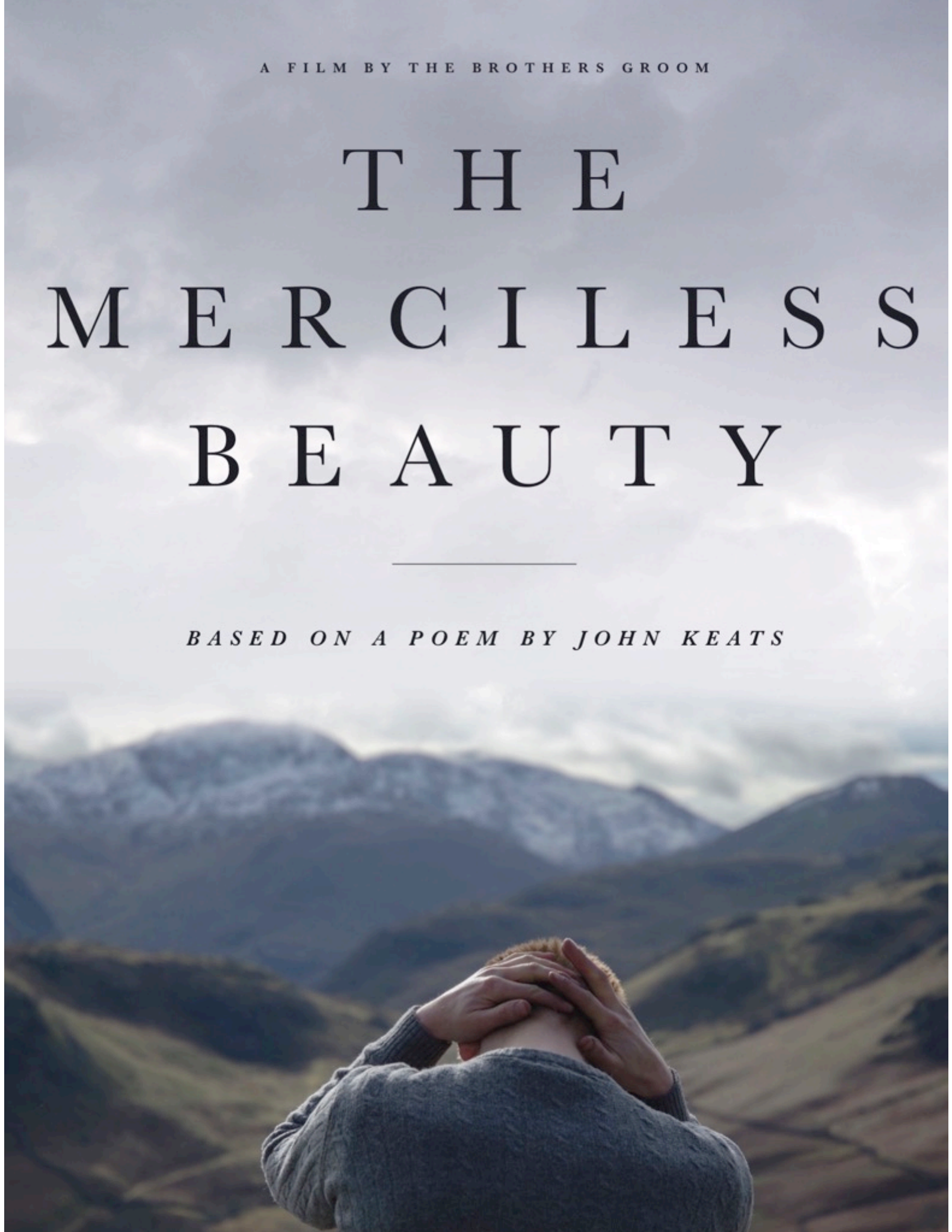


A FILM BY THE BROTHERS GROOM

THE
MERCILESS
BEAUTY

BASED ON A POEM BY JOHN KEATS



Johnny is a farmhand in the splendour of the English Lake District: he leads a life of introspection, until the strange appearance of a mysterious beautiful woman. Unsure if she's a figment of his imagination or an actual physical being, Johnny succumbs to obsession.



Short Narrative | 14 minutes | U.K.

Michael Groom | Director/Producer | +44 7773 528698 | groommichalej@hotmail.com

David Groom | Producer | +1 347 2854966/+44 7734864615 | david_groom@outlook.com

IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5928758/>

Facebook: [@themercilessbeauty](https://www.facebook.com/themercilessbeauty)

Synopsis

Johnny Longthwaite is an introspective farmhand, who works largely in solace amongst the beautiful mountains and meres of the Lake District, in northwest England.

It's a place steeped in tradition, full of legend and myth, and a valid contender for the lost land of Camelot. Johnny immerses himself in nature, but longs for some sort of kinship.

One morning on the point overlooking a lake, Johnny is alone and palely loitering. A mysterious woman in white appears. As Johnny goes about his work on the farm, he twice more encounters her, but each time she disappears.

