A person is shown floating in a dark, dreamlike space filled with vibrant, colorful nebulae and star clusters. The person is positioned horizontally, with their arms and legs slightly outstretched. The background is a deep black, punctuated by swirling clouds of blue, purple, red, and green light, creating a surreal and ethereal atmosphere.

An Asian-American high schooler discovers that the lover in her dream exists in the real world, but she can't bring herself to find him because she's a closeted trans girl living as a boy in real life.

SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS

Sophie is a sixteen-year-old Asian-American girl.

One night in her dream, she meets **Ande**, a cute white boy who shares her love of classical music. They both think the other is the figment of their imagination, so they decide to write each other's name on the bulletin board to see who is real. The next day, "Hi Sophie" appears on the board.

But Sophie doesn't write back, because she's a closeted trans girl who's not ready to out herself.

SYNOPSIS

Story beat: **taste of love through another world**



Black Mirror: San Junipero (2016), in which two elderly women fall in love in a simulated reality world where they can be their younger selves.



Your Name (2016), in which the girl and the boy fall in love as they inexplicably switch bodies as they go to sleep.

In the real world, Sophie is **Song**, a mama's boy who just transferred to a new high school for its prestigious piano program. He hates his piano teacher for disallowing imaginative playing but yearns for friends who share his love for classical music.

As a boy, Song tries to blend in. He makes friends who pushes him out of his comfort zone, and joins their band in hope of getting close to a boy he thinks to be Ande. As a girl, Sophie recomposes classical music with Ande in the dreams. They make up stories for the music, imagining the coming-of-age that she never gets to live in real life.

Fed up with this double life, Sophie tries to meet Ande in the real world, but she chickens out at the last minute. Ande shows up, but he's not the boy we think he is. He is **Anna**, a closeted trans boy who is his arch nemesis in the piano studio.

SYNOPSIS

Story beat: **getting through the normal life while falling in love in the other world**



In *Love, Simon* (2018), Simon befriends another closeted gay guy through emails. He tries to live a normal life while wandering who this potential lover is.

Despite madly in love in the dreamworld as Sophie and Ande, Song and Anna are at odds in their pursuit of music. Anna sees Song as a sellout and Song sees Anna as a snob living in her white privilege.

The two overcome their differences. They become friends but stay short of coming out to each other. They learn to embrace music beyond genres but stay short of seeing their bodies beyond the assigned genders.

All it takes for them to fall in love is to disclose their trans identities, to believe that dreams can come true, but they can't. To them, dreams are just dreams.

Ande eventually has to move away, and they never meet again in dreams.

SYNOPSIS

Story beat: **we know they're in love but they don't!**



In *You've Got Mail* (1998), Tom Hanks falls in love with Meg Ryan over emails, but they are business enemies in real life.

Four years later. They bump into each other in NYC. When Song plays a composition Sophie once wrote for Ande, they finally realize they're the lovers in their dreams.

SYNOPSIS

Story beat: **realization**



In both *You've Got Mail* and *Your Name*, the realization that they're the person they've been love with all along is the last beat of the story. The happy ending, accompanied with the regrets of all the missed opportunities, delivers that unforgettable emotional punch.

