

Persmap

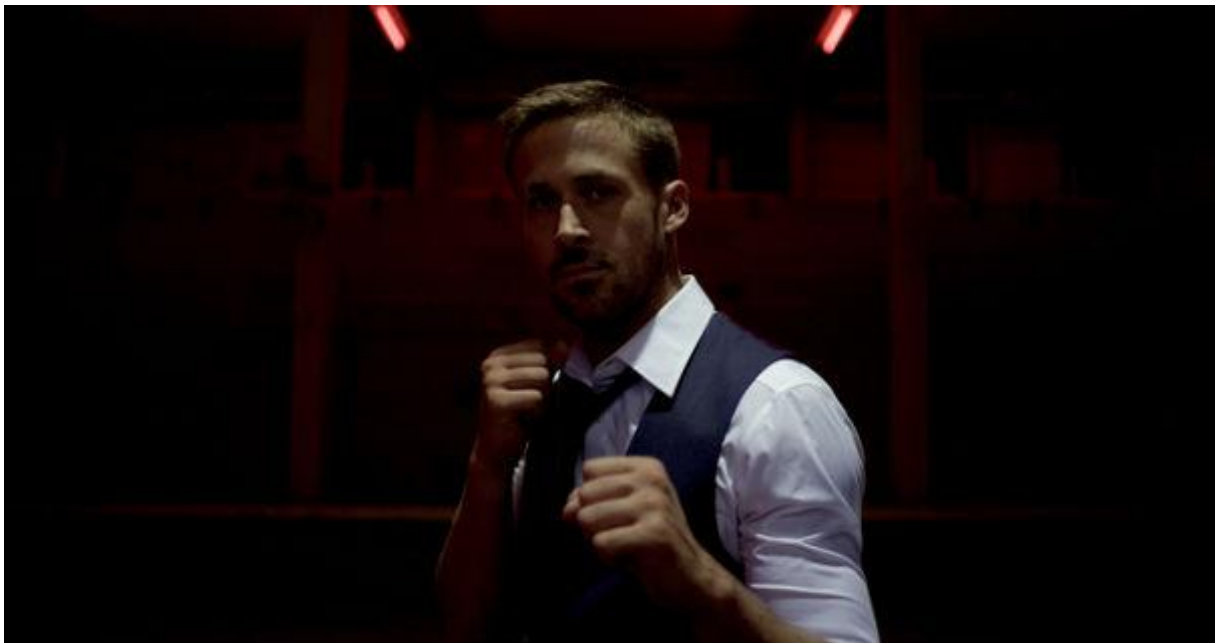


ONLY GOD FORGIVES

Een Film van Nicolas Winding Refn

ONLY GOD FORGIVES is een misdaadthriller waarin een agent en een gangster het tegen elkaar moeten opnemen. Julian (Ryan Gosling) en zijn broer Billy runnen een bokscub in Bangkok, welke dient als dekmantel voor een drugsoperatie. Wanneer Billy vermoord wordt, komt hun moeder Jenna (Kristin Scott Thomas) naar Bangkok en zint op wraak. Julian gaat op zoek naar de moordenaar en komt terecht in een bloederige spiraal van woede, verraad en wraak. Uiteindelijk moet hij het opnemen tegen een beruchte Thaise agent, die ook wel "Engel van Wraak" wordt genoemd.

Land: Frankrijk – Jaar: 2013 – Genre: actie – Duur: 95 min
Releasedatum: 13 juni 2013
Distributie: Cinéart



Meer informatie over de film:
Cinéart Nederland - Janneke De Jong
Herengracht 328 III / 1016 CE Amsterdam
Tel: +31 (0)20 5308840
Email: janneke@cinéart.nl
www.cinéart.nl

Persmap en foto's staan op: www.cinéart.nl
Persrubriek - inlog: cinéart / wachtwoord: film

Cast

Julian RYAN GOSLING
Billy TOM BURKE
Jenna KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS
Chang VITHAYA PANSRINGARM
Mai RATHA PHONGAM

Crew

Director NICOLAS WINDING REFN
Producer LENE BORGLUM
Production designer BETHE MICKLE
Director of photography LARRY SMITH
Editing by MATTHEW NEWMAN
Original music by CLIFF MARTINEZ

