

# A HORSE NAMED WINX

Directed and Produced by

**JANINE HOSKING**

Written and Narrated by

**ANDREW RULE**

**PRODUCTION**

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**PUBLICITY ENQUIRIES**

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Year of Production: 2024

Running Time: 120 minutes



## LOGLINE

“A Horse Named Winx” goes behind the sports headlines and victories to reveal the unforgettable spirit of champion who away from the racetrack faced her biggest battle and once again refused to be beaten.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

“A Horse named Winx” tells the story of one of our greatest athletes.

At the height of her fame, *Winx* became known as the “people’s horse” – an Australian icon who transcended her sport - joining the realms of fellow legends like Cathy Freeman and Sir Donald Bradman.

Although the world’s greatest racehorse retired in 2019, she’s still breaking records. *Winx*’s only foal sold this year at auction for a world record AUD \$10 million dollars. During her reign, huge crowds descended on racetracks across Australia to witness the *Phar Lap* of the modern era pull off the impossible - 33 straight wins - a feat unlikely to ever be repeated. *Winx*’s final race was watched by a world television audience in its millions and as the legendary sports commentator, Bruce McAvaney, succinctly noted, “*We’ve never had a horse mean so much to so many people.*”

From the wilful foal who was hard to catch, to a plain leggy teenager who kept to herself and turned her back on affection, *Winx* became a front-page phenomenon and in the process swept her trainer Chris Waller and jockey Hugh Bowman on to the world stage and in the middle of a “horse racing fairytale” that tested them to the limit.

“*I only now feel like I am ready to tell the story of what we went through,*” says Chris Waller, the perfectionist mastermind and architect behind *Winx*’s explosive world record winning sequence.

“A Horse Named Winx” goes behind the sports headlines and victories to reveal the unforgettable spirit of champion who away from the racetrack faced her biggest battle and once again refused to be beaten.

## PRODUCER / DIRECTOR STATEMENT – JANINE HOSKING

The question I am most often asked about the Winx documentary is why after a long career of making films about humans I chose to make a film about a racehorse.

I think it goes back to childhood memories of horses. Black Beauty, My Friend Flicka, National Velvet, Phar Lap, Mr Ed—any film, book or TV show with a horse in it would immediately grab my attention.

I have always loved horses, and when I was a kid my parents gave into my pleas to buy me a pony. Whilst my horse riding days are well and truly over, when I started hearing about a horse named Winx I happily joined her fan club—and I wasn't the only one.

“All nationalities, ages and religions, you name it, they came to watch racing. They came to watch Winx,” observed her trainer Chris Waller after that epic final race—a race that signified a fairytale ending and a world record 33 straight wins.

To decide when to make a film and with whom sometimes comes down to timing. When I first approached Winx's owners and Chris Waller about the idea of making a film about her, it was nearly two years after her last race.

Now that the pressure of Winx's amazing sporting achievement had passed, and the sheer exhaustion of that final campaign under the relentless glare of the media was over, everyone seemed ready and open to the idea of reflecting on the Winx juggernaut.

The first challenge was putting together the right team to collaborate with me to tell Winx's story. All roads led to legendary storyteller Andrew Rule who also co-authored Winx's best selling biography. Whilst I wanted to take the documentary in a different direction to Andrew's book I was keen to work with Andrew and to be able to utilise his knowledge of racing as well as his warm and often humorous storytelling style.

Winx's monumental 33 straight wins was a challenge to bring to the screen. How to tell the story of the most important races in a way that hadn't been told before? That task came down to Post producer Carolyn Kung and editor Paul Chidrawi who trawled through hundreds of hours of archive footage, to sculpt the story of each race.

From a filmmaking perspective I wanted the film's three main characters to be Chris Waller, jockey Hugh Bowman and of course our leading lady Winx.

I will always be grateful to both Chris and Hugh for embracing the interview process and being prepared to go back and deeply reflect on the four-year period when Winx dominated their lives.

Hugh Bowman's memory of every race, every move and every maneuver was impressive.

As a young child, Hugh had dreamt of being part of high pressure sporting moment and with Winx he certainly experienced that. Ultimately –he was one who had to guide her to victory—one mistake by Hugh and the winning streak was over.

Our interview with Chris Waller was conducted in one sitting that went for nearly six hours. This was Chris' choice to complete the interview in one session and looking back I think he might have found the process therapeutic in many ways. The interview, conducted by sports journalist Cameron Williams, was absolutely riveting.

