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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### A record 17 Australian films selected for Toronto International Film Festival

**Friday 21 August 2009:** Seventeen Australian films will screen at the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival, the largest selection of Australian films to ever screen at one of the world's premiere film festivals.

"It is deeply pleasing to see one of the world's most prestigious film festivals recognise the diversity and creativity of the Australian industry," said **Ruth Harley**, Screen Australia Chief Executive Officer. "Screening in Toronto is a wonderful launching pad into the North American market, and selection is testament to the talent of the filmmaking teams and the calibre of their projects. We congratulate all those involved on their selection."

Four Australian films will screen as Special Presentations. *Mao's Last Dancer* (d: **Bruce Beresford**, w: **Jan Sardi**, p: **Jane Scott**), *The Boys Are Back* (d: **Scott Hicks**, w: **Allan Cubitt**, p: **Timothy White, Greg Brenman**) and *The Waiting City* (w/d/p: **Claire McCarthy**, p: **Jamie Hilton**) will have their world premiere at Toronto. *Bright Star* (w/d: **Jane Campion**, p: **Jan Chapman, Caroline Hewitt**) will screen in Special Presentation following its world premiere at Cannes this year. Toronto's Special Presentations offer a showcase of high-profile films featuring major stars and directors from around the world.

*Balibo* (w/d: **Robert Connolly**, w: **David Williamson**, p: **John Maynard, Rebecca Williamson**), *Blessed* (d: **Ana Kokkinos**, w: **Andrew Bovell, Melissa Reeves, Patricia Cornelius, Christos Tsiolkas**, p: **Al Clark**), *Bran Nue Dae* (w/d: **Rachel Perkins**, w: **Reg Cribb, Jimmy Chi** p: **Robyn Kershaw, Graeme Isaac**) and *My Year Without Sex* (w/d: **Sarah Watt**, p: **Bridget Ikin**) have been selected to screen in the Contemporary World Cinema program. Contemporary World Cinema is a lavish collection of premieres and prize-winning film selections, a ticket for a worldwide cinematic tour.

The Discovery program will feature *Beautiful Kate* (w/d: **Rachel Ward**, p: **Leah Churchill-Brown, Bryan Brown**), *Last Ride* (d: **Glendyn Ivin**, w: **Mac Gudgeon**, p: **Nicholas Cole, Antonia Barnard**), *My Tehran for Sale* (d/p: **Granaz Moussavi**, p: **Julie Ryan, Kate Croser**) and *Samson & Delilah* (w/d: **Warwick Thornton**, p: **Kath Shelper**). Discovery offers a unique window on contemporary international cinema and is a showcase for new and emerging filmmakers.

*Daybreakers* (w/d: **Michael Spierig, Peter Spierig**, p: **Chris Brown, Sean Furst, Bryan Furst**) and *The Loved Ones* (w/d: **Sean Byrne**, p: **Mark Lazarus, Michael Boughen**) will screen in the Midnight Madness program, which highlights the weird

and the wonderful from directors who prefer to work in genres not usually seen in a festival context. Toronto will present the *Daybreakers* world premiere.

*Wake in Fright* (d: **Ted Kotcheff**, w: **Evan Jones**, p: **George Willoughby**) and *Sweetie* (d/w: **Jane Campion**, w: **Gerard Lee**, p: **John Maynard**) will be presented as part of Dialogues: Talking with Pictures, a popular and critically acclaimed film series curated and introduced by renowned directors who are invited to select and discuss films that have inspired them, had a significant impact on their artistic development or were pivotal in the progress of their own careers.

Toronto's Real to Reel program will feature the documentary *Stolen* (w/d: **Violeta Ayala**, **Dan Fallshaw**, p: **Tom Zubrycki**). Real to Reel presents the very best in non-fiction cinema from around the globe that will challenge, inspire, inform, entertain and move audiences.

The Toronto International Film Festival runs 10–19 September 2009. The final Australian films selected to screen in the 2009 festival were announced this morning Australian time. Toronto selectors received over 4,300 submissions from more than 60 countries for this year's festival.

#### **Balibo**

[www.balibo.com](http://www.balibo.com)

Production Company: Balibo Film Pty Ltd

Director: Robert Connolly

Writers: Robert Connolly, David Williamson

Producers: John Maynard, Rebecca Williamson

Australian Distributor: Footprint Films

International Sales: ContentFilm International

Cast: Anthony LaPaglia, Oscar Isaac, Gyton Grantley, Damon Gameau, Nathan Phillips, Mark Leonard Winter, Thomas Wright, Bea Viegas

Synopsis: As Indonesia prepares to invade the tiny nation of East Timor, five Australian-based journalists go missing. Four weeks later, veteran foreign correspondent Roger East is lured to East Timor by the young and charismatic José Ramos-Horta to tell the story of his country and investigate the fate of the missing men. *Balibo* is a political thriller that tells the true story of crimes that have been covered up for over thirty years.