Director's selected Filmography



2013	Only God Forgives
2011	Drive
2010	Valhalla Rising
2009	Bronson
2005	Pusher III: I'm The Angel of Death
2004	Pusher II, With Blood On My Hand
2003	Fear X
1999	Bleeder
1996	Pusher

Biografie:

Nicolas Winding Refn (1970) is een Deense film regisseur, schrijver en producer en staat bekend om zijn gewaagde en visueel stimulerende films. Zijn eerste film, die hij schreef en regisseerde op de jonge leeftijd van 24, was de extreem gewelddadige en niets aan de fantasie overlatende *PUSHER*. *PUSHER* werd een cult fenomeen en Refn kreeg internationaal erkenning in 1996. Dit jaar zijn in London de filmopnames begonnen van de Engelstalige remake van de *PUSHER* trilogie. Nicolas Winding Refn is uitvoerend producent voor deze remake.

Na het succes van zijn debuut, schreef, produceerde en regisseerde zijn volgende film *BLEEDER*. De première van *BLEEDER* was in 1999 bij het Film Festival in Venetië. Refn's derde film, *FEAR X*, was zijn eerste inval met Engelstalige films. De film ging in première op het Sundance Film Festival.

Na *FEAR X* keerde Refn terug naar Denemarken om *PUSHER II* en *III* te schrijven en regisseren. *PUSHER II* en *III* werden net zo succesvol als het eerste deel, en werden samen het internationaal befaamd als de *PUSHER* trilogie.

In 2006 schreef en regisseerde Refn *BRONSON*, een gewelddadige, onwerkelijke, escapistisch film. De film ging in première op het Sundance Film Festival in 2009, waarna de media Refn 'the next great European auteur' noemde. Refn schreef en regisseerde *VALHALLA RISING*, geïnspireerd door een verhaal wat zijn moeder hem voorlas toen hij jong was. De film ging in première bij het Film Festival in Venetië in 2009, waarna Refn's stijl werd verfijnd tot 'Refn-esk'.

De documentaire *GAMBLER* ging tevens in 2005 in première bij het Film Festival in Rotterdam. Refn heeft al twee 'lifetime achievement awards' (één uit Taipei International Film festival in 2006 en de tweede van Valencia International Film Festival in 2007) in ontvangst mogen nemen. Hij won de 'Emerging Master Award' bij het Philadelphia International Film Festival in 2005.

Refn is nu bezig met het regisseren van de film *ONLY GOD FORGIVES* (met Ryan Gosling en Kristin Scott Thomas), wat momenteel in voorbereiding is in Thailand. Refn won voor de film *DRIVE* de Best Director Award bij het Cannes Film Festival in 2011.

Refn woont in Kopenhagen met zijn vrouw en twee kinderen.

Director's Notes

The original concept for the film was to make a movie about a man who wants to fight God. That is, of course, a very vast obstacle but when I was writing the film, I was going through some very existential times in my life—we were having our second child and it was a difficult pregnancy—and the idea of having a character who wants to fight God without knowing why very much appealed to me. With that as the concept, I elaborated by adding a character who believes he is God (Chang), obviously the antagonist, with the protagonist being a gangster who is looking for religion to believe in (Julian). This is, of course, very existential itself because faith is based on the need for a higher answer but most of the time, we don't know what the question is. When the answer comes, then, we must backtrack our lives in order to find the question. In this way, the film is conceived as an answer, with the question revealed at the end.

Once I had the overall approach between Chang and Julian, the idea of a mother character, came to me. We are so used to seeing crime and violence being handled by male characters but the idea of a woman being the ultimate evil, and on top of that making her a mother, was pretty fun to write. It added to the dilemma that Julian is struggling with because the mother is a piece to the puzzle of why he wants to fight God. It was interesting, taking a mother and son drama and setting it in the heightened reality of a fight film. Adding in the world of Asia, more specifically, Bangkok, gave the film an aura of being very magical. The city is very future oriented in terms of technology and containing a population 12 million people and at the same time, it has a very strong spiritual undercurrent. The acceptance that people can live on different spiritual planes and still interact with each other made everything almost like an experiment. Those two words go hand-in hand. No one ever questions that.