He's berated by the farmer (who speaks in a broad Cumbrian dialect), and wonders why the farmer did not also see the beautiful lass.

Another brief encounter happens in the mundane world of Johnny's local pub, but the next sighting is considerably fruitful. This time The Beauty does not disappear, but leads Johnny through some timeless vistas to a strange hilltop where they share their first kiss in the snow.

Johnny then finds himself in The Beauty's 'elfin grot', a green bower of joy and happiness, where they make love, before she lulls him to sleep.

His sleep is fitful, and he awakens on the cold hillside, alone. Time passes, and he sees her no more, but he becomes increasingly obsessed and desirous of her.

She returns one day, when he's at his lowest ebb. She recognises his obsession where she hoped truly for love. She lures him to a cavernous cave. Johnny Longthwaite disappears. Did he become doomed by his own invention, perhaps falling in the depths of the cave; or was she indeed an actual being from another realm, and there she took him, away from this earthly plane?

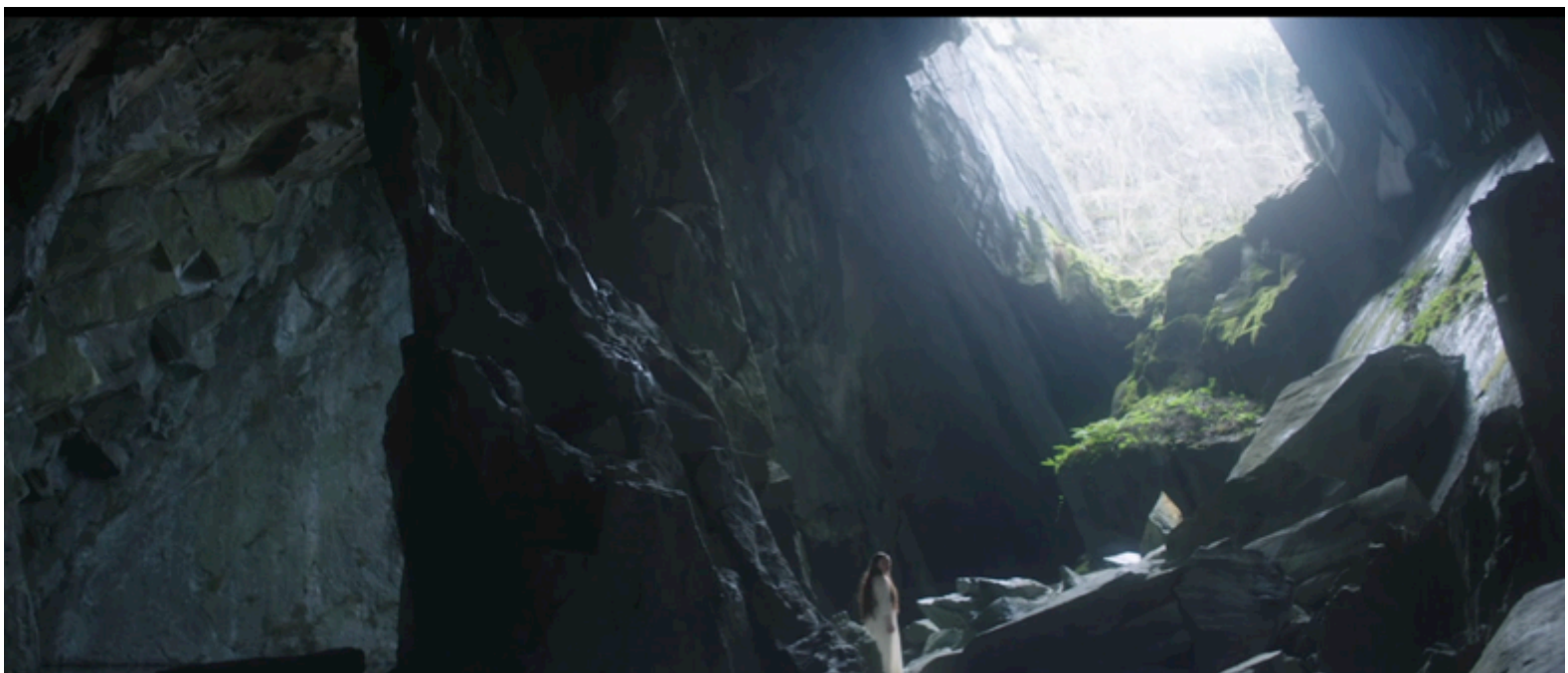
The Merciless Beauty is a loose modern-day adaptation of John Keats' poem *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. In the original, an errant knight encounters a lady in the meads, 'full beautiful – a faery's child', who declares her love for him. They make love and the knight dreams: a nightmarish vision of dead kings, princes and warriors, who cry: 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci hath thee in thrall!' It's a warning; the knight is doomed by this lady without mercy.