Above all else it was authentic and not "spin". Chris was prepared to take us through the eye of the storm that he weathered to reach the highest levels of racing and to bring Winx home safe and with an unblemished record every time.

It was important to Chris that the film be an accurate account of what took place away from the headlines. He paid us as filmmakers the highest honor he could that day by entrusting us with not only Winx's story but also his own.

After these interviews were completed, the pressure mounted to execute a film worthy of its participants.

The challenge in the edit was also coming to the realization that Winx is not just about three characters –in reality it took a team to make Winx a champion and I wanted to be respectful of that fact and to make sure that the close relationships she had with her strappers and track riders were also in the film as well as those she had crossed paths with on her journey to stardom.

Most sports film tend to end on a "high", the adulation of the crowd—the victory of the final race. But the real life story of Winx hasn't always been a fairytale.

As we immersed our selves in Winx's world post retirement, the "spirit of a champion" emerged in her story in a way I didn't expect and a deeper understanding of the complexities of the Winx story led me down a path I hadn't fully appreciated. As a result, I am truly in awe of the vets and carers who saved the life of our courageous Winx.

Of course central to the film is Winx and although she obviously can't give interviews we have strived to bring her personality to the fore of the story telling.

The man who broke her in, Tim Boland, describes the young Winx as "Studious—she is the sort of girl who wouldn't go to parties but instead do her homework and not be bothered about polishing her nails or hanging out with boys".

Track rider Ben Cadden described the then new recruit to Waller stables "as pretty plain and boring".

Later, he would describe her as "a freak".

“I remember saying to Chris—this horse—she’s our Phar Lap moment.”

As the wins reached double figures, Winx’s rivals likened her “to a trained sniper,” knocking them off one by one.

Perhaps her strapper Candice Persijn sums it up the best: “She just loved her job.”

Winx famously doesn’t like affection (particularly from strangers) and during the times we filmed with her at her retirement “hideaway”, Coolmore Stud, Winx pretty much ignored my attempts to befriend her.

She was impatient and dismissive around our cameras and I was becoming increasingly concerned that we hadn’t had much luck in portraying her “greatness” off the track.

But on our final filming day, I thought I would try one last time to give her a pat. As I was used to rejection, it came as a complete shock that this time she didn’t pull her head away.

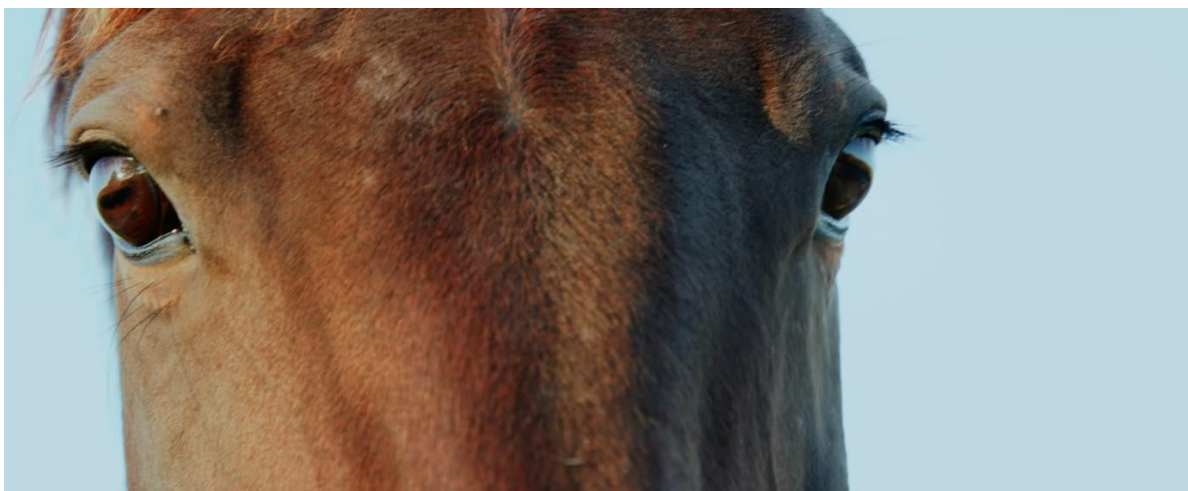
I recall saying something to her along the lines of: “I hope you’re happy we’re making a movie about you—all we need is one great ‘I am the Queen’ shot”.