In hindsight, I am able to see the similarities between Chang, One Eye in VALHALLA RISING, and Driver in DRIVE—all are rooted in fairytale mythology and have difficulties living in the everyday world. I can see that technically, there is a resemblance in their stoic behavior, silence, and fetishistic portraits even though they are different in time and are portrayed by different actors. Early on in ONLY GOD FORGIVES, there were scenes that referred to Chang in two different ways, by his mortal name (Chang) and his immortal name (Angle of Vengeance). But every time he was given a name he lost some of the mythology for me and his enigmatic behavior began to be defined. As a result, I decided to remove any reference to either his mortal or immortal name and he then just became the "It." Now, going back to the similarities between One Eye, Driver and this "It" character, I can say that in VALHALLA RISING, One Eye is enigmatic—we don't know his past but he is defined by his name. In DRIVE, Driver is defined by his function. And in ONLY GOD FORGIVES, the "It" character has no definition by name, only by image.

Regarding the casting of ONLY GOD FORGIVES, I am very pleased with how things came together. Originally, there was a different actor who was to play Julian but he dropped out of the film fairly close to the production date. I now considered that a blessing because it opened up an opportunity for me and Ryan to continue our collaboration. Oddly enough, I had written the script before directing DRIVE, and Julian had always been conceived as a very silent character. When Ryan and I began to work on the script together after DRIVE, the language of silence came naturally, which was helpful in that the Julian character is very much about an internal struggle that the camera projects—his character journey was always about moving inwards and not outwards. Looking at it now, I couldn't imagine anyone else playing that character other than Ryan. But then again, he and I are very much the same person.

In regard to Kristin Scott Thomas, she was cast early on and I remember when I first met her she asked me why I was considering her for the part of Crystal and my first reply was, "Because my

mother really likes you.” I had seen her in various films over the years and I always found her to be extremely brilliant and she also has the aura of what I would call, “classic Hollywood movie mythology.”

When it came to casting the Thai actors, it was a bit of a jungle. I always imagined there would be numerous theatre schools and acting traditions in Thailand because they have quite an extensive film community but I was wrong and it was like casting a needle in a haystack trying to find two actors to play Chang and Mia, who could both speak English. It became easier when I eliminated the English talk from Chang. I met Vithaya Pansringarm, who played Chang, a year and half before we were going to start shooting the movie and I just knew he was the one. I can't tell you why exactly because it's not like his auditions were outstanding but there was something about him—his kindness and the calmness—and yet I felt I could never predict him and that always interested me.

Rhatha Phongam, who played Mai, was a natural fit. I concentrated the casting of Mai on her silence since she was going to be more of an artificial creation in Julian's world. She too, I found very early on but because I directed *DRIVE, ONLY GOD FORGIVES* was delayed for a year. Happily, both actors stayed around and agreed to do the film when I finally wanted to do it.

When it came to Julian's brother Billy, I cast a British actor, Tom Burke, who I had wanted to work with for some time as he originally auditioned for Julian at a very early stage. Tom Burke and Gordon Brown (who played a member of Julian's gang, whom I'm also very fond of and have used almost as many times as Mads Mikkelsen) are two actors I wanted to bring with me to Thailand.

In a way, *ONLY GOD FORGIVES* is like an accumulation of all the films I've done so far. I think I was heading toward a creative collision, full speed ahead, in order to change everything around me and see what will come after. I have always said that I set out to make films about women but I end up making films about violent men. Now that everything is colliding, it may end up turning things upside-down for me. This collision is arousing because everything around me becomes so uncertain and we must not forget that the second enemy of creativity, after having “good-taste,” is being safe.



INTERVIEW WITH NICOLAS WINDING REFN

What is the movie about at its heart?

The original concept for the film was to make a movie about a man who wants to fight God. That is, of course, a very vast obstacle but when I was writing the film, I was going through some very existential times in my life—we were having our second child and it was a difficult pregnancy—and the idea of having a character who wants to fight God without knowing why very much appealed to me. With that as the concept, I elaborated by adding a character who believes he is God (Chang), obviously the antagonist, with the protagonist being a gangster who is looking for religion to believe in (Julian). This is, of course, very existential itself because faith is based on the need for a higher answer but most of the time, we don't know what the question is. When the answer comes, then, we must backtrack our lives in order to find the question. In this way, the film is conceived as an answer, with the question revealed at the end.