Director Biography Michael Groom

Michael Groom grew up on the fringes of the Lake District in north west England. He has worked in the film industry since leaving York University in 2003. He cut his teeth working with director Michael Winterbottom and went on to work on many British and American films that were shot in the UK, in a variety of roles covering pre-production, production, post-production, and delivery. Most lately he assisted director David Michôd, on Netflix and Plan B's War Machine and The King.

In December 2009 his debut feature film as a writer - 'Dogging: a Love Story' - was made and released by Vertigo Films. Directed by Simon Ellis, it screened at festivals including Dublin and Rotterdam, where it was nominated for the Golden Tiger award.

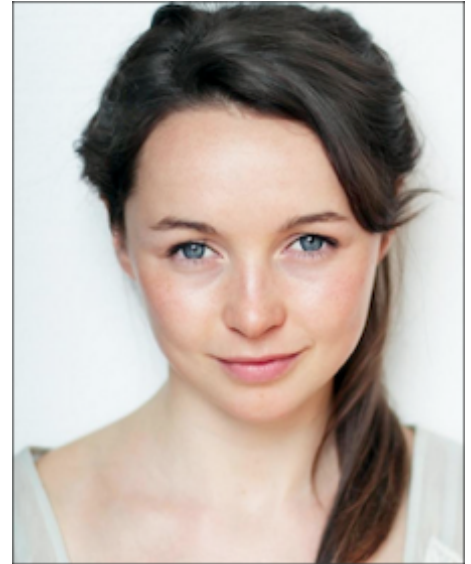
Since then, Michael has had other scripts in development and has made short films, The Merciless Beauty being his



Cast

Daisy Hughes played the role of the Beauty. She played series regular Cynthia Horrocks in Granada's *The Worst Witch* before attending the prestigious London acting school RADA and graduating in 2012.

Daisy has since worked extensively in London's West End, at The Southwark Playhouse, Theatre 503, Soho Theatre, and Shakespeare's Globe where she played Phyllida in *Gallathea* and Marie in *Eternal Love*. She recently performed in *Doctor Scroggy's War* at Shakespeare's Globe. Film credits include playing Iona in *Kids In Love* and Maddie in *The Price of Death*.



Richard Riddell also graduated from RADA (2006) and played the role of Johnny, the farm-hand who falls under the Beauty's spell.

Recent film work includes *Star Wars Episode VII* directed by JJ Abrams, *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* (Terry Gilliam), *Robin Hood* (Ridley Scott), *Legend* (Brian Helgeland) and *Blitz* (Elliot Lester).

He has featured in TV productions such as *Penny Dreadful*, *Misfits*, *Merlin*, *Waking the Dead*, and most recently *Bodyguard* and *The Terror*, as well as some comedies for American companies such as NBC and Comedy Central.

Samuel Edward Cook is another RADA graduate (2011) who's worked extensively on stage and has featured in many theatre productions, various short films, and TV dramas such as *Land Girls*, *Peaky Blinders* and *Brief Encounters*. He played the role of raconteur.



James Speakman is a Lakeland-based, trained actor, who's worked extensively on stage and has featured in various short films, TV adverts, TV soap *Emmerdale*, and in many theatre productions. He played the farmer, Johnny's employer.

Producer Biography | David Groom

David grew up just outside the Lake District in northwest England. Upon graduating from University College London he entered the film industry working for Revolution Films. He has since worked on many productions in a number of roles, learning from top directors and producers from the British and American industries. The Merciless Beauty was David's producing debut, and he has a number of other projects currently in development.



Crew

Director | Michael Groom

Writer | Michael Groom

Producer | David Groom

Cinematographer | Alex Stone

Editing | Bruce Billings

Toby Watts

Music | John Dorr

Hair & Makeup | Chiara Ugolini

Costume Design | Sheara Abrahams

Sound Recording | Andrew Layfield

Sound Design | Sam Petty

Art Direction | Teddy Jackson





Awards & Screenings

SELECTION
LEIDS INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL 2016

COURT MÉTRAGE
short film corner
FESTIVAL DE CANNES 2017

A FILM BY THE BROTHERS GROOM

RUNNER UP
BEST SHORT
Cape Fear
Independent
Film Festival
2018

RUNNER UP
BEST FOREIGN FILM
THE MOUNTAIN
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
2018

THE MERCILESS BEAUTY

BASED ON A POEM BY JOHN KEATS

WINNER
Best Horror/Thriller Short
Reno School of Film Festival
2017

OFFICIAL SELECTION
ST. LOUIS
SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
2018

OFFICIAL SELECTION
RIFF
2018

OFFICIAL SELECTION
DEBBY FILM
FESTIVAL
2018

OFFICIAL SELECTION
SPEECHLESS
FILM FESTIVAL
2018

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Kewick
Film Festival
2018

OFFICIAL SELECTION
BEER TOWN
FILM FESTIVAL
WITH DCU
2018

OFFICIAL SELECTION
SAPPORO
SHORT FILM
FILM MARKET 2017

OFFICIAL SELECTION
TOU-COURT
FILM MARKET 2017

OFFICIAL SELECTION
CLERMONT
FERRAND
2017