#### **Beautiful Kate**

[www.beautifulkatemovie.com.au](http://www.beautifulkatemovie.com.au)

Production Company: Beautiful Kate Productions Pty Ltd

Director/Writer: Rachel Ward

Producers: Leah Churchill-Brown, Bryan Brown

Australian Distributor: Roadshow Films Australia

International Sales: The Works International

Cast: Ben Mendelsohn, Bryan Brown, Maeve Dermody, Sophie Lowe and Rachel Griffiths

Synopsis: Ned Kendall returns to his isolated family home to say goodbye to his dying father, but memories of his beautiful twin sister awaken long-buried secrets from the past.

#### **Blessed**

Production Company: Wildheart Zizani

Director: Ana Kokkinos

Writers: Andrew Bovell, Melissa Reeves, Patricia Cornelius, Christos Tsiolkas

Producer: Al Clark

Australian Distributor: Icon Film Distribution

International Sales: Bankside Films

Cast: Frances O'Connor, Miranda Otto, Deborra-Lee Furness, Victoria Haralabidou, Monica Maughan, Wayne Blair, William McInnes, Tasma Walton

Synopsis: An urban odyssey through a day and a night. The love between mothers and their children. Being lost and finding your way home.

### **The Boys Are Back**

Production Companies: Southern Light Films Pty Ltd, Tiger Aspect Pictures (SPV) Ltd

Director: Scott Hicks

Scriptwriter: Allan Cubitt

Producers: Timothy White, Greg Brenman

Australian Distributor: Hopscotch Films

International Sales: HanWay Films

Cast: Clive Owen, Emma Booth, Laura Fraser, George MacKay, Erik Thomson, Julia Blake, Chris Haywood, Emma Lung, Nicholas McAululty

Synopsis: *The Boys Are Back* is a moving and humorous love story between journalist Joe Warr and his two sons, from different marriages, who find themselves living in a boys-only household following the death of Joe's second wife.

### **Bran Nue Dae**

Production Companies: Robyn Kershaw Productions Pty Ltd, Mayfan Pty Ltd

Director: Rachel Perkins

Screenplay: Reg Cribb, Rachel Perkins, Jimmy Chi

Based on the stage musical *Bran Nue Dae* by Jimmy Chi and Kuckles

Producers: Robyn Kershaw, Graeme Isaac

International Sales: Bankside Films

Cast: Rocky McKenzie, Jessica Mauboy, Ernie Dingo, Missy Higgins and Geoffrey Rush

Synopsis: *Bran Nue Dae* is a road movie, coming-of-age, comedy musical, which celebrates the adventure of finding home.

### **Bright Star**

[www.brightstarthemovie.com](http://www.brightstarthemovie.com)

Production Companies: Jan Chapman Productions, Brightstar Films Ltd

Writer/Director: Jane Campion

Producers: Jan Chapman, Caroline Hewitt

Australian Distributor: Hopscotch Films

International Sales: Pathé International

Cast: Abbie Cornish, Ben Whishaw, Paul Schneider, Kerry Fox

Synopsis: John Keats, the romantic poet, wrote the love poem 'Bright Star' for his 18-year-old next-door neighbour, Fanny Brawne. This is the story of their first love.

### **Daybreakers**

[www.daybreakersmovie.com](http://www.daybreakersmovie.com)

Production Company: Paradise Production Pty Ltd

Directors/Writers: Michael Spierig, Peter Spierig

Producers: Chris Brown, Sean Furst, Bryan Furst

Australian Distributor: Hoyts Distribution Pty Ltd

International Sales: Mandate International

Cast: Ethan Hawke, Willem Dafoe, Claudia Karvan, Michael Dorman and Sam Neill

Synopsis: The year is 2019. A mysterious plague has swept over the earth, transforming the majority of the world's population into vampires. Humans are now an endangered, second-class species – forced into hiding as they are hunted and farmed for vampire consumption to the brink of extinction. It's all up to Edward Dalton, a vampire researcher who refuses to feed on human blood, to perfect a blood substitute that might sustain vampires and spare the few remaining humans.

### **Last Ride**

[www.lastridemovie.com](http://www.lastridemovie.com)

Production Company: Last Ride Pty Ltd

Director: Glendyn Ivin

Screenplay: Mac Gudgeon (from the novel by Denise Young)

Producers: Nicholas Cole, Antonia Barnard

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

International Sales: ContentFilm International

Cast: Hugo Weaving, Tom Russell, Anita Hegh, John Brumpton, Kelton Pell, Sonya Soares

Synopsis: A desperate father and his 10-year-old son are on the run from the law. Their journey into the ravishing beauty of the desert and the human heart, pits them against the elements and each other.

