



MEDIA RELEASE

WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2015

THE 62ND SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL BEGINS

The 62nd Sydney Film Festival opened tonight at the State Theatre with the World Premiere of Australian film *Ruben Guthrie*.

Festival Director **Nashen Moodley** was pleased to open his fourth Festival to a packed auditorium including; the film's director **Brendan Cowell**; producer **Kath Shelper**; executive producer **Jonathan Duncan**; actors, **Patrick Brammall**, **Alex Dimitriadis**, **Harriet Dyer**, **Jeremy Sims**, **Aaron Bertram**, **Robyn Nevin**, **Jack Thompson**, **Laura Dundovic**, **Elly Oh** and **Leon Ford**; and musicians **Sarah Blasko** and **Art vs Science**.

NSW Minister for the Arts, Troy Grant, spoke at the Opening Night Gala, saying Australian films are the strong flavour of this year's festival. "The local film industry is firing on all cylinders with over 51 Australian productions screened over 12 days at this year's festival including; six features, 10 feature-length documentaries, 12 short documentaries, and 22 short fiction films, together with some of the best cinema in the world," he said.

"Sydney is already the film capital of Australia, we're now setting our sights on the Southern Hemisphere. This will require a co-ordinated effort from Screen NSW, other government agencies and industry to lure more big productions to Sydney."

Lord Mayor Clover Moore also spoke, welcoming audiences to come and experience all the Festival has to offer, including the **Festival Hub** at Sydney's Town Hall. "Sydney is only the second city ever to be nominated as a UNESCO city of film. I encourage everyone to come to see the latest cinema from our own filmmakers and from filmmakers across the globe; to hear stories from different cultures, about different ideas and different ways of life; and with fresh eyes, take a look at who we are as Australians," she said.

SFF Opening Night is presented by Lexus Australia. **Sean Hanley, Chief Executive, Lexus Australia** said "Lexus' proud partnership with the Sydney Film Festival confirms the brand's commitment to positioning the brand in exciting new areas as we broaden our appeal and bring Lexus to new audiences."

"In addition, tonight's relaunch of the global Lexus Short Films initiative with an exciting new format underlines Lexus' commitment to unearthing up-and-coming film directors both in Australia and overseas."

Ruben Guthrie is the directorial debut of award-winning playwright, screenwriter and actor **Brendan Cowell**, adapted from his own critically acclaimed Belvoir St Theatre production. The film, produced

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by **Kath Shelper**, was shot on location all over Sydney; and the cast is a gathering of some of the best Australian actors, including **Patrick Brammall**, **Alex Dimitriadis**, **Abbey Lee**, **Harriet Dyer**, **Jeremy Sims**, **Brenton Thwaites**, **Aaron Bertram**, **Robyn Nevin** and **Jack Thompson**.

Also in attendance: SFF Patrons **Jan Chapman AO**, **Gillian Armstrong AM**; SFF Official Competition jury member **Pen-ek Ratanaruang**.

A long list of SFF 2015 filmmakers also attended, including; **Ewen Leslie**, *The Daughter* actor; **Simon Stone**, *The Daughter* director; **Jan Chapman** and **Nicole O'Donohue** *The Daughter* producers; Jennifer Peedom, *Sherpa* director; **Kim Farrant**, *Strangerland* director; **Partho Sen-Gupta**, *Sunrise* director; **Adil Hussain**, *Sunrise* actor, **Ramin Bahrani**, *99 Homes* director; **Guido Gonzalez** and **Shakthi Sivanathan**, *Riz* directors; **Jeremy Sims**, *Last Cab to Darwin* director; **Fred Nicolas**, *Max & Lenny* director.

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.

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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