Later, our cinematographer quietly filmed Winx in close-up. When I look back at this footage it stills gives me chills.

There she is staring down the lens like a magnificent, silent screen siren.

The intelligence in her eyes, her knowing gaze—her sense of self—all captured in a single look.

Winx—I am humbled and honored to tell your story.



## BIOS

### CHRIS WALLER - WINX TRAINER



Picture Lisa Grimm

New Zealander Chris Waller made Australian racing history quickly, and comprehensively. Ten years after settling in Australia he had seven times become champion trainer in Sydney. Twice in that period he established new records for the most city wins by a trainer in a season. Around Australia in that decade he trained the winners of 75 Group 1 races – most famously *Winx*, triple Cox Plate winner, the greatest racehorse of her generation.

Born in 1974, Waller grew up in rural Foxton on New Zealand's North Island. In his twenties he took over the stables of trainer Paddy Busuttin and took a team of just four horses to race in Australia in 2000. He moved permanently to Sydney in 2007, expanding his Rosehill stables.

His big break came in 2008 when Bob Ingham, following the sale of his Woodlands stud, bought a group of high-priced yearlings at the Sydney Easter yearling sales and entrusted their training to Waller. A few weeks later Waller achieved his first Group 1 when Triple Honour won the Doncaster Handicap at Randwick. The next season saw his second Group 1 with *Danelagh* in the All-Aged Stakes. In season 2010-11 he became Sydney's premier trainer for the first time.

Waller's association with Ingham underpinned this expansion of his training operation, but he also trained for other clients. He established additional stables at Warwick Farm and, interstate, at Flemington and the Gold Coast.

His total of 167.5 winners in 2012-13 broke the record of 156 held jointly by Hall of Fame trainers Tommy Smith and Gai Waterhouse. In 2014 he became the first person in Australian racing history to train the winners of \$20 million in prize money in a single season. In 2016 Waller was inducted into New Zealand's Racing Hall of Fame.

*"It shows you can do it; it doesn't matter what your bank balance is or where you've come from or what your experience is, anybody can do anything in life,"* (Chris Waller)

## HUGH BOWMAN - WINX JOCKEY



Picture Bronwen Healy

Hugh Bowman had established himself as a champion jockey, years before becoming inextricably linked in the public mind with *Winx*. Hugh Bowman and *Winx* became one of the greatest partnerships in Australian racing. Named after his great uncle who was killed on active service in the Second World War, James Hugh Bowman was born in 1980 and grew up on the family farm at Dunedoo, east of Dubbo, New South Wales. As a small boy he rode in country shows and was noted for his natural horsemanship. After secondary schooling in Sydney, he began his racing apprenticeship with Bill and Leanne Aspros in Bathurst, winning the Wellington Picnic Cup in 1996. By season 1999/2000 he was the NSW premier country apprentice.

Hugh Bowman moved to Sydney in 2002, soon making his way into the top rank of riders. His first Group 1 win was on *Defier* in the 2004 Doomben Cup. In 2007 he rode in England, successfully captaining 'The Rest of the World' team in the unique series of races at Ascot constituting the Shergar Cup. He won his first Sydney Jockeys' Premiership in 2008/09 and took the VRC Oaks on *Samantha Miss*. Bowman rode frequently for Chris Waller, trainer of *Winx*, and first rode the mare in September 2014 to win the Group 2 Furious Stakes at Randwick, her third win from three starts. In 2015 the pair reunited to win the Queensland Oaks (her sixth win from 12 starts). Bowman again rode *Winx* in her eighth win, the 2015 Epsom Handicap and remained her jockey for the rest of her career.

*Winx* retired in April 2019 with 37 career wins, the last 33 in succession. Hugh Bowman rode her for 32 of those wins. With the increasing weight of public expectation, he rode her in all her 25 Group 1 wins. No horse before had ever won four Cox Plates. Bowman rode her in each of these, in three Queen Elizabeth Stakes, and the Doncaster Mile.

## JANINE HOSKING – DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER



Janine Hosking is an award-winning documentary director and producer.

Janine's career highlights include producing and directing the feature documentaries 'My Khmer Heart' and 'Ganja Queen' for HBO and having 'Mademoiselle and the Doctor' screen to critical acclaim at both Australian and international film festivals.