reality

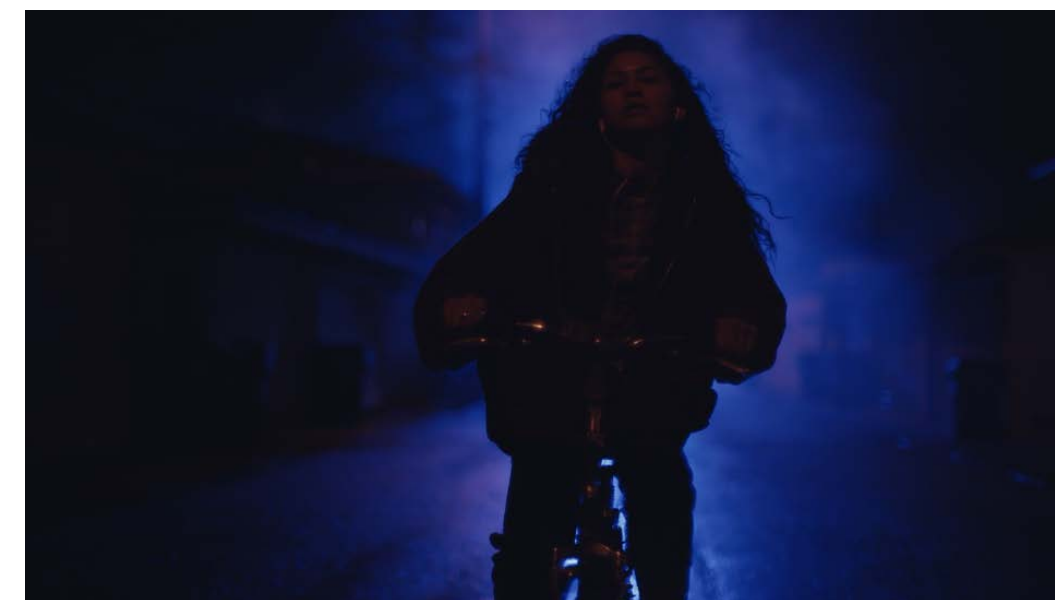


Me and Earl and the Dying Girl (2015)



Lost River (2014)

