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**FOXTEL SIGNS MAJOR PRODUCTION DEAL
WITH TIM MINCHIN
ANNOUNCES LANDMARK CO-PRODUCTION WITH SKY U.K.
UPRIGHT**

TIM MINCHIN TO STAR

Foxtel, Sky UK, Screen Australia and Lingo Pictures today announced production of a landmark new series UPRIGHT, starring musician, comedian, actor and writer Tim Minchin.

The stellar team behind UPRIGHT includes the creator Chris Taylor, best known as a member of *The Chaser* team. Taylor and Minchin are writing the eight-part series alongside award-winning writer-actors Kate Mulvany (*Fighting Season*, *Jasper Jones* stage play) and Leon Ford (*Offspring*, *No Activity*). The Director is Matthew Saville (*Please Like Me*). Minchin will also write the music and is Executive Producer with Penny Win and Helen Bowden. Producers are Lingo Pictures' Jason Stephens, Chris Taylor and Melissa Kelly (*Hounds of Love*).

The series will be made in association with the South Australian Film Corporation. Screenwest and Create NSW are also investors.

A sharp-tongued and touching drama, UPRIGHT is the story of two misfits, thrown together by chance in the middle of the Australian desert, who forge the unlikeliest of bonds in their quest to get a precious piano from one side of the country to the other.

Lucky Flynn (Minchin) hasn't spoken to his family in years. He's broke, distant and damaged. He's also a gifted pianist, whose talent for music is matched only by his talent for self-destruction. When he learns that his mother has only days left to live, Lucky sets off in a hire car to drive the 4000 kilometres from Sydney to Perth to say goodbye to her, taking with him his only cherished possession in the world – a battered and scarred upright piano. But what should have been a straightforward drive across the Nullarbor soon becomes a test of Lucky's emotional fitness, when he (quite literally) runs into Meg (Milly Alcock), a hilarious, tough-as-nails teenager, who we soon discover has plenty of scars and secrets of her own.

Production will begin in South Australia and Western Australia in October.

Foxtel's Head of Drama Penny Win said: "As part of Foxtel's commitment to telling great Australian stories, we are delighted to be able to bring this wonderful adventure to the screen. We look forward to working with Tim Minchin and Lingo Pictures, on what will be a wonderful showcase of Aussie talent."

Screen Australia's Head of Production Sally Caplan said: "Foxtel have proven their commitment to the production of premium Australian drama with *Wentworth*, *The Kettering Incident* and most recently the iconic *Picnic at Hanging Rock* which has had fantastic success locally and with international sales.

“UPRIGHT is a project that will also appeal in Australia and to the international market, with the hugely talented Tim Minchin on board to produce and star in the series. What attracted us to this series was the well-crafted young female protagonist, and work of the strong writing team including accomplished writer Kate Mulvany, and comedic writers Leon Ford and Chris Taylor. I have no doubt this moving and quirky comedy will resonate with audiences.”

S AFC Chief Executive Courtney Gibson said: “UPRIGHT brings together an extraordinary combination of creative talents to deliver what promises to be outstanding television. South Australia’s stunning locations will provide the perfect setting for this landmark production for Foxtel, which will be based at Adelaide Studios.”

Morwenna Gordon, Commissioning Editor Sky Comedy, said: “Sky Comedy is always striving to work with the best talent and on the most surprising, unique and beautifully crafted shows, so we’re delighted to be collaborating with the world class Tim Minchin on UPRIGHT. Alongside Milly Alcock (and a battered piano), we’re sure this is a road trip Sky customers will never forget.”

Tim Minchin said: “From the moment I heard about the idea for UPRIGHT, I knew it was the show I’d been waiting to make. I like stories that make me laugh and think and cry, I adore the landscapes of outback Australia, and I love music, and homecomings, and characters full of flaws. It’s awesome to be writing with this extraordinary team, and I’m looking forward to acting alongside Milly Alcock, who I think is a really special talent.”

Jason Stephens, Lingo Pictures, said: “There are not many shows I’ve enjoyed developing as much as UPRIGHT. It’s been a joy having Tim back home and working with our talented team of writers scripting this beautiful and funny show. Matt Saville’s direction always delivers something special so I can’t wait to start shooting and bringing this story to the Foxtel and Sky audiences.”

Lingo Pictures is currently producing *Lambs of God* for Foxtel, starring Ann Dowd (*The Handmaid’s Tale*), Essie Davis (*Miss Fisher’s Murder Mysteries*, *Game of Thrones*) Sam Reid (*Prime Suspect 1973*) and Jessica Barden (*The End of the F*****g World*).

Production credit: UPRIGHT is a Lingo Pictures production for Foxtel and Sky UK, with major production investment from Foxtel and Screen Australia in association with the South Australian Film Corporation. Financed with support from Create NSW and Screenwest. Rest of world sales are being handled by eOne.

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foxtel sky original productions



About Foxtel

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