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PRESENT

SWAN SONG

A film by Todd Stephens

105 minutes, USA

Starring Udo Kier, Jennifer Coolidge, Linda Evans and Michael Urie

Official Selection

2021 SXSW Film Festival – World Premiere
2021 NewFest – Winner: NewFest Pride Audience Award
2021 Provincetown Film Festival
2021 Nantucket Film Festival
2021 Frameline
2021 Oak Cliff Film Festival

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SYNOPSIS

Legendary actor Udo Kier stars as retired hairdresser Pat Pitsenbarger, who escapes the confines of his small-town Sandusky, Ohio nursing home after learning of his former client's dying wish for him to style her final hairdo. Soon, Pat embarks on an odyssey to confront the ghosts of his past – and collect the beauty supplies necessary for the job. SWAN SONG is a comical and bittersweet journey about rediscovering one's sparkle, and looking gorgeous while doing so.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Back in 1984, I walked into my small-town gay bar for the first time -- The Universal Fruit and Nut Company. There he was, glittering on the dancefloor. Wearing a teal feather boa, fedora and matching pantsuit, "Mister Pat" Pitsenbarger was busting old school moves straight out of Bob Fosse. I was seventeen, and Pat was a revelation.

Years later, when I set out to write my autobiographical "Edge Of Seventeen", I immediately thought of Mister Pat. I went back home to hunt him down, only to discover Pat had just suffered an aneurism and was temporarily unable to speak. But his lover David told me stories...about how Pat was once the most fabulous hairdresser in Sandusky, Ohio...about his legendary drag performances...about how he used to shop at Kroger's dressed as Carol Burnett - in 1967! This was a man who always had the courage to be himself, long before that was safe.

The truth is, Mister Pat inspired me to write "Edge Of Seventeen". I wrote a significant "Pat" character as my protagonist's mentor, but midway through the shoot, the part got cut. I always knew my muse would return someday in my writing, and when he finally did many years later, I looked for Pat again only to learn he just passed away. Sadly, Pat's legendary hand-beaded rhinestone gowns are all lost to time. Only a shoebox remains - filled with some tarnished jewelry and a half-smoked pack of Mores.

"Swan Song" is a love letter to the rapidly disappearing "gay culture" of America. As it has become more acceptable to be queer, what used to be a thriving community is rapidly melting back into society. Thanks to assimilation and technology, small-town gay bars like The Universal Fruit and Nut Company are becoming extinct. "Swan Song" is dedicated to all the forgotten flaming florists and hairdressers who built the gay community and blazed the trail for the rights many of us cling to today. But, above all, for me this film is about learning that it's never too late to live again.

- Todd Stephens



Q&A WITH DIRECTOR TODD STEPHENS

Can you talk about how your past works have led you to “Swan Song?”

“Swan Song” is a return to the more serious side of my Gemini self. After the wacky world of “Another Gay Movies”, I wanted to go back to my roots and finish what I think of as my “Ohio Trilogy” (started by “Edge of Seventeen”, then “Gypsy 83”). Honestly though, it took me years to find the courage to reveal the more personal/autobiographical side of myself again. But after many false starts and several amazing therapists, I finally got up the nerve to reopen my heart. In many ways, the character of Pat is me, telling myself it’s not too late to do what I love.

Was this film written with Udo Kier in mind?

I should make Udo happy and say yes, but I actually had Gene Wilder in my head when I wrote the first draft. But after spending more than a year searching for the perfect Pat, it became clear that the only human being on this planet who could fully do him justice was Udo Kier. Watching Udo’s performance on set every day was like witnessing a master class in acting.

What was Udo’s first reaction to the screenplay?

Udo called me right away, and said he loved it. I jumped on the first plane to Palm Springs to meet him, and the rest is history. Udo was very gracious with helping to get the film off the ground – I later returned to Palm Springs to shoot a Kickstarter video in his fabulous living room. One of the biggest bonuses of making “Swan Song” has been making a new best friend in Udo. He’s family now.

Can you talk about your attraction to small-town in America?

Sandusky, Ohio is where I was born and raised, and will always be a huge part of who I am. I’ve had a love/hate relationship with my hometown over the years – it’s like I couldn’t wait to leave and now I can’t wait to return. Times have changed since we filmed “Edge of Seventeen” there in 1997 and felt like we needed to keep the film’s gay storyline in the closet. In fact, when Producer Eric Eisenbrey and I arrived back in town to start preproduction for “Swan Song”, Sandusky was celebrating it’s 3^rd Annual Gay Pride Festival. My queer inner child almost couldn’t process it! After years of being down and out, Sandusky’s reawakening helped inspire Pat’s rebirth in the film.



If you could choose anyone living or dead, who would you choose to do your hair for your funeral?