dream

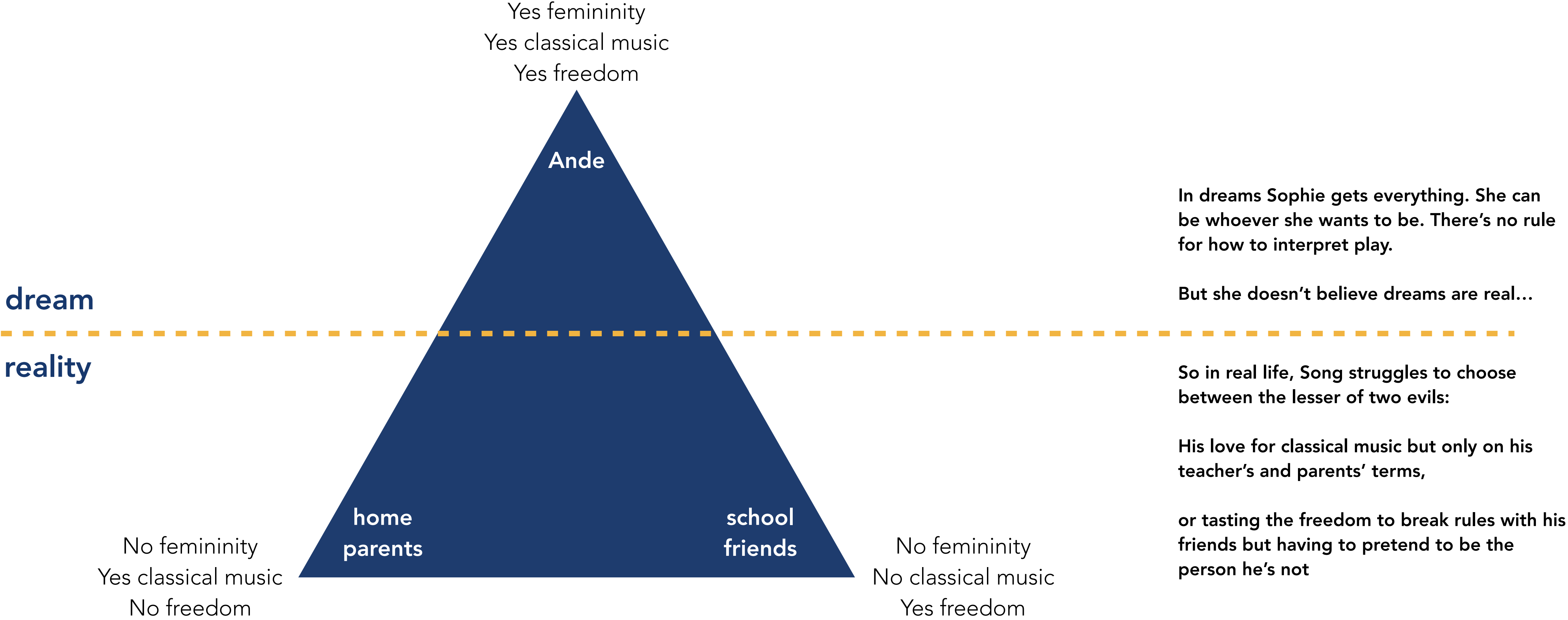


Euphoria (2019)

WORLD

The story is set in Cedarville, a fictional rusty town in Upstate New York. The difference between reality and dream is the color palette. In reality, the world has an earthy hue. In dreams, the world is hazy, lit by blue and purple lights.

CONFLICT TRIAD



Growing up in China, I always thought I was different. I started buying girl clothes behind my parents' back when I was in middle school. I wanted to be a girl, but I didn't think it was possible. It was always like a dream, possible to imagine, impossible to realize.

Coming to America, being trans became a legal possibility. But when I looked for films about trans people, they were often dramas with tragic endings. I didn't want to identify with the characters in those films because they didn't show me the possibility of happiness. I thought if I came out as a trans girl, no one would love me.

Being a girl remained a distant dream.

It took me 25 years to finally transition.

How badly do I wish that I was exposed to more diverse trans narratives. How badly do I wish that media didn't always portray trans life so tragically. How badly do I wish that someone showed me that dreams didn't have to stay dreams; they could be real.

ARTIST STATEMENT



I want to make this film because this is the film I wish I had seen when I grew up.

I want my characters to live the life I wished I lived in their dreams. There they get to bathe in gender euphoria and fall in love like no tomorrow. But they also have to face the obstacles I faced in their waking life. They have to perform their assigned genders and walk past each other every day, not knowing they're the lovers in their dreams.

If only they believe their true selves deserve love in the real world, if only they believe dreams can come true, they would have reached their happy ending on page one.

I want my audience to yearn for my characters. I want all the gender nonconforming kids and their parents to believe that they, too, need take that leap of faith and believe that dreams can come true.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Casting reference for Sophie



Hunter Schafer from Euphoria (2019)



Yen Sen from All I Want Is Everything (2022)

MUSIC

Classical music has always been my counter culture. To me, it means freedom. I get to choose what it means. In fact, I became a filmmaker in fifth grade because I wanted others to see the stories I hear from my favorite music. Listening to classical music is like hanging out with a good friend. It listens to my feelings and affirms them with no judgement. It helped me through the darkest days. I probably wouldn't be alive today without classical music.

Sophie's music journey mirrors her gender journey. She has to learn to unsee the connotations people impose upon classical music, i.e. the restrictive interpretations (Song's teacher) and the elitist associations (Song's mom). She eventually learns to love music on her own terms, just like how they eventually learn to love their bodies on their own terms.

In the end, Ande recognizes Sophie through the music she plays. At that moment, music encapsulates all those years of yearnings and regrets better than a thousand words.