Why is the god character portrayed as the antagonist and not the protagonist?

Being God is not interesting enough. Wanting to fight him is much more compelling because there is a sense of loss and weakness, which is what the audience identifies with. We all admire strength, which is what Chang represents, but emotionally, we don't connect to it. The act of searching, on the other hand, is very human because there is weakness in not knowing and in not being able to fulfil everything in our lives. It goes back to faith being based not on us having a question, but on receiving an answer and then trying to figure out what the question could actually be.

Describe the importance of Kristin Scott Thomas's character.

We are so used to seeing crime and violence being handled by male characters but the idea of a woman being the ultimate evil, and on top of that making her a mother, was pretty fun to write. It added to the dilemma that Julian is struggling with because the mother is a piece to the puzzle of why he wants to fight God. It was interesting, taking a mother and son drama and setting it in the heightened reality of a fight film. Adding in the world of Asia, more specifically, Bangkok, gave the film an aura of being very magical. The city is very future oriented in terms of technology and containing a population 12 million people and at the same time, it has a very strong spiritual undercurrent. The acceptance that people can live on different spiritual planes and still interact with each other made everything almost like an experiment. Those two words go hand-in hand. No one ever questions that.

Where does this film fall in the framework of your career as a director?

I always find it very hard to answer questions having to do with my career because I never really plan anything and the few times I tried, my plans ended up changing very radically. Rather, I think I force myself into situations that I can't run from, making my life as difficult as possible because it forces me to leave out common sense as it relates to the so called "right thing to do" or the "safe solution." Instead, I have to act on my instincts of what feels right and what feels wrong. It is the act of making a film in blindness and the exciting part is not really knowing or being able to predict the outcome. If I were to show you the script I wrote two years ago as well as every version of the film from pre-production through the final cut, you would see a hundred different films. That's why creativity has such a sexual drive within it.

Use three words to describe your film. Why did you choose those words?

It's not that I don't want to answer this question, it's that I don't know how to answer it as I very rarely know why I do what I do. I almost always know why I don't do what I don't do, however.

Is this film a reflection of part of your own life and in what way?

I think everything you do, in one way or another is a reflection of part of you. Thus far, I have been very fortunate to make the films that I want to make and it is certainly something I can't deny. However, aside from Bronson, which is very much a biography of my life, I cannot pinpoint certain elements. I leave that up to the experts.

There seems to be a significant parallel between the characters One EYE, Driver, and Chang more than any of your other characters. Why is that?

That's a good question. All the characters are rooted in fairytale mythology and have difficulties living in the everyday world. I can see that technically, there is a resemblance in their stoic behaviour, silence, and fetishistic portraits even though they are different in time and are portrayed by different actors. I'm not sure why but there is an undeniable link between them and it is a character I will revisit in a film I plan to make in the near future.

Why is Chang's name never mentioned in the movie?

Early on there were scenes that referred to Chang in two different ways, by his mortal name (Chang) and his immortal name (Angle of Vengeance). But every time he was given a name he lost some of the mythology for me and his enigmatic behaviour began to be defined. As a result, I decided to remove any reference to either his mortal or immortal name and he then just became the "It."

Now, going back to your question about the similarities between One Eye, Driver and this "It" character, I can say that in VALHALLA RISING, One Eye is enigmatic—we don't know his past but he is defined by his name. In DRIVE, Driver is defined by his function. And in ONLY GOD FORGIVES, the "It" character has no definition by name, only by image.

In the past, you have been specific about your intentions to explore different film genres. The Pusher Trilogy is a crime movie, Bronson is biopic, Valhalla Rising is a science fiction movie, and DRIVE is a fairytale. What is ONLY GOD FORGIVES?

In a way, ONLY GOD FORGIVES is like an accumulation of all the films I've done so far. I think I was heading toward a creative collision, full speed ahead, in order to change everything around me and see what will come after. I have always said that I set out to make films about women but I end up making films about violent men. Now that everything is colliding, it may end up turning things upside-down for me. This collision is arousing because everything around me becomes so uncertain and we must not forget that the second enemy of creativity, after having "good-taste," is being safe.

