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EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01am WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2016

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FIRST FILMS FOR 2016

The 63rd Sydney Film Festival today announced 26 new films to be featured in this year's 8-19 June event, plus a Martin Scorsese retrospective curated by David Stratton. Also revealed in advance of the full program launch of 200+ films on Wednesday 11 May, is the first of over 150 Festival guests: two time Oscar-winning director Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, is confirmed to attend the Festival in June.

"Now here's a sneak peek that's sure to whet your appetite for this year's festival!" said Festival Director **Nashen Moodley**. "These 26 films may just be a taste of what's coming, but they already make for a compelling selection of the best in features and documentaries. These are films that can change your mind, change your mood and change the way you look at the world. From big stars and big ideas to small but perfectly formed stories of truth and imagination, there's something for all kinds of film lovers here," he said.

Leading the titles announced today in the Festival's sneak peek are **Demolition** from *Dallas Buyers Club* director **Jean-Marc Vallée**, starring **Jake Gyllenhaal** ("his best performance since *Brokeback Mountain*" - *Variety*), and Australian **Naomi Watts**; off-beat romantic comedy **Maggie's Plan**, starring **Ethan Hawke**, Oscar-winner **Julianne Moore**, **Greta Gerwig** (*Frances Ha*, SFF 2016) and Australian **Travis Fimmel**; and cultural giant of European cinema **Alexander Sokurov's** love letter to the Louvre, **Francofonia**, a follow up to *Russian Ark*.

Other feature highlights include two films that pay homage to the 1980s: Irish comedy **Sing Street**, a film that bursts with '80s sounds and a stellar Irish cast including **Aidan Gillen** (GOT) from John Carney (*Begin Again*, SFF 2014); and acclaimed *Boyhood* director **Richard Linklater's** ode to the decade **Everybody Wants Some!!**, a "spiritual sequel" to his high school-set 1993 film **Dazed and Confused**.

True stories on offer include Sundance 2016 Grand Jury Prize for US Documentary winner **Weiner**, an explosive film following former congressman Anthony Weiner, the subject of two sexting scandals, and his wife Huma Abedin (long-time aide to Hillary Clinton); **A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers**, by Festival guest and two time Oscar-winning filmmaker **Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy** and co-director **Geeta Gandbhir**, following 160 predominantly Muslim Bangladeshi policewomen on a difficult mission overseas; the eye-opening Janis Joplin biopic **Janis: Little Girl in Blue**; and American experimental artist **Laurie Anderson's** avant-garde journey through love and loss in **Heart of a Dog**.

In 2016 the Festival will continue to bring films from the world's top film festivals to venues across Sydney including **The State Theatre, Dendy Opera Quays, the Art Gallery of NSW, Event Cinemas George Street, the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Dendy Newtown, Casula Powerhouse, and the Skyline Drive In Blacktown**, as official festival screening venues. Cutting edge and experimental cinema arts will also be returning to the Sydney Film Festival's **Festival Hub** at Sydney's Town Hall.

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Of the 36 films announced in the preview, 17 are new features and nine are new documentaries including 22 Australian Premieres, and 10 are iconic works of cinema to be screened on 35mm prints - the retrospective program **Essential Scorsese: Selected by David Stratton**. The selection features **Taxi Driver (40 years on)**, **Goodfellas**, **Raging Bull** and **The Age of Innocence** amongst others. Stratton, who was SFF's Festival Director from 1966 to 1983, will introduce selected screenings.

Prestigious new features included in the preview are Terence Davies' **Sunset Song**, an adaptation of Lewis Grassic Gibbons' Scottish literary classic of the same name, starring English model turned actress **Agness Deyn** in a role that celebrates the strength of women; and winner of the Golden Globe Lion at the 2015 Venice Film Festival **Desde allá (From Afar)**, a first feature from Venezuelan writer-director Lorenzo Vigas exploring an unlikely romance between a street kid and an older man.

Edgy features include renowned Indonesian director **Joko Anwar's (Joni's Promise, SFF 2005) A Copy of My Mind**, a romantic, political and sexy new drama providing comment on Indonesia's political climate and insight into the lives of everyday Jakarta residents; striking black and white film **Tharlo**, winner of the 2015 Tokyo Filmex Grand Prize by Tibetan filmmaker Pema Tsenden; and Chad Hartigan's multi-Sundance 2016 award winner **Morris from America**, a hip-hop infused portrait of an African-American teenager in a new land.

Outstanding documentaries remain essential to the Festival, and this year's Festival has a strong focus on entertaining and enlightening films from factual filmmakers around the world. **Sonita** follows filmmaker Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami and her subject, rapping Afghani refugee Sonita Alizadeh - activist and social media sensation, as their stories intersect and entwine in unexpected ways.

No Home Movie is a moving portrait of the late avant-garde Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman's (*Jeanne Dielman, 1975*) relationship with her mother, a Polish immigrant and Auschwitz survivor. Multi awardwinning and acclaimed director **Werner Herzog** explores the Internet and the connected world in **Lo and Behold: Reveries of the Connected**. The powerful **Mr. Gaga** celebrates influential choreographer, Israeli Ohad Naharin, artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company.