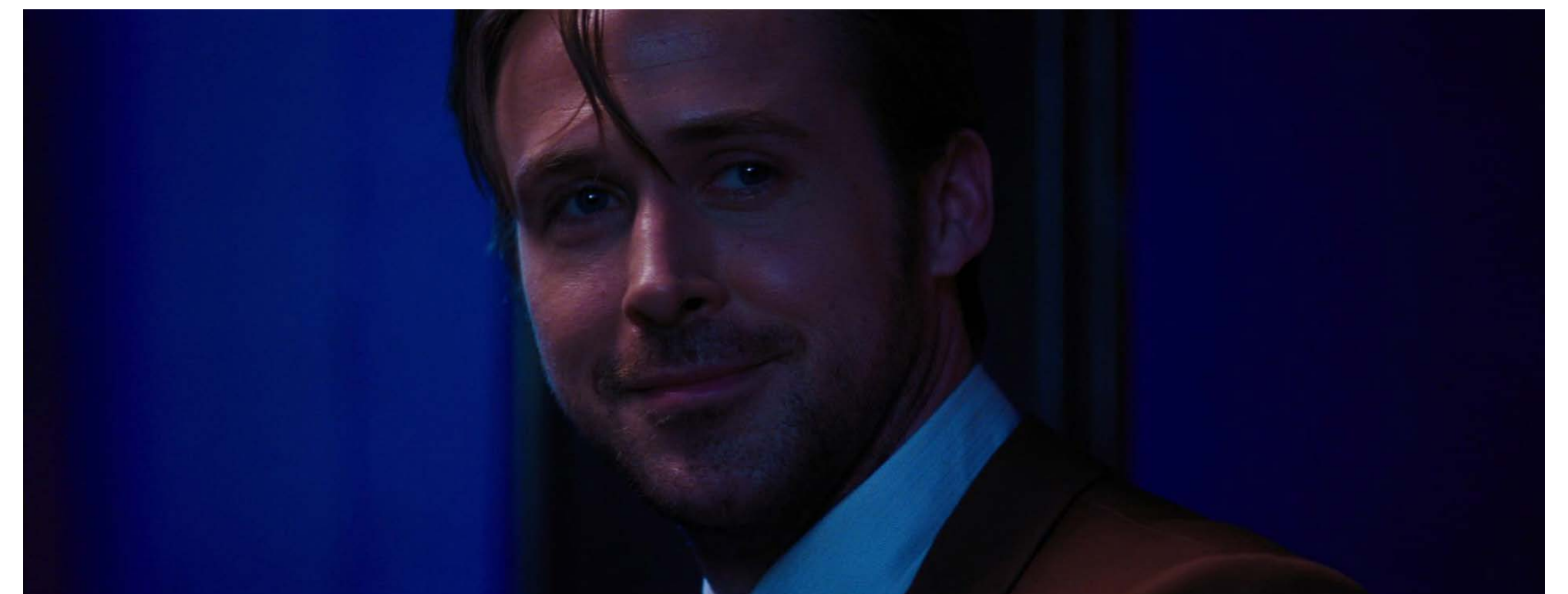
Here's the playlist to the music that inspire my writing:
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0buUPy1l6isKrxKsYef1mW?si=8e9007adf4c24bc8>



Portrait of a Lady on Fire (2019)

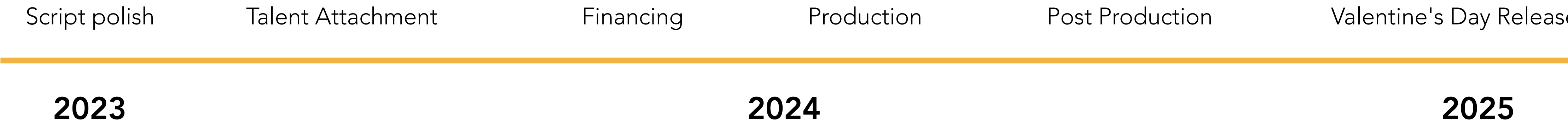


Phoenix (2014)