Janine has also produced and directed the feature documentaries, '35 Letters' (Winner Best Documentary Sydney Film Festival 2014) and AACTA nominated 'The Eulogy' (2018), which told the story of classical pianist Geoffrey Tozer and featured former Prime Minister Paul Keating. Her 2022 film "Knowing the Score" about Australian conductor Simone Young was executive produced by Cate Blanchett and nominated for a prestigious Rose d'Or Award. She recently produced *How to Poison A Planet*, featuring Mark Ruffalo, for STAN.

## ANDREW RULE – WRITER AND NARRATOR



Andrew Rule has been telling true stories for more than 45 years. He started as a reporter for a Victorian country newspaper in the 1970s and went on to work for some of Australia's biggest publications: *The Age*, the *Melbourne Herald*, the *Herald Sun* and the Sydney-based national magazine, *Good Weekend*. He is known for writing about crime and its detection but has also covered global events from the Olympics to the Christchurch earthquake, a Papua New Guinea military coup, the Bali nightclub bombing and Japan's catastrophic tsunami. He has written and co-written many books ranging across subjects from crime to horse racing, including *Winx's* biography.



## RACHAEL BLAKE - FAIRYTALE NARRATOR



Rachael Blake is one of Australia's leading voice-over talents. Rachael enjoys a tremendous career, both on stage and on screen. Most recently seen on TV in **SIGNIFICANT OTHERS** and **CLEVERMAN** for the ABC and **WOLF LIKE ME** and **EDEN** for Stan. Rachael has also won both an AFI and Silver Logie for her television work and has appeared in some of Australia's most popular television series. Rachael was awarded the Centenary Medal for her services to the Australian Film Industry in 2001.

## CAMERON WILLIAMS - INTERVIEWER



Cameron Williams' career has been a sports lover's dream. As host of numerous Olympic Games, FIFA World Cups, State of Origin, NRL Grand Finals, Wimbledon etc., he's been there to witness the best of world sport, and fortunate to interview a whole spectrum of stars from Muhammad Ali to Michael Jordan. But it's his passion for horse racing that has never run dry. Especially for *Winx*, who he describes as the "Phar Lap of our time". Cameron who conducted several of the key *Winx* master interviews, was also instrumental in bringing this very special project together.

## KEVIN SCOTT - DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



Kevin is an award-winning cinematographer who has been working in the film industry for over 30 years. After film school training in the UK, he worked his way through the ranks of the industry in London, as a Clapper Loader, Focus Puller then Camera Operator & Director of Photography. Kevin has worked on over 40 Feature Films and 100's of commercials & documentaries all over the world.

"As a Director of Photography, I believe it is my job to capture the director's idea, truthfully and visually, creating both beautiful and realistic images. I have been based in Sydney, Australia for 20 years travelling worldwide to shoot TVC's, Drama and Documentary. I've won awards including Gold from the Australian Cinematographers Society, B.A.F.T.A. & numerous film festivals in the U.S. Europe & Australia.

## CAROLYN KUNG - POST PRODUCER



Carolyn has had an extensive career in television as a producer, director and writer. She has worked across a variety of factual programming from news and current affairs, through to lifestyle, documentary, doco-drama, entertainment and reality television. She directs and produces on the historical SBS series *Who Do You Think You Are?* and specialises in post-production, supervising large teams of editors and post producers on reality series *The Block*, for the Nine Network. *Winx* is Carolyn's first foray into feature documentary

## PAUL CHIDRAWI - EDITOR



Paul Chidrawi has 14 years' experience editing unscripted film and television. With credits across a range of productions including *Who Do You Think You Are? The Recording Studio*, *Top Gear Australia* and *The Block*, his time in the edit suite bringing the excitement and drama of *Winx's* story to the big screen has been a career highlight.

## STEPHEN HOPES - SOUND, ADDITIONAL CAMERA AND POST SUPERVISOR



After a career in the music business as a session musician Steve crossed over to his earlier passion of photography and turned his recording studio skills to location sound recording working on many and varied documentary projects from "Ganja Queen" (HBO) to more recently "Midnight Oil: The Hardest Line" "How To Poison A Planet" and "A Horse Named Winx" . As a director of iKandy Films with Janine Hosking, Steve oversees all the post production of iKandy's documentaries as well as working as an additional cinematographer and licensed drone operator.

