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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES EXPANDED FAMILY & YOUTH PROGRAM

The 63rd Sydney Film Festival announces a program of seven family-friendly programs, to screen at the Festival, with weekend daytime sessions to suit families and children of all ages. The Festival is also delighted to welcome teenagers to screenings for the first time.

93 Festival feature films are rated 15+ making them accessible to audiences under the age of 18 years old; a result of changes to the Australian classification rules allowing the Festival to assess films using the criteria set out in the National Classification Code, instead of applying the 18+ mandatory default classification required in previous years.

Family Films Programmer **Clare Sawyer** said, “This year’s selection will take audiences on a journey from 19th Century Russia with the 2015 Anecy Animated Film Festival Audience Award-winner **Long Way North**, to contemporary France and Canada with **Miss Impossible** and **Coconut Hero**. Some eagerly awaited studio films have also been included in the mix, and for the first time teens between 15 and 18, hungry for diverse and edgy cinema, will have a plethora of choice.”

Festival audiences can be the first to see two of the most anticipated family films of the year: adventure comedy **Ice Age: Collision Course** and the Cannes-selected **The BFG** directed by Steven Spielberg. Adults too will love this program, which is brimming with festival-quality feature-length films suitable for all ages including **Coconut Hero**, the new Australian feature **Girl Asleep**, **Long Way North** and **Miss Impossible**.

A special selection of animated short films from around the world, for children aged three and above, have been curated by the Festival’s animation specialist **Malcolm Turner** and can be seen in the **Kids Animation Showcase** (Saturday 11 June, 12:00pm).

The SFF 2016 family program includes:

THE BFG

USA | 2016 | 110 Minutes | In English

Director: *Steven Spielberg* | Producers: *Steven Spielberg, Frank Marshall, Sam Mercer*

Screenwriter: *Melissa Mathison* | Cast: *Mark Rylance, Ruby Barnhill, Penelope Wilton, Jemaine Clement, Rebecca Hall, Rafe Spall, Bill Hader*

Directed by Spielberg, Disney’s *The BFG* tells the imaginative story of a young girl and the Giant who introduces her to the wonders and perils of Giant Country.

COCONUT HERO

Germany, Canada | 2015 | 101 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Director: *Florian Cossen* | Screenwriter: *Elena von Saucken* | Producers: *Jochen Laube, Fabian*

Maubach | Cast: *Alex Ozerov, Bea Santos, Krista Bridges* | World Sales: *Beta Cinema*

This warm-hearted Canadian feature revolves around the baby-faced Mikey, a loner who seems to blunder everything – even a suicide attempt. When the obituary he listed runs in the local paper

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anyway, Mikey is humiliated, but a network of vibrant supporting characters help restore his faith in life's pleasures. Sensitive to the difficult issues it deals with, this sweet indie depicts hope, despair and small-town life in an idiosyncratic and intimate way.

GIRL ASLEEP

Australia | 2015 | 77 mins | In English

Director: Rosemary Myers | Screenwriter: Matthew Whittet | Producer: Jo Dyer | Cast: Bethany Whitmore, Harrison Feldman, Matthew Whittet | Distributor: Umbrella Entertainment

A festival hit that turns being a confused 14-year-old into a unique world of wonder. Rosemary Myers' feature debut is a journey into the absurdities of the teenage mind. Navigating puberty in 1970s suburbia, Greta doesn't want to grow up. Her surprise birthday party is on track to be the worst night of her life – until she's flung into an odd fairy-tale universe with a warrior princess. Filled with wild musical flourishes and moments of colourful theatrics, *Girl Asleep* resists the adult world as much as its lead character.

ICE AGE: COLLISION COURSE

USA | 2016 | 100 mins | In English | VIP Premiere

Directors: Mike Thurmeier, Galen T Chu | Screenwriter: Michael Berg | Producer: Lori Forte | Cast: Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Denis Leary, Seann William Scott, Simon Pegg, Jennifer Lopez, Queen Latifah, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Jessie J | Distributor: Twentieth Century Fox Film Distribution

Scrat's epic pursuit of the elusive acorn catapults him into the universe where he accidentally sets off a series of cosmic events that transform and threaten the Ice Age World. To save themselves, Sid, Manny, Diego, and the rest of the herd must leave their home and embark on a quest full of comedy and adventure, travelling to exotic new lands and encountering a host of colorful new characters.

LONG WAY NORTH

France, Denmark | 2015 | 81 mins | In French with English subtitles

Director: Rémi Chayé | Screenwriters: Claire Paoletti, Patricia Valeix, Fabrice de Costil | Producers: Ron Dyens, Claus Toksvig, Henri Magalon | Cast: Christa Théret, Féodor Aktine, Antony Hickling | Distributor: Rialto Distribution

Gorgeously animated and joyously told, this enchanting tale of a girl's journey to the North Pole will charm audiences young and old. Both the 19th century Russian Court and Sasha's family have given up on ever seeing her adventurer grandfather, but courageous 15-year-old Sasha sets out to prove them all wrong. Fans of female-led adventure stories like *Brave* and *Frozen* will be equally captivated by this award winning animation.

KIDS ANIMATION SHOWCASE

A special selection of animated short films chosen for a discerning your audience. Expect lots of clever animals, plenty of laughs and the odd scary moment for good measure! Suitable for children aged 3-8 years.

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MISS IMPOSSIBLE

France | 2016 | 90 mins | In French with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

Director: *Emilie Deleuze* | Screenwriters: *Emilie Deleuze, Marie Desplechin, Laurent Guyot* |

Producers: *Tatiana Bouchain, Patric Sobelman* | Cast: *Léna Magnien, Raphaëlle Doyle, Patricia Mazuy* | World Sales: *Doc and Film International*

Aurore is never happy; not with her family, school, teachers or friends. And unlike her sisters, she's a real handful! It's going to take a gutsy new teacher, not scared off by her insolence, and some young guys in a cool band who want Aurore to join them, for her to break through and find her true and better self. With gentle humour, the film demonstrates that when you're 13 years old, everything is easier said than done.

Sydney Film Festival runs 8 – 19 June 2016.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2016 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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***Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 8 June** to **Sunday 19 June 2016**, the 63rd Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth 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 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: *Arabian Nights* (2015); *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011); *Heartbeats* (2010); *Bronson* (2009); and *Hunger* (2008).

The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, 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 63rd 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. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

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