### **The Loved Ones**

Production Company: Ambience Entertainment

Writer/Director: Sean Byrne

Producers: Mark Lazarus, Michael Boughen

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

International Sales: Arclight Films

Cast: Xavier Samuel, Robin McLeavy, John Brumpton, Victoria Thaine, Jess McNamee, Richard Wilson

Synopsis: Brent, a student still grieving for his father, declines an invitation to the end of year dance from Lola, the quietest girl in school. She and her father kidnap him and Brent must fight to survive the macabre celebration they have in store for him.

### **Mao's Last Dancer**

[www.maoslastdancermovie.com](http://www.maoslastdancermovie.com)

Production Company: A Great Scott production for Last Dancer Pty Ltd

Director: Bruce Beresford

Screenwriter: Jan Sardi

Producer: Jane Scott

Australian Distributors: Hopscotch Films, Roadshow Films Australia

International Sales: Celluloid Dreams International

Cast: Bruce Greenwood, Kyle MacLachlan, Joan Chen, Chi Cao, Amanda Schull, Aden Young and Jack Thompson

Synopsis: The inspirational true story of a young boy's extraordinary journey from poverty to international stardom. From gruelling apprenticeship to classical dancer in communist China, to the glory of creative freedom in America. But, there is a painful price to be paid for his quest for self-expression. *Mao's Last Dancer* captures the intoxicating effects of first love and celebrity, the pain of exile, and ultimately the triumph of individual endeavour over ideology. *"Before you can fly, you have to be free"*.

### **My Tehran for Sale**

Production Company: Cyan Films

Director Granaz Moussavi

Producers: Julie Ryan, Kate Croser, Granaz Moussavi

Cast: Marzieh Vafamehr, Amir Chegini, Asha Mehrabi

Synopsis: Marzieh is a young female actress living in Tehran whose theatre work is banned by the authorities. At an underground rave, she meets Iranian born Saman, now an Australian citizen, who offers her a way out of her country and the possibility of living without fear.

### **My Year Without Sex**

[www.myyearwithoutsex.com](http://www.myyearwithoutsex.com)

Production Company: My Year Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Sarah Watt

Producer: Bridget Ikin

Australian Distributor: Footprint Films

International Sales: The Works International

Cast: Matt Day, Sacha Horler, Katie Wall, Fred Whitlock

Synopsis: One family. One year. No Sex. What else is there? Sport, spending, saving, singing, storage solutions, spiritual stuff, Santa ...

### **Samson & Delilah**

[www.samsonanddelilah.com.au](http://www.samsonanddelilah.com.au)

Production Companies: Scarlett Pictures Pty Ltd, CAAMA Productions Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Warwick Thornton

Producer: Kath Shelper

Australian Distributor: Footprint Films

International Sales: Elle Driver

Cast: Rowan McNamara, Marissa Gibson, Mitjili Gibson, Scott Thornton

Synopsis: The world is a small place when you're Samson and Delilah. From an isolated community in the desert, their silent love for each other takes them on a journey of survival. Lost, unwanted and alone, they discover that life isn't always fair, but love never judges.

### **Stolen**

Production Company: BIC Productions, United Notions Film

Writers/Directors: Violeta Ayala, Dan Fallshaw

Producer: Tom Zubrycki

International Sales: BIC Productions

Synopsis: Australian filmmakers Violeta Ayala and Dan Fallshaw go to the Polisario-governed refugee camps in the Algerian desert to make a film about a family reunion.

Everything changes when the black Saharawis start to talk about a different subject ... their freedom.

### **Sweetie**

Production Company: Arenafilm Pty Ltd

Director: Jane Campion

Writers: Jane Campion, Gerard Lee

Producer: John Maynard

Australian Distributor: Footprint Films

International Sales: Indigo Film & Television

Cast: Geneviève Lemon, Karen Colston, Tom Lycos, Jon Darling

Synopsis: Jane Campion's stunning debut feature, *Sweetie*, focuses on the hazardous relationship between the buttoned-down, superstitious Kay and her rampaging, devil-may-care sister, 'Sweetie' – and, by extension, their entire family's rotten roots.

### **The Waiting City**

Production Company: Waiting City Films Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Claire McCarthy

Producers: Jamie Hilton, Claire McCarthy

Australian Distributor: Hopscotch Films

International Sales: H2O Motion Pictures

Cast: Radha Mitchell, Joel Edgerton, Isabel Lucas

Synopsis: *The Waiting City* is a mystical-infused love story set against the intoxicating, epic backdrop of Calcutta, India.

### **Wake in Fright**

Production Company: NLT Productions and Group W

Director: Ted Kotcheff

Writer: Evan Jones (based on the book by Australian author Kenneth Cook)

Producer: George Willoughby

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

Cast: Donald Pleasance, Gary Bond, Chips Rafferty, Jack Thompson

Synopsis: *Wake in Fright* details the story of John Grant, a young schoolteacher, stranded in a brutal and menacing town in outback Australia.