

Toronto festival to screen six Australian films

Wednesday 20 August 2008:

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) overnight launched its full program, confirming that six Australian feature films will screen at this premier North American festival, which runs 4–13 September, 2008.

“TIFF offers the best launching pad into the North American market and traditionally has a strong Australian line-up,” said Tait Brady, Executive Director Marketing Support and Promotions of the newly formed agency Screen Australia. “This year is no exception. The selection reflects the tremendous diversity of current Australian production, including an animated feature, an edgy genre film and an entertaining doco about a forgotten chapter of Australian film history.”

The six films, five of which have investment from Screen Australia and/or its predecessor agencies (FFC, AFC), have been selected across the festival’s various sections.

Disgrace (d: **Steve Jacobs**), starring John Malkovich as a professor whose life implodes after he has an affair with one of his students, will have its world premiere in the Special Presentations section of the festival. This highly anticipated film is based on the novel ***Disgrace*** by J.M. Coetzee, which won the Booker Prize in 1999.

Midnight Madness will screen two of the six films in selection: ***Not Quite Hollywood*** (d: **Mark Hartley**) will have its international premiere, while ***Acolytes*** (d: **Jon Hewitt**) will have its North American premiere. Both films have featured strongly on the domestic festival circuit with successful screenings at both the Melbourne and Brisbane International Film Festivals. Midnight Madness highlights the weird and the wonderful, including thrillers, chillers and rockumentaries from directors whose genre work is not usually seen in a festival context.

Three Blind Mice (d: **Matthew Newton**) will have its international premiere at the festival when it screens in the Discovery section. The film recently had its world premiere at the Sydney Film Festival where it was programmed as part of the inaugural Official Competition. The film received a special mention from the jury at the closing night ceremony for its energy, passion and superb ensemble cast.

The Discovery section will also showcase the world premiere of the first Australia/Israel co-production, the stop-motion animated feature ***\$9.99*** (d: **Tatia Rosenthal**). Narrated by Geoffrey Rush the film based on the short stories of celebrated Israeli writer Etgar Keret, the film will offer filmgoers slightly less than \$10 worth about the meaning of life.

The final film selected to screen is feature documentary ***Yes Madam, Sir*** (d: **Megan Doneman**) narrated by Helen Mirren. The film will have its world premiere in the Real to Reel section of the festival and is the first feature film from filmmaker Megan Doneman.

The Toronto International Film Festival will run 4–13 September 2008.

\$9.99

(80 min)

Production Company: Sherman Pictures and Lama Productions

Director: Tatia Rosenthal

Writers: Etgar Keret and Tatia Rosenthal

Producers: Emile Sherman and Amir Harel

Distributor: Icon Film Distribution

International Sales: Fortissimo Films

Voice Cast: Geoffrey Rush, Anthony LaPaglia, Samuel Johnson, Claudia Karvan, Joel Edgerton, Ben Mendelsohn, Barry Otto, Leeanna Walsman

Synopsis: A stop-motion animated feature that weaves together stories from the residents of a Sydney apartment block and offers slightly less than ten dollars worth of wisdom about the meaning of life.

Acolytes

(92 min)

Production Company: Stewart & Wall Entertainment

Executive Producers: Grant Bradley, Gary Hamilton, Ian Gibbins

Director: Jon Hewitt

Writers: Shane Krause, Shayne Armstrong and Jon Hewitt

Producers: Penny Wall and Richard Stewart

Distributor: Palace Films

International Sales: Arclight Films

Cast: Joel Edgerton, Michael Dorman, Sebastian Gregory, Hanna Mangan-Lawrence, Joshua Payne, Belinda McClory

Synopsis: *Acolytes* tells the story of a school bully's two victims who, in an attempt to exact revenge, find themselves embroiled in a game of cat and mouse with a serial killer.

Disgrace

(120 min)

Production Company: Wild Strawberries Pty Ltd, Sherman Pictures Pty Ltd

Executive Producers: Julio DePietro, Michael J. Werner, Wouter Barendrecht

Director: Steve Jacobs

Writer: Anna-Maria Monticelli

Producers: Anna-Maria Monticelli, Emile Sherman, Steve Jacobs

Distributor: Icon Film Distribution

International Sales: Fortissimo Films

Cast: John Malkovich, Jessica Haines

Synopsis: Professor David Lurie's life falls apart after he has an impulsive affair with one of his students. Forced to resign from the university he escapes to his daughter's farm. The relationship is tested when they both become victims of a vicious attack. Based on the Booker Prize winning novel by J.M. Coetzee.

Not Quite Hollywood

(102 min)

Production Company: City Films World Wide p/l

Executive Producers: Bruno Charlesworth, Jonathan Shteinman, Paul Wiegard, Nick Batzias

Writer/Director: Mark Hartley

Producers: Michael Lynch, Craig Griffin,

Distributor: Madman Cinema

International Sales: Magnolia Films

Cast: with Jamie Lee Curtis, Dennis Hopper, Stacy Keach, Quentin Tarantino, Brian Trenchard-Smith, Dr. George Miller, Barry Humphries

Synopsis: In the 70s and 80s a uniquely antipodean wave of exploitation cinema swept

the world. Shlocky, sexy and very funny, 'Ozploitation' became one of the most prolific and successful periods in Australian filmmaking – and yet it rarely rates a mention in the official histories of cinema. Filled with outrageous anecdotes and lessons in maverick filmmaking, and featuring interviews with celebrity devotee Quentin Tarantino, *Not Quite Hollywood* is a fast-moving journey through a very Australian slice of genre cinema.

Three Blind Mice

(92 min)

Production Company: dirty rat films pty ltd

Executive Producers: Michael Favelle, Ben Ferris

Writer/Director: Matthew Newton

Producer: Ben Davis

Co-producer: Caitlin Stanton

Distributor: dirty rat films pty ltd, Odin's Eye Entertainment

International Sales: Odin's Eye Entertainment

Cast: Ewen Leslie, Toby Schmitz, Matthew Newton

Synopsis: Three young Navy officers hit Sydney for one last night on land before being shipped over to the Gulf to fight. Sam has been mistreated at sea and is going AWOL, Dean has a fiancé and the future in-laws to meet, and Harry just loves playing cards. Throughout the night the boys lose each other, find themselves, and along the way discover courage, friendship and redemption.

Yes Madam, Sir

(94 min)

Production Company: Sojourn Film Pty Ltd

Executive Producers: Monica Blinco, John Lynch, Annie Collins

Writer/Director: Megan Doneman

Producers: Megan Doneman, Laraine Doneman

Cast: Narrator - Helen Mirren

Synopsis: *Yes Madam, Sir*, a feature documentary filmed over six years, presents an intimate portrait of India's first woman police officer, Kiran Bedi – an unstoppable revolutionary taking on the world's largest democracy, India.