The 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.

The full Sydney Film Festival program will be announced on Wednesday 11 May at 11am.

Note: Flexipasses and subscriptions to Sydney Film Festival 2016 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit <http://www.sff.org.au> for more information.

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

EDITORS NOTES

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), 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, 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.

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.

DOCUMENTARIES

A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES: PEACEKEEPERS

Director: Geeta Gandbhir, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy | USA, Pakistan | 95 mins | In English, Bengali and Creole with English subtitles

The inspiring story of a group of Bangladeshi policewomen, who join a UN peacekeeping mission to Haiti, directed by two-time Oscar winner Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy and Geeta Gandbhir. The primary focus isn't the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated Haiti in 2010, but rather the struggles of

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the Muslim police officers who attempt to balance family and community expectations with their personal ambitions. Once in Port-au-Prince, with little training or experience, these mothers – and breadwinners – struggle with homesickness, stolen weapons and a volatile environment, which is only intensified when the UN mission is accused of spreading cholera. The filmmakers follow the women throughout their preparations, mission and eventual return home to Dhaka – where they face fresh challenges – providing a rare insight into the lives of modern Muslim women. Also screening in this year's Festival is Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's 2016 Oscar winning short documentary, *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness*, on the subject of honour killings in Pakistan.

A GIRL IN THE RIVER: THE PRICE OF FORGIVENESS

Director: Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy | Pakistan | 39 mins | In Punjabi and Urdu with English subtitles
This is a short.

HEART OF A DOG

Director: Laurie Anderson | USA | 75 mins | In English

Artist and musician Laurie Anderson's poignant meditation on love, childhood, stories and belief, is also an ode to her late mother, partner Lou Reed and beloved dog Lolabelle. Anderson's distinctive voice and music guide us through a progression of dreamy, often humorous images, including home movies, dog photos and animations. The artist's memories of family and childhood, philosophical reflections on belief and grieving, modern day surveillance, and most importantly her much-loved terrier, are melded into an intimate essay-style film. It's been described by Anderson as 'a story about how stories work—how you forget your own story, how you repeat your own story, how somebody else's story gets plastered onto you'. Her last feature, *Home of the Brave*, was 30 years ago. In her inspired return to the art form, she has produced a unique and intensely personal work.

JANIS: LITTLE GIRL BLUE

Director: Amy Berg | USA | 106 mins | In English

Uncompromising rocker Janis Joplin, as you've never known her before: an eye-opening documentary featuring unseen footage, private letters and interviews with band members. Joplin died at age 27 from a heroin overdose, within a few short years of Jimi Hendrix, Brian Jones and Jim Morrison – the quartet later tagged the '27 Club'. Her tragic early death turned her into an icon, and in the process the woman and her talent were diminished. Oscar-nominated director, Amy Berg, with access to Joplin's personal letters (read by singer Cat Power) and previously unseen footage and interviews, looks behind the myth. She charts the evolution of Joplin from her 1950s Texan home-town, to San Francisco in the era of hippie-dom and psychedelia, to her breakout performance at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival. Most importantly, the film celebrates Joplin's raw, brazen talent, and the clout of her unmistakable gravelly voice.

LO AND BEHOLD: REVERIES OF THE CONNECTED

Director: Werner Herzog | USA | 98 mins | In English

Werner Herzog, director of such beloved classics of the non-fiction realm as *Grizzly Man* and *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, turns his inimitable eye on the evolution of the Internet. Herzog tackles this ambitious topic in 10 chapters; beginning with the birth of the phenomena in a drab University of California room, continuing through themes such as hacking, addiction, online harassment, and artificial intelligence. His interviews with pioneers, experts, geeks and other visionaries are

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frequently downright playful, despite the often chilling content. He explores everything from computer games and self-driving cars to cellular-free zones and artificial intelligence with his trademark scepticism and curiosity. And finally, Herzog confronts the future with probing questions about the role that the Internet itself will play in shaping society's morals and dreams.

MR. GAGA

Director: Tomer Heymann | Israel, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands | 100 mins | In English and Hebrew with English subtitles

This multi-award winning documentary chronicles the life and work of modern dance choreographer Ohad Naharin, offering a glimpse into the artistic genius' creative process. Filmmaker Tomer Heymann, who has known Ohad Naharin for more than 20 years, spent eight of those making this documentary. In the process, he interviewed Naharin's friends, dancers and colleagues. He also filmed rehearsals at the Batsheva Dance Company in Tel Aviv, where the sinuous Naharin has been artistic director and choreographer since 1990. Naharin himself speaks of his early kibbutz childhood, his late introduction to dance, a brief spell at Martha Graham's company, his adored wife, and his work, including the creation of his own movement language, Gaga. This richness of Naharin's life-story is further amplified by stunning dance excerpts from his explosive, hypnotic and stylish productions.