Your choice of casting in this particular film is quite radical in that you have unknown actors acting with famous actors and famous actors playing against type. What was your casting process like?

Originally, there was another actor who was to play Julian but he dropped out of the film fairly close to the production date. I now considered that a blessing because it opened up an opportunity for me and Ryan to continue our collaboration. Oddly enough, I had written the script before directing DRIVE, and Julian had always been conceived as a very silent character. When Ryan and I began to work on the script together after DRIVE, the language of silence came naturally, which was helpful in that the Julian character is very much about an internal struggle that the camera projects—his character journey was always about moving inwards and not outwards. Looking at it now, I couldn't imagine anyone else playing that character other than Ryan. But then again, he and I are very much the same person.

In regard to Kristin Scott Thomas, she was cast early on and I remember when I first met her she asked me why I was considering her for the part of Crystal and my first reply was, “Because my mother really likes you.” I had seen her in various films over the years and I always found her to be extremely brilliant and she also has the aura of what I would call, “classic Hollywood movie mythology.”

When it came to casting the Thai actors, it was a bit of a jungle. I always imagined there would be numerous theatre schools and acting traditions in Thailand because they have quite an extensive film community but I was wrong and it was like casting a needle in a haystack trying to find two actors to play Chang and Mia, who could both speak English. It became easier when I eliminated the English talk from Chang. I met Vithaya Pansringarm, who played Chang, a year and half before we were going to start shooting the movie and I just knew he was the one. I can't tell you why exactly because it's not like his auditions were outstanding but there was something about him—his kindness and the calmness—and yet I felt I could never predict him and that always interested me.

Rhatha Phongam, who played Mai, was a natural fit. I concentrated the casting of Mai on her silence since she was going to be more of an artificial creation in Julian's world. She too, I found very early on but because I directed *DRIVE, ONLY GOD FORGIVES* was delayed for a year. Happily, both actors stayed around and agreed to do the film when I finally wanted to do it.

When it came to Julian's brother Billy, I cast a British actor, Tom Burke, who I had wanted to work with for some time as he originally auditioned for Julian at a very early stage. Tom Burke and Gordon Brown (who played a member of Julian's gang, whom I'm also very fond of and have used almost as many times as Mads Mikkelsen) are two actors I wanted to bring with me to Thailand.



RYAN GOSLING

Ryan Gosling was Academy Award-nominated as Best Actor for his performance in Anna Boden & Ryan Fleck's *HALF NELSON*. The portrayal also garnered him Screen Actors Guild, Critics' Choice, Chicago Film Critics Association, Online Film Critics Society, Toronto Film Critics Association, and Satellite Award nominations; the Breakthrough Performance award from the National Board of Review; Best Actor honors from the Seattle and Stockholm International Film Festivals; and the Independent Spirit Award for Best Male Lead.

He had previously been nominated for the latter award for his breakthrough performance in Henry Bean's *The Believer*, which also brought Mr. Gosling a London Critics' Circle Film Award nomination. The film won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival.

Among his subsequent films were Alex and Andrew Smith's *THE SLAUGHTER RULE*, opposite David Morse; Barbet Schroeder's *Murder by Numbers*, with Sandra Bullock; Matthew Hoge's *THE UNITED STATES OF LELAND*, with Kevin Spacey, Lena Olin, and Don Cheadle; Gregory Hoblit's *FRACTURE*, with Anthony Hopkins; and the hit *THE NOTEBOOK*, directed by Nick Cassavetes, opposite Rachel McAdams. In 2004, he was named Male Star of Tomorrow by the National Association of Theatre Owners at ShoWest.

He received Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations, and won a Satellite Award, for Craig Gillespie's *LARS AND THE REAL GIRL*; and was again a Golden Globe Award nominee for *BLUE VALENTINE*, in which he starred alongside Michelle Williams and which marked his first collaboration with filmmaker Derek Cianfrance.