## BEK WARD - PRODUCER ATTACHMENT



**Bek Ward is an emerging Film & TV Producer from Perth, Western Australia. She is particularly interested in working with real stories that are wholesome, inspirational, comedic and unapologetically themselves.**

**Bek has produced mostly Documentary films, which have been seen around the globe at leading festivals such as the Sydney Film Festival and Doc NYC. Her short Documentaries DEAFYING GRAVITY and A STYLE FOR EVERY STORY have also been broadcast on the ABC and SBS.**

**Bek has also coordinated across a range of TV projects with Warner Bros, BBC and the ABC.**

**Picture Bronwen Healy**



## WINX FACTS



### Where Was Winx Born?

She foaled on the 14th September 2011 at Coolmore Stud, Jerry's Plains in the Hunter Region of New South Wales.

### Who Bred Winx?

Winx was bred by Fairway Thoroughbreds and then sold as a yearling for \$230,000.

### Who Is The Sire (Father) Of Winx?

The Sire of Winx is Irish bred stallion Street Cry (IRE). His most important race wins include the 2022 Dubai World Cup. Street Cry also sired the brilliant US mare Zenyatta winner of 19 of her 20 starts.

### Who Is The Dam (Mother) Of Winx?

The mother of Winx is Vegas Showgirl (NZ) who was sired by Al Akbar. She won seven races from 35 race starts and was trained by Graeme Rogerson in New Zealand.

### Who Owns Winx?

Winx is owned in partnership by Magic Bloodstock (Manager: Peter Tighe), Debbie Kepitis and Richard Treweek

### Who Trains Winx?

Winx is trained by multiple Premiership-winning Sydney trainer Chris Waller.

### Who Rides Winx?

Winx has had six riders during her career with Hugh Bowman now famously recognised as her "regular" jockey. Jason Collet, Tommy Berry, James McDonald and Larry Cassidy have each won on her.

### What Is The Career Record For Winx?

Winx is famous for her winning streak of 33 straight wins. A modern day racing record. Winx has raced 43 times for 37 wins and 3 second placings. 25 Group One wins (World Record).

### How Much Prizemoney Has Winx Won?

Winx has earned \$26,451,175 in prize money.

### What Distances Has Winx Won Over?

Winx has won over 1100m, 1200m, 1300m, 1400m, 1500m, 1600m, 2000m, 2040m and 2200m

### What Major Races Has Winx Won?

Winx is the only horse in history to win 4 WS Cox Plates – Kingston Town won 3, she is also the third mare in history to win two WS Cox Plates – Sunline and Tranquil Star the others. However Sunline (1999/2000) and Winx are the only two to win the Cox Plate back to back. Tranquil Star won the race in 1942 and 1944. Amongst her victories, Winx has also won the Queen Elizabeth Stakes x 2, Epsom Handicap, Doncaster Mile, Chipping Norton Stakes x4, George Ryder Stakes x4, George Main Stakes x3 and Turnbull Stakes x2.

### Is Winx The All-Time Highest Prizemoney Earner In Australia?

The answer is... Yes! Winx currently sits on top of the list of prizemoney earners in Australian thoroughbred racing history with total earnings of \$26,451,175 not too far behind her is triple Melbourne Cup winning mare Makybe Diva with \$14,527,110 and then the great mare Sunline with \$11,351,667.

### What Racetrack Records Has Winx Equalled or Broken?

2019 – Apollo Stakes – Track Record 1:20.88s  
2017 – Cox Plate – Track Record 2:02.94s  
2015 – Cox Plate – Track Record 2:02.98s

### What Is Winx's Unbeaten Winning Streak?

Winx has won 33 races in succession, surpassing the undefeated champion Black Caviar (25).

### How Does Winx Rate On The Global Thoroughbred Racing Stage?

In 2018 on the Longines World's Best Racehorse Rankings – WINX equalled 1st place with Cracksman (UK).

### How has Winx been honored?

Australia post issued a Winx stamp on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2018. The Stamp marked her 26<sup>th</sup> consecutive race win. Fans who enjoyed horticultural are able to buy the Winx Rose. The variety is a vigorous, bushy variety with small clusters of creamy white full flowers, named after Winx. Winx has been immortalised with statues at Moonee Valley, Melbourne and Royal Randwick and Rose Hill racecourses in Sydney. The World class Winx Stand at Royal Randwick was named in the great mare's honor.



### How much was Winx's foal sold for in 2024?

Winx's foal was sold for a world record \$10 million at the Inglis Easter Yearling Sale and was bought by Winx's part owner Debbie Kepitis, Woppitt Bloodstock.



