



MEDIA RELEASE  
EMBARGOED UNTIL 8 MAY 2013

## Sydney Film Festival, 5-16 June, presents a series of music films in this year's Sounds on Screen and festival program

Seven music films make up the Sounds on Screen program. You'll also find another six music-related documentaries and two feature films with music at their core at the 60<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival.

Music is a central theme in the Sydney Film Festival 2013 program. This year's Sounds on Screen selection includes BAFTA-winning director Shane Meadows' (*This Is England, Dead Man's Shoes*) highly anticipated documentary ***The Stone Roses: Made of Stone*** about the legendary 1990s Manchester band. For opera-lovers, ***Becoming Traviata*** gives an insight into the process of staging Verdi's masterworks at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in France; the film features opera star Natalie Dessay.

A couple who encourage the Angolan orphans in their care to express their angst with hardcore music are profiled in ***Death Metal Angola. This Ain't No Mouse Music*** takes you on hip-shaking journey with Arhoolie Records boss Chris Strachwitz to find the roots of American music, from New Orleans to Appalachia and right into the DNA of rock'n'roll. Heralded by *The Hollywood Reporter* as 'a must see music doco', ***Muscle Shoals*** pays homage to the small-town studio in Alabama which since the 1950s has been the scene of some of the greatest musical hits of all time. Aretha Franklin, Alicia Keys, Gregg Allman, Bono, Clarence Carter, Jimmy Cliff, Mick Jagger, Ed King, Keith Richards, Percy Sledge, and Steve Winwood all pay tribute to this special place.

***Mistaken for Strangers***, is a humorous new documentary chronicling life on the road with the indie band The National. The film is the project of Tom Berninger (a festival guest), who is the younger brother of The National's singer Matt Berninger. For Jeff Buckley aficionados, ***Greetings from Tim Buckley***, directed by Daniel Algrant and starring Imogen Poots, William Sadler and Penn Badgley, follows the journey Jeff took in grappling with the legacy of his late musician father, Tim, leading up to and culminating with his legendary 1991 performance of his father's songs.

Competing for the **Foxtel Australian Documentary Prize**, three Australian filmmakers have used the theme of music to look at subjects as diverse as the first Burmese female pop group in ***Miss Nikki and the Tiger Girls***; the legacy of Indigenous Australian rock 'n' roll reggae legend George Rurrumbu in ***Big Name No Blanket***; and Jeremy Oxley, frontman of the '80s Australian eighties band The Sunnyboys and his 30-year struggle with schizophrenia in ***The Sunnyboy***. In partnership with the Vivid LIVE program, the band, who just reformed after a 19-year hiatus, will play a live gig at the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

Principal State Government partner

Strategic partner

Government partners



“This year’s line-up of music-related movies covers an impressively diverse range of beats from New Orleans to Angola, The National to The Stone Roses, via a little town in Alabama. There’s Australian musical talent on show – The Sunnyboys, Warumpi Band, US Mob and No Fixed Address – and we’ve thrown in a little opera and bluegrass too! To round it off, our Closing Night film puts backup singers in the spotlight. I doubt there’s been such a music-filled festival in the festival’s 60 years,” said SFF Programs Manager Jenny Neighbour.

### **Music related documentaries/features and festival guests include:**

The documentary ***Narco Cultura***, directed by Shaul Schwarz, examines Mexican popular music that celebrates widespread drug violence and the growing popularity of the “narco ballads” in the US. The film delves into the world of the powerful cartels that are gaining strength on both sides of US/Mexico border.

***Pussy Riot – A Punk Prayer*** won the 2013 Special Jury prize in World Cinema Documentary at Sundance. This timely documentary follows the legal proceedings of the controversial Russian feminist punk band, and the public outcry when they were jailed by the Putin government.

The digital restoration of the groundbreaking 1981 Australian film ***Wrong Side of the Road***, based on the real lives of the seminal Australian bands Us Mob and No Fixed Address, is presented in partnership with the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia.

Music is a central element to the storytelling of award-winning Belgian drama ***The Broken Circle Breakdown*** (Official Competition), directed by Felix van Groeningen. The rousing American-styled bluegrass tunes heard and performed throughout the film are essential to the film’s emotional storyline. This deeply moving festival crowd-pleaser won the Best European Film from the Europa Cinemas Label as well as the Panorama Audience Award at the 2013 Berlinale.

