

Songbird - A terrifying odyssey into Covid-23, a hypothetical look into our future

By  Daniel Derksen

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Songbird, the first feature film to be made during Covid-19 in Los Angeles, and about the pandemic itself, is a terrifying, hypothetical look into our future, depicting increasing isolation, militarised enforcement, fear and loss. It also champions values like love, courage, bravery and compassion. Its ultimate message is one of human redemption and hope.

The film releases on 19 February 2021 in South Africa, with sneak previews on 13 and 14 February.



Set in Los Angeles, four years in the future, the Covid virus has mutated, culminating in a more infectious and deadlier strain: Covid-23. Lockdowns are now mandatory, curfews, food shortages and broken supply chains are a fact of life.

“It’s what we think would happen if the lockdown we experienced continued for another few years,” says co-writer/director Adam Mason.

But at the film’s heart, Mason continues, “*Songbird* is a love story about two people who can’t be together – star-crossed lovers who must figure a way out of their dire circumstances to be together.”



In *Songbird*, the Covid-23 virus has mutated and the world is in its fourth year of lockdown. Infected Americans are ripped from their homes and forced into quarantine camps known as Q-Zones, from which there is no escape, as a few brave souls fight back against the forces of oppression. Amid this dystopian landscape, a fearless courier, Nico (KJ Apa), who is immune to the deadly pathogen, finds hope and love with Sara (Sofia Carson), though her lockdown prohibits them from physical contact. When Sara is believed to have become infected, Nico races desperately across the barren streets of Los Angeles in search of the only thing that can save her from imprisonment or worse.

Mason was in pre-production on another movie when it became clear that the nation - and arguably the world - had shut down and closed everything due to the uncontrolled spread of Covid-19.

But another unique opportunity came the next morning when Mason's writing partner, Simon Boyes, called him with an idea "of making a movie with our friends on cell phones and laptops," says the filmmaker. "So we wrote a 10-page outline that day, which included a 'call to arms' about how we could lead the way forward during the lockdown and create something really exciting."

Mason sent his call to arms to producer Adam Goodman, who wanted to make the film on a scale bigger than Mason and Boyes had anticipated.

“And the next thing I know,” Mason recounts, “Michael Bay was involved.”

A master of such epic blockbusters as *Armageddon*, *Pearl Harbor* and the *Transformers* franchise, Bay has also produced and shepherded more modest anthologies including *A Quiet Place*, *The Purge* and *Ouija*.

Throughout his celebrated career, Bay has routinely hired, promoted and encouraged young directors just starting in the film industry.

Mason concludes: “We took what was going on today and then we twisted it. It’s a time capsule of the world we’re living in right now. But most of all, we want it to be an entertaining, action-packed love story that takes audiences on a ride.”

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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