The late, great Mister Pat, of course! But, assuming he's all booked up after the film comes out, my second choice would be the late Sydney Guilaroff, whose genius Hollywood creations inspired our final look for Linda Evans. Who am I kidding, though? In reality -- I told my husband Tim he as to personally style my hair in the casket because he's the only one who really knows how I do it haha.

What's your drag name and what song do you perform?

Lazy Susan. And probably something by Stevie Nicks. But only if I feel like it.



FILMMAKER BIOS

TODD STEPHENS (Writer/Director)

Todd wrote, produced and directed "Another Gay Movie" and "Gypsy 83" and also wrote and produced "Edge Of Seventeen." All four of his previous features won numerous festival awards and were released theatrically all over the world. Todd is currently a Professor of Film at School of Visual Arts in NYC.

ERIC EISENBREY (Producer)

Eric Eisenbrey is a California born and raised producer, writer and actor. He associate produced Todd Stephens' teen comedy "Another Gay Movie" and was a story writer & co-produced "Another Gay Sequel." Eric is an associate producer on the Revry TV series "Pet Peeves" (Premiering April 2021). Additional projects include having narrated the America ReFramed documentary "Broken Heart Land" and directed the theatrical west coast premiere of Ping Chong's "Truth and Beauty." Eric is an alumni of University of California, Irvine, and currently lives in Los Angeles with his best fur-friend Betty.

JACKSON WARNER (Cinematographer)

Jackson Warner Lewis grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma where he chased and documented tornadoes in the prairie landscape with his family's Hi-8 camcorder. It was his love of chasing the eye of the storm that led him to attend and study Cinematography at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. SWAN SONG is Jackson's fifth feature film as Director of Photography.

SHAWNA-NOVA FOLEY (Costume Designer)

Shawna-Nova Foley was raised on the North Coast in Cleveland, Ohio, but has lived and worked all along the eastern and midwestern region. Having over 20 years' experience in film, television, and theater, she currently works as a Costume Designer. She would describe herself as having creative ardor with interests in many mediums. As an internationally shown photographer with a background in art history she draws on her knowledge and understanding of lighting, color, composition, and storytelling to bring characters to life through her costume design. Shawna is proud to have a film debut at SXSW for a second year in a row.



KITTY BOOTS (Costume Designer)

Kitty Boots was born and raised in England. She received an honors degree in theatrical design at Birmingham University. It was at legendary nightclub Jackie 60 where she first met Todd Stephens. She would convince him to take a chance on a first time costume designer and hired her for the goth cult classic *Gypsy 83*. Since then, her credits include *Mean Girls 2*, *West 32nd* directed by Michael Kang, *Multiple Sarcasm* starring Timothy Hutton and Mira Sorvino, *Life in Flight* starring Patrick Wilson and *Musical Chairs* directed by Susan Seidelman. Kitty was a wardrobe stylist for Emmy winning "Queer Eye" and recently worked on over 700 episodes of Food Network's "Chopped." She designed shows for MTV, QUIBI, NETFLIX, CBS, ABC and NBC. Kitty has styled Debbie Harry, Sharon Osbourne, Ted Allen, Carson Kressley, Nico Tortorella, Arnold Schwarzenegger, as well as her favorite bands, Princess Goes to the Butterfly and Blondie. Her fashion magazine credits include Nylon Magazine, Alice Magazine, Paper, Elle and I.D. As a costume designer and stylist, Kitty enjoys traveling, creating, and working with her amazing teams.

KASSANDRA DEANGELIS (Production Designer)

Kassandra DeAngelis is a California-born and raised production designer and set decorator, currently residing in Cleveland Ohio. Her interest in film production began when, as a child actor, she soon realized, despite being yelled at, she much preferred hanging out on the prop truck than being on stage. This, along with being her father's weekend garage sale excursion partner, planted the seed for her current career. That career began in the art department and quickly transitioned into set decorating and design. She has designed commercials, music videos and she has worked on numerous feature films such as *Brightburn*, *Them That Follow* and *The Tomorrow Man*.

SPENCER SCHILLY (Editor)

Spencer Schilly's career spans over 20 years as a writer, director, producer and editor. Two of his award-winning features, *SUMMER THUNDER* and *THE HOUSEBOY*, can be seen on Netflix. Spencer also edited Todd Stephen's *ANOTHER GAY SEQUEL* and RuPaul's cult-classic *STARRBOOTY*. To date, he's edited 10 features and over 20 television series including *RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE* and *THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF ATLANTA*. Born in Memphis, TN, Spencer graduated with an MFA from School of Visual Arts in New York. He currently lives in Los Angeles, working primarily as an editor, while also developing several other projects. His darkly comedic web series, *PET PEEVES*, premieres on the streaming platform, Revry, next month.

