



MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2015

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS BY POPULAR DEMAND AT PALACE CINEMA

Sydney Film Festival announces popular festival films will be screened at Palace Cinemas in Leichhardt and Paddington, for an additional three evenings from Monday 15 to Wednesday 17 June.

“By Popular Demand, at Palace Verona and Norton Street cinemas will show third screenings of Festival films, where the first two Festival screenings have reached, or are approaching, sell out,” said Festival Director Nashen Moodley.

“This year is the first time the Festival has ever extended the run of top-selling films beyond the end of the Festival. These third screenings are a wonderful way for audiences, if they missed out on tickets to the first two Festival screenings, to see some of the most talked-about films of the year,” he said.

“We are thrilled to be working with Sydney Film Festival to give audiences the chance to see these exceptional films at our cinemas” said Palace Cinemas’ CEO, Benjamin Zeccola. “At Palace Cinemas we are focussed on delivering the best quality films with a first-rate cinema-going experience and this partnership perfectly aligns with that focus”.

Eight features and two documentaries will screen again at **By Popular Demand** at Palace Cinemas. Features such as acclaimed American indie comedy *Dope*, set in 1990s about hip hop obsessed teens; Sundance comedy hit *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* from award winning *American Horror Story* director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon; *Grandma*, starring the great Lily Tomlin exploring womanhood in America over three generations; and from India *The Crow’s Egg*, a family film about two cute kids from Chennai and their quest to taste pizza.

Other important features include award-winning Ukrainian film *The Tribe*, a sign-language drama without subtitles or narration; Swedish master Roy Andersson’s critically acclaimed quirky comedy *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence*; darkly comic drama *Villa Touma* about a family from the waning Palestinian Christian aristocracy; and celebrated Iranian director Jafar Panahi’s latest film *Tehran Taxi*, made in defiance of a government ban.

Documentaries **By Popular Demand** include Australian Maya Newell’s film *Gayby Baby*, a child’s eye view of growing up in same sex families; and *The Wolfpack*, a strange but true story of seven film obsessed children who rarely leave their New York apartment.

SFF’s By Popular Demand at Palace Cinema films:

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THE CROW'S EGG

Dubbed the next *Slumdog Millionaire*, this funny and charming film from South India is a crowdpleaser for young and old alike. Two mischievous and resourceful brothers live in poverty in a Chennai slum but find joy in each other and their family and friends. When the brothers see an advertisement for pizza, which coincides with the opening of a nearby pizza shop, they are determined to taste this magical food for the very first time. So begins a great adventure, with triumphs and setbacks, as the industrious brothers try to raise the cash to fund their wish. With delightful performances and a vibrant energy, *The Crow's Egg* is both a simple fable and a poignant reflection on globalisation and aspiration.

Screens Tuesday 16 June, 6.30pm, Palace Norton Street.

DOPE

Fresh, exuberant and brilliantly paced, *Dope* is a smart comedy about a group of geeks who, through a series of missteps, end up with a stash of drugs that they have to sell in order to survive. Malcolm (Shameik Moore) and his friends Jib (Tony Revolori) and Diggy (Kiersey Clemons) are the outcasts of their school in a tough, gang-ridden neighbourhood. Constantly on the run from bullies at school and the drug dealers in their hood, the friends bond over their obsession with '90s hip-hop culture and their punk band. When Malcolm inadvertently ends up with a stash of ecstasy belonging to a notorious dealer (A\$AP Rocky), they are forced to sell it, which sets them off on a crazy adventure – all this while Malcolm is trying to get into Harvard. With a sparkling soundtrack, including new songs by Pharrell Williams, *Dope* is energetic, inspiring and laugh-out-loud funny.

Screens Monday 15 June, 6.30pm, Palace Verona.

GAYBY BABY

Gayby Baby follows the lives of four kids – wrestling fan Gus, Sydneysider Ebony, erudite Matt and Fiji-based Graham – whose parents all happen to be gay. Kids being raised by same-sex couples are growing in numbers worldwide. We are in a Gayby Boom. But who are these kids? What do they think about having same-sex parents? And do they face different issues to other kids? At a time when the world is debating marriage equality, these questions are more pertinent than ever. This intimate and often humorous film offers a refreshingly frank picture of same-sex families.

Screens Tuesday 16 June, 8.30pm, Palace Verona.

GRANDMA

The incomparable Lily Tomlin stars as the titular character, but she's no ordinary granny. She's Elle, a foul-mouthed, stony-broke, gay poet. And she's crankier than usual, as she's just broken up with her younger lover Olivia (Judy Greer). When her granddaughter Sage (Julia Garner) needs money, Elle is willing to help, but it's going to take a while – time that Sage doesn't have. In the process of finding the cash, we encounter Elle's ex-lovers and friends, as well as her fractured family. All this action takes place over one emotional and fractious day. Director Paul Weitz (*About a Boy*, *American Pie*) has gathered together an ace cast, including Marcia Gay Harden, Sam Elliott and the late Elizabeth Peña. However, Tomlin's performance takes centre stage, embracing her gay icon status and showing off her comedic chops to perfection.

Screens Wednesday 17 June, 6.30pm, Palace Norton Street.

ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL

Winner of the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* is an original film about friendship, creativity, mortality and the love of

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cinema. Greg (Thomas Mann) is a high school senior who is trying to blend in as anonymously as possible. Even his closest friend Earl (R.J. Cyler) is described as a 'co-worker'. Together, Greg and Earl create parodies of classic films. Their repertoire includes: *Pooping Tom*, *A Sockwork Orange*, *Senior Citizen Cane* and *2:48PM Cowboy*. When Greg's mom (Connie Britton) insists he spend time with Rachel (Olivia Cooke) – a girl who has just been diagnosed with cancer – he slowly discovers how worthwhile the true bonds of friendship can be. Greg decides to make a film for Rachel, one that will test the limits of his creativity and lay bare his feelings for her. With a great score by Brian Eno, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* is full of humour and pathos – and a glorious love letter to cinema.