Mr. Gosling's recent films include Glen Ficarra and John Requa's *CRAZY, STUPID, LOVE.*, with Steve Carell and Emma Stone, for which he received his third Golden Globe Award nomination; Nicolas Winding Refn's *DRIVE*, for which he received his third Spirit Award nomination; George Clooney's *THE IDES OF MARCH*; and Ruben Fleischer's *GANGSTER SQUAD*, also with Ms. Stone.

This year he will be reteaming with directors Derek Cianfrance and Nicolas Winding Refn in *A PLACE BEYOND THE PINES* and *ONLY GOD FORGIVES*, respectively, as well as appearing in a new film by Terrence Malick. Mr. Gosling will soon be making his feature directorial debut with *HOW TO CATCH A MONSTER*, from his original screenplay.

TOM BURKE

Tom Burke is one of the UK's most highly respected and versatile young actors with starring roles across stage, screen & television.

His film credits include *CHARI* directed by Stephen Frears, *TELSTAR* and *THE KID* directed by Nick Moran, *I WANT CANDY* for Ealing Studios, *THIRD STAR* opposite Benedict Cumberbatch for Western Edge Pictures and *Look, Stranger* directed by Arielle Javitch. He will next be seen in Ralph Fiennes' *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN* for BBC Films and *ONLY GOD FORGIVES* directed by Nicolas Winding Refn.

His work for television includes *IN LOVE WITH BARBARA* opposite Andrew Riseborough, *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* directed by Brian Kirk, *NAPOLEON* directed by Pier Wilkie, *BELLA AND THE BOYS* and David Yates' award-winning *STATE OF PLAY* and *THE YOUNG VISITORS* all for the BBC. Tom can currently be seen playing a starring role in the second series of Abi Morgan's hit series *THE HOUR* and in Sue Perkins' comedy series *HEADING OUT*.

In 2008, Burke was awarded the Ian Charleson Award for his performance in *CREDITORS* at the Donmar Warehouse directed by Alan Rickman. Other stage credits include *REASONS TO BE PRETTY* at the Almeida, *DESIGN FOR LIVING* at the Old Vic and *THE DOCTORS DILEMMA* at the Royal National Theatre.

KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS

Kristin Scott Thomas is an English actress who gained international recognition in the 1990's for her roles in *BITTER MOON*, *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*, for which she won the BAFTA Film Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role, and *THE ENGLISH PATIENT* for which she received a Golden Globe nomination as well as an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress.

Among her subsequent films are *GOSFORD PARK*, in which she played Lady Sylvia McCordle, *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*, *THE HORSE WHISPERER*, *KEEPING MUM*, *NOWHERE BOY*, *EASY VIRTUE*, and *NE LE DIS À PERSONNE (Tell No One)*, by French director Guillaume Canet. In addition, Scott Thomas received many accolades for her performance in *IL Y A LONGTEMPS QUE JE T'AIME (I've Loved You So Long)*, including BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations for Best Actress.

In early 2007, Scott Thomas played Arkadina in a London West End production of Anton Chekhov's *THE SEAGULL*, for which she won a Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actress.

In 2009, she starred in *PARTIR (Leaving)* as Suzanne, earning a nomination for Best Actress at the Cesar Awards and winning Best Actress at the Evening Standard British Film Award. She also starred in *SARAH'S KEY* as Julia Jarmond and in 2011, played the role of Patricia Maxwell in *SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN* before returning to London's West End to star as Emma in Harold Pinter's *BETRAYAL* directed by Ian Rickson.

Scott Thomas's recent films include *BEL AMI* with Robert Pattinson, based on the 1885 novel written by Guy de Maupassant, and the film adaption of Douglas Kennedy's novel, *THE WOMAN IN THE FIFTH*, directed by Pawel Pawlikowski.

This year, Scott Thomas is teaming up with director Nicolas Winding Refn for his new film, *ONLY GOD FORGIVES*, and with director Ralph Fiennes for *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN*. She is also performing on stage in Harold Pinter's *OLD TIMES*.