SANTIAGO FIGUEIRA (Editor)

Santiago Figueira W. is a New York based video editor. He has worked on many music videos as an editor, director, cinematographer, visual effects artist, and graphic designer, as well as multiple short films on-set and in post-production. One of his first short films "L'Unique" in which he worked on as cinematographer and editor, was nominated in a national youth film festival in Venezuela (FILA) in August of 2015 and won the "Best Short Film" award, as well as "Best Production Design", "Best Cinematography" and "Best Directing". Santiago has now worked as an editor on "Swan Song" a feature film that has been admitted to the SXSW film festival lineup in 2021.



CHRIS STEPHENS (Composer)

Born in Sandusky and raised on a steady diet of early MTV videos and his older brothers' rock and new wave records, the sounds of analog synths and angular guitars have swirled through Chris' consciousness since birth. In 1998, a chance encounter with a certain Moog Prodigy would begin a lifelong obsession with instruments that seem to come from another planet. The Moog was a key prop in brother Todd Stephens' first feature, *EDGE OF SEVENTEEN*. While working on the film, Chris would sneak the vintage synth home at night and marvel at the power and subtlety of sounds it made with the slightest shift of a knob. It was like playing with pure energy. *SWAN SONG* is Chris Stephens' debut feature film score. The Moog Prodigy which Chris quietly made 'disappear' at the end of filming *EDGE OF SEVENTEEN* can be heard throughout several key scenes in the final installment of Todd's Sandusky Trilogy.

LYDIA KANE (Makeup/Hair)

Lydia Kane is a filmmaker from a mid-western town rooted in the heart of Ohio. Her documentaries *SPIRIT OF THE GAME* and *LUCAS COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING COALITION* were screened at multiple festivals worldwide. As a writer, her scripts have been semifinalists in the Script Lab Screenplay Contest and the Austin Film Festival. She also works in the film industry as a makeup and special effects artists, with work on the features *THE LAST SUMMER* and *WHITE BOY RICK*, as well as the upcoming features *JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH* and *SWAN SONG*.



CAST BIOS

UDO KIER (Actor)

Beginning his life with the same flare for the dramatic that would come to define his career, Udo Kier was born in Köln, Germany near the end of the second world war. The hospital was bombed and buried Kier and his mother in the rubble. Both survived, and Kier would later move to London as a young adult to study English. Kier was discovered in London by Michael Sarne, who cast him in his first role as a gigolo in *ROAD TO SAINT TROPEZ*. Kier then starred in Michael Armstrong's extremely controversial *MARK OF THE DEVIL*. He would go on to work with Paul Morrissey in Andy Warhol's *FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN* and *BLOOD FOR DRACULA*, Dario Argento in *SUSPIRIA*, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder in *THE THIRD GENERATION*, *LILI MARLEEN*, and *LOLA*.

Kier entered the American independent cinema scene many years later after meeting Gus Van Sant at the Berlin Film Festival. Van Sant offered Kier the role of Hans, the lamp-singing john in *MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO* with Keanu Reeves and River Phoenix. He would later have roles in Gus Van Sant's *EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES* and *DON'T WORRY HE WON'T GET FAR ON FOOT* as well as such 90s Hollywood hits as *ACE VENTURA: PET DETECTIVE*, *JOHNNY MNEMONIC*, *BARB WIRE*, *END OF VIOLENCE*, *FOR LOVE OR MONEY*, *ARMAGEDDON*, *BLADE*, and *END OF DAYS*. Kier is probably best known for his collaboration with Lars von Trier, appearing in most of his films including *MEDEA*, *EUROPA*, *BREAKING THE WAVES*, *DANCER IN THE DARK*, *DOGVILLE*, *MANDERLAY*, *MELANCHOLIA*, *NYMPHOMANIAC (VOL. II)* and *THE KINGDOM* (Danish TV). Kier's recent renaissance has seen him play memorable roles in the Activision game *CALL OF DUTY*, numerous television roles in the north America and Europe, and in the films *IRON SKY*, *BRAWL IN CELL BLOCK 99*, *DOWNSIZING*, *AMERICAN ANIMALS*, *BACURAU*, *THE PAINTED BIRD*, *THE BLAZING WORLD* and *SWAN SONG*, among many others.

JENNIFER COLLIDGE (Actress)

Jennifer Coolidge has been a Hollywood mainstay ever since playing Stifler's mom in the 1999 comedy classic *American Pie*. She is beloved for her role as "Paulette" in the iconic film *Legally Blonde*, opposite Reese Witherspoon, and well-known for her frequent collaborations with director Christopher Guest in films such as *Best in Show* (2000), *A Mighty Wind* (2003) and *For Your Consideration* (2006).

Originally from Boston, Coolidge studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City and was a nine-year veteran of The Groundlings comedy troupe in Los Angeles.