Screens Tuesday 16 June, 8.30pm, Palace Norton Street and Wednesday 17 June, 8.30pm, Palace Verona.

A PIGEON SAT ON A BRANCH REFLECTING ON EXISTENCE

Swedish cinematic visionary Roy Andersson brings his trademark absurdist humour and singular vision to this winner of the Venice Film Festival Golden Lion. Zipping back and forth through time, and peopled with a bizarre cast of characters, the film is a meticulous tragicomic series of vignettes. Fifteen years in the making, it follows on from the much loved *Songs From The Second Floor* and *You, The Living* (SFF 2008), together making up *The Living Trilogy*. It unites a macho Swedish monarch, a randy Flamenco teacher, a series of rather funny deaths and a rousing musical number. Alongside these humorous snippets of life, we encounter tragic examples of man's lack of empathy for others, and for animals. Guiding us through this unique take on existence are Sam and Jonathan, two travelling salesmen peddling strange novelty items. The overall effect is immersive and astonishing. Says Andersson: "I envision A Pigeon... as comical from beginning to end, emotional and uplifting. But from time to time, the audience will also witness outbreaks of terror. The range between humour and horror will be profound."

Screens Wednesday 17 June, 6.30pm, Palace Verona.

TEHRAN TAXI

Winner of the Golden Bear at the Berlinale, *Tehran Taxi* is the third film made secretly by Jafar Panahi since a ban on filmmaking was imposed on him in Iran. *Where This Is Not A Film* was an expression of great frustration following the ban, Panahi's next film *Closed Curtain* was filled with anger. *Tehran Taxi* is more hopeful, and frequently very funny. A taxi drives through the city streets and various passengers enter, each expressing their views on a range of matters relating to Iran today. The driver is Jafar Panahi himself, and he has a camera attached to the dashboard. Some of the passengers know who he is, but most don't. A seller of pirated DVDs certainly recognises the great director, and tries to boost his business by claiming that Panahi is his business partner. Panahi and the various characters he encounters reflect on art, politics, and the law. Perhaps the most fascinating encounter is with Panahi's young niece, who is making a film herself and trying to follow her teacher's instructions not to depict a "sordid realism." Playful, funny and optimistic, *Tehran Taxi* finds Panahi at his most creative and entertaining, giving one hope that the creator of such great films as *The Circle*, *Offside* and *Crimson Gold* (all screened SFF 2011), will soon make films, and travel the world, freely.

Screens Wednesday 17 June, 8.30pm, Palace Norton Street.

THE TRIBE

Winner of over 25 awards at numerous international film festivals, *The Tribe* is a shocking and exhilarating film performed entirely in sign language and without subtitles. Sergey enters a specialised boarding school for the deaf and is soon participating in robberies. Quickly, he works his way up the hierarchy of the school's organised network of crime and prostitution, *The Tribe*. When Sergey falls in love with one of the girls he pimps out, he breaks all of the unwritten rules of the

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group, and the repercussions will be severe. Drawing you into a world that is at first puzzling but gradually comes into focus, *The Tribe* is unique and truly unforgettable. Sexually explicit, violent, and always riveting, you'll recoil even as you are dazzled by what you see on the screen.

Screens Monday 15 June, 8.30pm, Palace Verona.

VILLA TOUMA

Set in Ramallah, the directorial debut from award-winning screenwriter Suha Arraf (*The Syrian Bride; Lemon Tree*, SFF 2008) offers a rare glimpse into aristocratic Palestinian Christian society. Shut away in their villa, three unmarried sisters cling desperately to their former glory. When Badia, their orphaned young niece, comes to live with them, things change for the sisters. The house seems to come back to life when they begin to teach her the piano and the proper etiquette of the Christian upper classes. When romance blooms for Badia, it becomes linked to the political situation of the region. A moving drama, infused with humour, *Villa Touma* is a memorable look at a sector of Palestinian society rarely seen on the screen.

Screens Monday 15 June, 6.30pm, Palace Norton Street and Tuesday 16 June, 6.30pm, Palace Verona .

THE WOLFPACK

"If I didn't have movies, my life would be pretty boring," says one of seven siblings (aged 16-23) who've spent most of their lives watching films in their Lower East Side apartment. Sometimes they went out nine times in one year... one year they didn't go out at all. The six long-haired brothers, their sister, and mother, live under the rule of the patriarchal father. He holds the key to outside world, literally. Director Crystal Moselle, with privileged access, filmed the siblings as they recreated scenes from their favourite movies like *Reservoir Dogs* and *The Dark Knight* – complete with elaborate homemade props and costumes – and reveals their gradual emergence into the open. The unsettling story of this strange yet compelling family won the Grand Jury Prize for US Documentary at Sundance this year.

Screens Monday 15 June, 8.30pm, Palace Norton Street.

Sydney Film Festival runs 3 – 14 June 2015.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2015 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 3 June** to **Sunday 14 June 2015**, the 62nd Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, panel discussions, international guests and more. Each year the Festival's programming team curates 12 days of cinema sourced from world-famous film festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the Berlinale; as well as Australia's finest local productions.

Sydney Film Festival also presents an Official Competition of 12 films that vie for the Sydney Film Prize, a highly respected honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners are: *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011), which went on to win an Academy Award; *Heartbeats* (2010); and *Bronson* (2009).

The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen.

The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit: www.sff.org.au.

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The 62nd Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney.

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