Rhatha Phongam

Rhatha Phongam, also known as Yayaying, was born on May 19, 1983. The daughter of Noi Phongam, a famous Thai comedian and actress, Rhatha started in the business when she was 16, making her debut album, Ya Ya Ying with GMM Grammy (one of Thailand's biggest entertainment companies) in 1999. She consistently released albums until 2007, appearing as guest singer on other albums and touring with her own concerts as well as guest appearing in other concerts. During her busy schedule, Rhatha was able to take time out to finish her education, receiving scholarships along the way. Rhatha speaks fluent English.

Rhatha starred in her first musical called Fah Jarod Sai in 2007, in which she played Kasfeeya, one of the leads. It was the first ever extravaganza play to be staged in Thailand. The play was very successful having a run of 40 shows and was extended for another 13 shows. Her latest venture into theatre was another musical called Mea Bia, playing the lead part of Mekhala (a tour guide). As with her previous musical, Rhatha and the musical were well received by the public. Having starred in the popular television series, Fak-Din-Klin-Doa, Rhatha has been a constant television personality with guest appearances on various shows and programs, recently being seen in the television series, Sixth Sense.

Rhatha's move into films started with landing the role as "Mai" in the Nicolas Winding Refn film ONLY GOD FORGIVES with Ryan Gosling, Kristin Scott Thomas and Vithaya Pansringarm.

Following ONLY GOD FORGIVES, she landed one of the leading roles in the Thai film JANDARA as Khun Boonlueang, directed by one of Thailand's most respected directors, M.L. Pundhevanop Dhewakul. Rhatha also guest starred in the Thai action film, TOM YAM GOONG 2, as an assassin.

Rhatha is presently busy with her modeling work, for which she received the Asian Model Award in Korea. She also started filming another drama series and has been approached with other pending film projects both locally and internationally.



Vithaya Pansringarm

Vithaya Pansringarm (nickname "Pu") was born in Bangkok, Thailand on August 11, 1959. Growing up in the 1960's in a middle-class Thai family, Vithaya was exposed to western music and films. One of his father's jobs was to translate and voice-over American Westerns shown on large outdoor screens at festivals.

Although he started studying accounting at a Thai university, his passion was for the arts. He went to New York City, changing his major to graphic design, and graduated with honors from New York Institute of Technology in 1985.

After working as a graphic designer for a few years, he married Fay, an American ballet dancer and moved back to Bangkok in 1987 where they founded and direct the Rising Star Dance Studio, one of Bangkok's foremost academies of dance. With Rising Star, Vithaya helped direct and produce shows, events, industrials, and pageants. He also free-lanced as a translator and master of ceremonies.

His acting career started almost by accident when he was discovered by Australian cinema photographer/director Wade Muller who asked him to act as police captain Lieutenant Somchai in the short film Second Chance.

Wade later recommended Vithaya to the casting director of the Hollywood production Prince and Me: The Elephant Adventure shooting in Thailand. He was cast in a principle role as King Sarayu thus making his international debut in film in 2009. This led to director Tom Waller asking Vithaya to play the lead role of Father Ananda in the controversial Thai film Mindfulness and Murder in late 2009. This role earned Vithaya "Best Actor" at Thrill Spy International Film Festival in Washington, DC. in 2010. When the film was finally given permission to be shown in Thailand in 2011, Vithaya was recognized on the local scene and was nominated for best actor and for best screenwriter at the Thailand National Film Awards 2012.

After roles in several international productions shot in Thailand including Colonel Komsan in Largo Winch 2 (2011), Minister in The Hangover Part 2, and Nath in Trade of Innocents, directed by Christopher Bessette (2012), Vithaya was cast in the leading role of police lieutenant "Chang" aka "The Angel of Vengeance" in Only God Forgives, directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, co-starring with Ryan Gosling and Kristen Scott Thomas.

Vithaya is currently acting in several international film productions while preparing for the lead role in The Last Executioner (directed by Tom Waller) as the rock 'n roll musician who became the last Thai to execute prisoners by machine gun.

Vithaya is an active environmentalist and member of the Executive Committee of the Wild Animal Rescue Foundation of Thailand (WARF). He is a martial artist holding a fifth degree black belt in Kendo (Japanese fencing). He is the President of the Thailand Kendo Club and a former member of the Thailand National Kendo Team. He is an accomplished watercolor artist, Thai classical musician and chef. He and Fay have a son, Aaron.