The festival’s Closing Night Film, ***Twenty Feet From Stardom***, directed by award-winning filmmaker **Morgan Neville**, follows a number of diverse and gifted backup singers living in the shadows of superstardom. This documentary will entertain with footage of and interviews with **Darlene Love, Merry Clayton, Lisa Fischer, Judith Hill, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, Mick Jagger, Sting, Claudia Lennear** and **Tata Vega**.

### **Now for the full synopses for Sydney Film Festival’s 2013 Sounds on Screen films:**

#### ***Becoming Traviata* | France | Director: Philippe Beziat**

In this rich and fascinating documentary, celebrated soprano Natalie Dessay joins forces with innovative theatre and opera director Jean-François Sivadier. The pair work with the London Symphony Orchestra to craft a production of Verdi’s *La Traviata* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in France. From rehearsals through to performance, director Philippe Béziat documents the ‘Sivadier Method’. This unorthodox approach abandons crinolines, chandeliers and clichéd choreography, aiming to bring performers closer to their audiences. There’s much pleasure to be had here, as singers hone their articulation, gestures and movements, striving for a perfect marriage of drama and music. Sivadier’s rapport with his cast, especially dynamic diva Dessay, is extraordinary. It makes for compelling viewing from Act I, Scene I at rehearsals to Violetta’s tragic end on first night. This invigorating behind-the-scenes study of a master talent at work is a must-see for theatre and opera lovers and budding fans alike.

Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners



***Death Metal Angola* | USA-Angola | Director: **Jeremy Xido****

Death metal might sound like an unlikely inspiration for a group of war-shocked orphans, but then this off-the-grid film is full of surprises. After decades of civil war, Huambo in central Angola is gradually returning to peace. Some of the 'living dead' that roamed the streets have found a home at the Okutiuka orphanage. Run by Sonia, an extremely resourceful young woman, and her guitarist boyfriend Wilker, the orphanage deals out sustenance and hardcore music in equal measure. Ramping up your sound system to the extreme is seen by the couple as a good way to "clear out the debris from all these years of the sounds of war." Wilker has big dreams of holding Angola's first rock fest. A potent and convincing film that juxtaposes moving interviews with powerfully brutal music, *Death Metal Angola* is "a cult classic in the making" (*Huffington Post*).

***Greetings from Tim Buckley* | USA | Director: **Daniel Algrant** | Cast: Penn Badgley, Imogen Poots, William Sadler**

Relationships between rockers and their families is a key theme of this year's Sounds on Screen program. In this case, it's a father and son – iconic '60s singer/songwriter Tim Buckley and '90s rock sensation Jeff Buckley. The pair didn't know each other – Tim divorced Jeff's mother before he was born and died of an overdose when his son was just seven. This freewheeling drama focuses on Jeff's struggles to come to terms with his father's abandonment as well as his musical legacy. The core of the film is a 1991 tribute concert for Tim, in which 25-year-old Jeff (pre-*Grace*) reluctantly takes part. Penn Badgely (*Gossip Girl*) is fittingly magnetic as Jeff – even capturing his unique voice. Algrant's film, marked by a fantastic score (made up mainly of Tim's songs), is haunted by the tragically short lives of these two legendary talents.

***Mistaken For Strangers* | USA | Director: **Tom Berninger****

This remarkable, rough-around-the-edges documentary is a disarmingly personal look at ace indie-rock outfit The National. The film's director, Tom Berninger, is the brother of the band's lead singer Matt. Tom is younger, rounder and altogether less driven than his headlining sibling. When he's invited to join the band on tour as a roadie, Tom takes his camera along. "I didn't care what kind of movie he made," Matt says. "I just said, 'You are going to finish this. You are not going to stop.'" From the first excruciating interview, it's clear that Tom's left his filmmaking to chance. Though it may have started out as a portrait of a band on the road, a sweetly sincere and often comic story of brotherly love and rivalry emerges from the backstage rushes. Little brother dun' good this time though – the film recently opened the Tribeca Film Festival.

***Muscle Shoals* | USA | Director: **Greg 'Freddy' Camalier****

Aretha Franklin, Mick Jagger, Greg Allman, Jimmy Cliff, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon: the list is music royalty. All of these and more have made the trip to a little ol' town on the Tennessee River in Alabama – Muscle Shoals. The town's fabled recording studios were said to have a sound like no other. Perhaps it was ace house band The Swampers, or something in the water. The legend began when Percy Sledge recorded 'When a Man Loves a Woman', and continued with Wilson Pickett's 'Mustang Sally', Aretha Franklin's 'I Never Loved a Man', The Stones' 'Brown Sugar', and Lynyrd Skynyrd's 'Freebird'. Fans of rock and soul worldwide have been touched by the music recorded here, and they'll relish getting right down to the nitty gritty with this rockin' doco that's loaded with star interviews and original footage of soulful studio sessions.

Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners



***The Stone Roses: Made of Stone* | UK | Director: Shane Meadows**

Few British bands from the late 1980s had the same impact on pop music as The Stone Roses. The swaggering psychedelia of their classic debut album inspired a generation of rebellious club-happy Gen-Xers both in their native 'Madchester' and worldwide, paving the way for the likes of Oasis and Radiohead. But things unravelled bitterly soon after, and the group famously struggled with their legacy. Fifteen years later, they finally found a way past their differences and regrouped. In this expansive doco, longtime fan Shane Meadows (director of *This Is England*) chronicles the band's muddled history and much-anticipated reunion. Live footage and interviews capture everything from the earliest days to their falling out and the secret rehearsals before their triumphant 2012 world tour. And Meadows is there when the band implodes yet again. Tickets for the UK premiere sold out in 60 seconds – fans had better hurry!

***This Ain't No Mouse Music* | USA | Directors: Chris Simon, Maureen Gosling**

Since the 1960s, the founder of the legendary Arhoolie Records, Chris Strachwitz, has been documenting and recording the deep roots of American music. He's captured everything from blues, Cajun and weird hillbilly country, to Tex-Mex and New Orleans R&B. If it's authentic and really cookin', he's a fan. His Down Home Music store in El Cerrito, California, is piled high with unique recordings. In this rousing doco, filmmakers Chris Simon and Maureen Gosling join Strachwitz on a foot-stomping tour across the southern States. Chock-full of archival footage of performers such as Big Mama Thornton and Lightin' Hopkins, interviews with Arhoolie fans like Ry Cooder, and clips from films by the 'master of movies' Les Blank (who sadly died this year), this is a rockin' gem of a film that celebrates music that is soulful and authentic – just like Strachwitz himself.

**SFF 2013 festival guests include:** director **Tom Berninger** and producer **Craig Charland** (*Mistaken for Strangers*); **Jeremy Oxley**, frontman of the '80s Australian eighties band The Sunnyboys, director **Kaye Harrison**, producer **Tom Zubrycki** and subjects **Mary Oxley** and **Peter Oxley** (*The Sunnyboy*); **Miss Nikki** and director **Juliet Lamont** (*Miss Nikki and the Tiger Girls*), director **Steven McGregor**, producers Rachel Clements and Lisa Watts, and subjects **Neil Murray**, **Sammy Butcher** and **Suzina McDonald** (*Big Name No Blanket*); Australian Director **Ned Lander**, producer **Graeme Isaac** and members of the cast (*Wrong Side of the Road*).

**Sydney Film Festival celebrates its 60th anniversary this 5-16 June bringing a packed program of screenings and special events to even more venues across Sydney.** The full program will be announced on **Wednesday 8 May 2013. Flexi passes are now on sale.** For tickets and full up-to-date program information please visit [www.sff.org.au](http://www.sff.org.au).

---

**ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animations across the city at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, the Art Gallery of NSW and the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne. 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](http://www.sff.org.au)

Sydney Film Festival also presents twelve films that vie for the 'Official Competition'; a highly respected international 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 Festival Official Competition winners include: *Alps* (2012), *A Separation* (2011) – which went on to win an Academy Award®, *Heartbeats* (2010), *Bronson* (2009) and *Hunger* (2008).

Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners



The 60th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia, and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

**What:** Sydney Film Festival

**When:** 5-16 June, 2013

**Tickets & Info:** 1300 733 733 [www.sff.org.au](http://www.sff.org.au)

---

## MEDIA ENQUIRIES

**Charlotte Greig** Publicity Manager **Sydney Film Festival**

E: [charlotte@sff.org.au](mailto:charlotte@sff.org.au) P: 02 9690 5314 M: 0404 111 919

**Amber Forrest-Bisley** Director **Cardinal Spin**

E: [amber@cardinalspin.com.au](mailto:amber@cardinalspin.com.au) P: 02 8065 7363 M: 0405 363 817

**Matt Fraser** Communications Advisor **Cardinal Spin**

E: [matt@cardinalspin.com.au](mailto:matt@cardinalspin.com.au) M: 0401 326 007

Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners