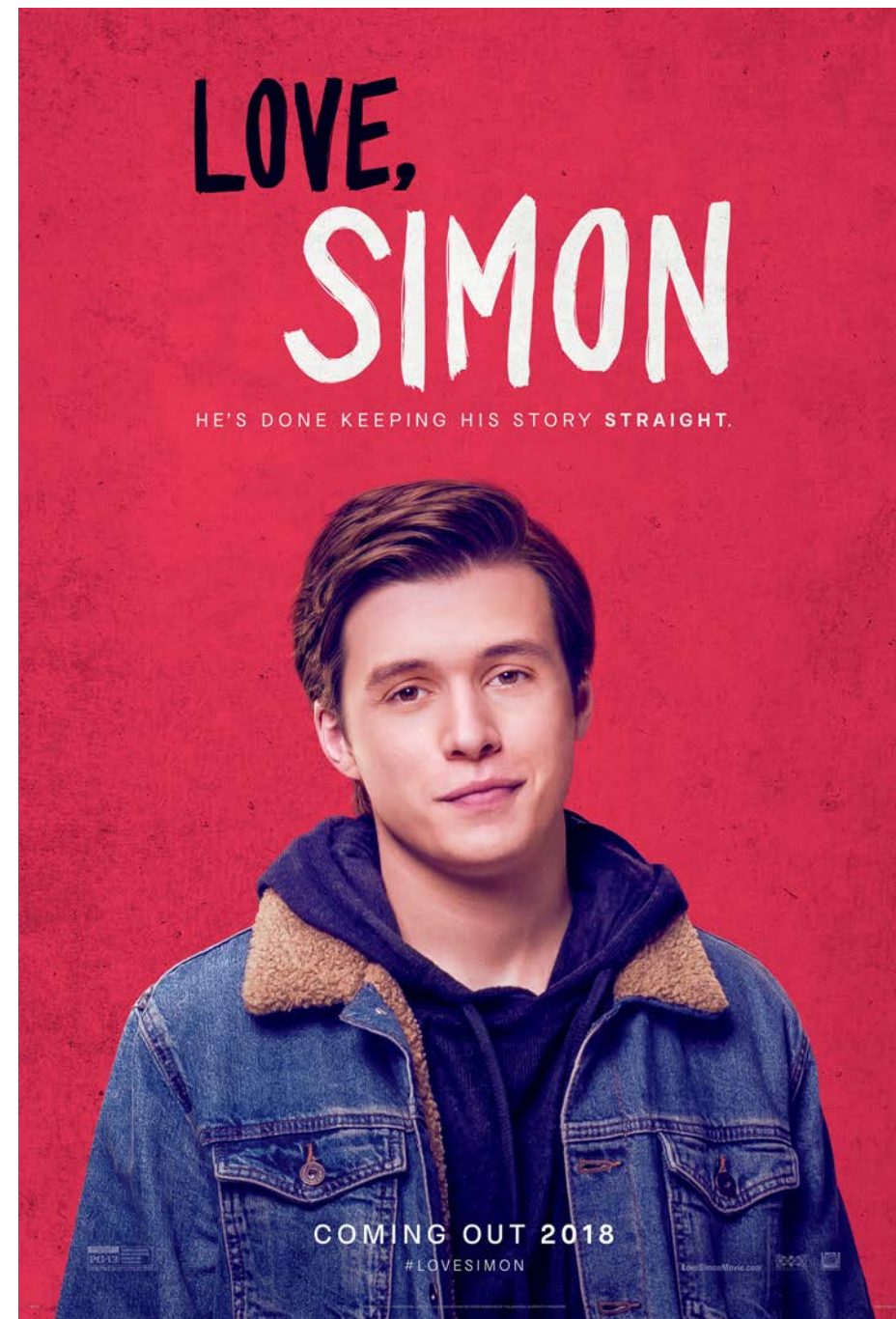


La La Land (2016)

TIMELINE



COMP



Love, Simon (2018)

Budget: 10 million

Box office: 66 million



Your Name (2016)

Budget: 5 million

Box office: 380 million



You've Got Mail (1998)

Budget: 65 million

Box office: 250 million

Genre: Coming-of-age Romantic Fantasy
Estimate budget: 3-5 million