Winx foal in the sales ring –Picture Sharon Chapman

# WINX CREDITS

## Starring

WINX

VEGAS SHOWGIRL

STREET CRY

THE CLEANER

FIRST SEAL

HIGHLAND REEL

HARTNELL

FOXPLAY

RED EXCITEMENT

HUMIDOR

HAPPY CLAPPER

## Co-Starring

(In order of appearance)

PADDY SHEEHAN

ANDREW RULE

GUY MULCASTER

RICHARD TREWEEKE

TIM BOLAND

BEN CADDEN

RICK TREWEEKE

JULIE TREWEEKE

LARRY CASSIDY

STEPH WALLER

CANDICE PERSIJN

MARCUS HERITAGE

OLLY KOOLMAN

RIAAAN KOOLMAN

DR JONATHAN LUMSDEN

JASON COLLETT

KERRIN MCEVOY

CHRISTINE BOWMAN

DARREN FLINDELL

PADRAIG KELLY

DR JESSICA PARTLOW

CHRIS WALLER

PETER O'BRIEN

PETER AND PATTY TIGHE

AMIR ATTAOLLAHI

ELIZABETH TREWEEKE

BEN STONER

HUGH BOWMAN

ALAN THOMAS

UMUT ODEMISINGLU

JAMES MCDONALD

ANDREW CLARKE

KAREN KOOLMAN

KIAN KOOLMAN

JOSH PARR

TOMMY BERRY

BLAKE SHINN

JASON BRETTL

TOM MAGNIER

DR NIAMH COLLINS

DR TROY BUTT

DR LUCY CUDMORE



Director of Photography KEVIN SCOTT

Sound Recordist STEPHEN HOPES

Field Director CAROLYN KUNG

Research BEK WARD  
JOSEPH HOSKING  
JANINE HOSKING  
JANINE HOSKING

Consultants to the Producer ANDREW RULE  
CAMERON WILLIAMS

Development Research KATRINA MCGOWAN  
Senior Production Assistant ROBIN EASTWOOD

Producer Attachment BEK WARD

Additional Camera STEPHEN HOPES  
STUART WILSON  
BENJAMIN FOLEY  
JESSE PHILLIPS  
ANNA MCGIRR

Additional Sound CLIFFORD CONAN MCBRIDE

Additional Editing JANINE HOSKING

Aerial Cinematography STEPHEN HOPES  
KEVIN SCOTT

Archive Producer NAOMI HALL  
RESEARCH ENGINE

Graphics PICTUREDRIFT  
BRENDAN COOK

Offline Post Facility IKANDY FILMS

Post Supervisor STEPHEN HOPES

Fairy Tale Narrator RACHAEL BLAKE

Finishing Post Facility ZIGZAG POST

Colourist ANGELA CERASI

Senior Online Artist ROB SARROFF

Music Supervisor KIM GREEN

Sound Post MASSIVEMUSIC SYDNEY

Composer HAYDN WALKER

Supervising Sound Editor & Re-  
recording Mixer ABBY SIE

Sound Editor & Re-  
Recording Mixer MYLES LOWE

Dialogue Editor SAUL GILLINGHAM

Sound Editors DAMIAN PRESS  
MADELYN TAIT  
DAMIAN WADDELL

Sound Studio Producer LUCI ROBBIE

**OPENING TITLES**

**"WINX'S THEME"**

Haydn Walker, MassiveMusic

**"AMERGIN'S INVOCATION"**

Performed by Lisa Gerrard

& Patrick Cassidy

Written by Lisa Gerrard & Patrick Cassidy

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Filmorchester Babelsberg

Written by Dirk Maassen

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SOPHIE BAKER, JASON BRETTLÉ  
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Photography

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Poster Art      CARNIVAL STUDIOS  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR DEMI HOPKINS  
Concept inspiration      LORNA HOSKING

Special Thanks

Chris Waller Racing

CHRIS WALLER, STEPH WALLER

SOPHIE BAKER

HUGH AND CHRISTINE BOWMAN

PETER AND PATTY TIGHE

DEBBIE AND PAUL KEPITIS

ELIZABETH AND RICK TREWEEKE

Coolmore Australia

Home of Winx

TOM MAGNIER, PADDY SHEEHAN, JOHN KENNEDY, SAMANTHA HILL, TOM MOORE, JODIE WALSH

Racing Victoria

STEPHEN DOLE, CARLY DIXON

Racing NSW

GRAEME HINTON, TOM MOXON

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The filmmakers pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which this documentary was produced and filmed.

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