The actress and comedienne has made scene-stealing appearances in *A Cinderella Story*, *Pootie Tang*, *Zoolander*, *Sex and the City*, *Friends*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Party Down*, *Napoleon Dynamite*, *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, *Glee*, *Inside Amy Schumer*, *2 Broke Girls* and more. In addition to her memorable roles in television and film, she has also voiced animated characters, performed on Broadway and toured her own standup act in front of live audiences.



Recently Coolidge was seen in *Like a Boss*, co-starring Tiffany Haddish and Rose Byrne, and *Promising Young Woman* opposite Carey Mulligan. Next, she will be seen in the HBO limited series *THE WHITE LOTUS* and the Lionsgate feature *SHOTGUN WEDDING* opposite Jennifer Lopez. She splits her time between Los Angeles and New Orleans.

LINDA EVANS (Actress)

Award-winning Actress Linda Evans has personified beauty and grace to American television viewers for over five decades, from her role as Audra Barkley on *The Big Valley* to the glamorous Krystle Carrington on *Dynasty*, to *Hell's Kitchen*, the British competitive cooking-reality show she won in 2009.

Linda became one of the most celebrated female television stars of the 1980s. For her role as Krystle, wife of an oil multimillionaire played by John Forsythe, Linda was nominated five times for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a TV Drama series and she won the Golden Globe in 1982. Linda won five People's Choice Awards as Favorite Actress in a Drama Series and was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead actress in a Drama Series. For her contribution to the television industry, Linda has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Linda's often lavish and luxurious life has rivaled Krystle Carrington's. She has dined with queens and presidents, been romanced by the rich and famous, and today, what Linda treasures most is the wisdom she has gained along the way.



CREDITS

Cast:

Mister Pat Pitsenbarger UDO KIER
Dee Dee Dale JENNIFER COOLIDGE
Rita Parker Sloan LINDA EVANS
Dustin MICHAEL URIE
Eunice IRA HAWKINS
Sue STEPHANIE MCVAY
Walter Shanrock TOM BLOOM
Miss Velma JUSTIN LONESOME
Gabriel THOM HILTON
Ro Ro SHANESSA SWEENEY
Lyle BRYANT CARROLLE
Vie SHELBY GARRETT
Janie CATHERINE ALBERS
Josiah DAVE SORBORO
Shaundell ROSHON THOMAS
Miss Gertie ANNIE KITRAL
David ERIC EISENBREY
Tristan JONAH BLECHMAN
Nurse TIM MURRAY
Phyllis CHERYL TALLEY-SHARP
Scottie RAY PERRIN
Lady with Shades RUTH MAIER
Scrabble Guy GENE DAGIAU
Gas Station Customer KATE VOLZ
Vivante Lady ROSE LEININGER
Red Wagon Attendant STEPHEN ISRAEL
Sherman Ransom RICHARD STRAUSS
Cab Driver TEVIS MARCUM
Silver Haired Bear VERNON GUINN
Gay Dad BRANDON LIM
Gay Daddy MATTHEW CHOJNACKI
Son LIAM HESPEN
Newborn Babe LAUREN CUTNAW
Nurse Leslie LESLIE MCGUIER
Judge Schine KAREN FULLER
Waiter Jeffrey JEFFREY DOTSON JR.
Courthouse Couple JOHN STEPHENS, KAREN STEPHENS
The Lemon Man NICK AVERY
Kharma Customer KATIE BOISSONEAULT
Tristan's Client JORI NAEGELE
Fabulous Barfly BARBIE MARIE
Fruit & Nut Tart HARVEY HEYS



LUNA PICTURES and HOUSE OF GEMINI

present a TODD STEPHENS film UDO KIER in "SWAN SONG"

starring UDO KIER, JENNIFER COOLIDGE, IRA HAWKINS, STEPHANIE MCVAY with
MICHAEL URIE and LINDA EVANS

Casting by EVE BATTAGLIA C.S.A., LINA TODD C.S.A.

Associate Producers EVE BATTAGLIA, CHRIS PARTHMORE, JESS WEISS, STACEY
DAVIS, ROSHON THOMAS, KAREN STEPHENS, CHRIS STEPHENS

Music Supervisor GERRY GERSHMAN

Original Score CHRIS STEPHENS

Costume Designers SHAWNA-NOVA FOLEY, KITTY BOOTS

Edited by SPENCER SCHILLY, SANTIAGO FIGUEIRA W.

Production Designer KASSANDRA DEANGELIS

Director of Photography JACKSON WARNER LEWIS

Executive Producers RHET TOPHAM, MEGHAN HOGREFE, RICK HOGREFE, JAY FRALEY,
DREW SKLAR

Produced by ERIC EISENBREY, TIM KALTENECKER, RHET TOPHAM, STEPHEN ISRAEL

Written, Produced and Directed by TODD STEPHENS

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