NO HOME MOVIE

Director: Chantal Akerman | Belgium, France | 115 mins | In English, French and Spanish with English subtitles

The final film by influential Belgian director Chantal Akerman (*Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, 1975) is a profoundly moving mother-and-daughter portrait. Akerman's mother, Natalia, a Polish Jew who survived Auschwitz, is now a frail old woman mostly confined to her Brussels apartment. Her life experiences and chronic anxiety have had a significant impact on her daughter, influencing the filmmaker's frequent exploration of themes such as gender, sex, solitude and cultural identity. Akerman probes her mother's fading memories, both in person and online, against the background of routine mundanities. In the final months of her mother's life, Akerman endeavours to capture the stories that will soon vanish for good. Tragically, having died in October 2015, this is also the last story that Akerman will tell.

SONITA

Director: Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami | Germany, Switzerland, Iran | 91 mins | In English and Farsi with English subtitles

This year's winner of the world documentary Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award at Sundance is the story of how a gutsy Afghani refugee's love of rap music changed her life. Sonita, an undocumented exile, lives in Tehran with her sister and young niece. The teenager dreams of being a superstar rapper, an ambition at odds with the Iranian regime and Afghani traditions. Sonita's long-unseen mother pays her a surprise visit: she's decided to sell her daughter as a bride, so they can buy her brother a wife. At this point, the film's director Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami takes a pivotal role in Sonita's life – firstly by deferring the wedding plans, and then entering her into an online rap competition. Sonita's fate hangs in the balance. This is an absorbing look at the evolution of a teenager from dreamer to budding activist, which simultaneously calls into question the role of a filmmaker.

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WEINER

Director: Josh Kriegman, Elyse Steinberg | USA | 95 mins | In English

This absorbing exposé of Anthony ‘sexting scandal’ Weiner’s 2013 New York mayoral campaign won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. In 2011, Weiner resigned from Congress after being shamed for sending a sexually explicit photograph of himself via Twitter. His wife Huma Abedin, who happens to be Hillary Clinton’s top aide, stood by him throughout. When news breaks of Weiner’s return to Twitter, using the moniker ‘Carlos Danger’, the mayoral bid falls apart. The frustration of his supporters and cool-headed wife (the Clinton parallel is unmistakable), along with the media’s outraged and often comical response, pales beside the jaw-dropping reaction of Weiner himself. Filmmakers Kriegman (a former Weiner aide) and Steinberg enjoyed unconstrained access to the charismatic, erudite politician and the result is fascinating viewing.

FEATURES

A COPY OF MY MIND

Director: Joko Anwar | Indonesia, South Korea | 116 mins | In Indonesian with English subtitles

An unlikely romance blossoms between a film-loving beautician and an amateur DVD bootlegger against the turbulent socio-political backdrop of contemporary Jakarta. Sari (Tara Basro), when not working at the salon, spends her spare time watching monster movies on pirated DVDs. When she complains about dodgy subtitles on one of her discs, she’s introduced to the man who ineptly subtitles them, Alek (Chicco Jerikho). What starts as a fun, erotic, yet decidedly peculiar affair is quickly jeopardised. The couple’s lives are put in grave danger when they discover that a disc stolen by Sari contains evidence of government corruption. Joko Anwar’s fifth film (his debut, *Joni’s Promise*, screened at SFF 2005) masterfully shifts gears from charming, low-key romance to a suspenseful and immersive depiction of urban Jakarta and Indonesia’s political climate.

A WAR

Director: Tobias Lindholm | Denmark | 116 mins | In Danish with English subtitles

Director Tobias Lindholm and actor Pilou Asbæk reunite following their collaboration on *A Hijacking* (SFF 2013) in this riveting and complex exploration of Denmark’s role in the Afghan war. Asbæk (*Borgen*, *Game of Thrones*) is company commander Claus M. Pedersen stationed in an Afghan province. Back in Denmark, his wife Maria tries to keep things together, caring for their three children who desperately miss their father. During a routine mission, the soldiers are caught in heavy crossfire and in order to save his men, Claus makes a decision that has grave consequences. Casting former Danish soldiers and Afghan refugees, Lindholm has created a realistic, gripping film that looks at the moral dilemmas and personal consequences faced by those in war zones. Equally adept at tension-filled scenes of armed conflict as it is with the emotional repercussions, *A War* is a meticulous and exceptional film.

ANGRY INDIAN GODDESSES

Director: Pan Nalin | India, Germany | 104 mins | In English and Hindi with English subtitles

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Dubbed India's answer to *Bridesmaids*, this female buddy movie from acclaimed director Pan Nalin (*Samsara*) presents a refreshingly frank portrait of women in India today. Ahead of Frieda's pending nuptials, a group of her closest friends gather to catch up on lost time at her beachside home in Goa. The diverse bunch includes a singer, photographer, actress, activist, a trophy wife and a businesswoman. Their conversation flows freely and jubilantly, leading to revealing and often hilarious discussions that span everything from sex to gender politics to the handsome guy next door. That is until an incident threatens to break their newly formed bond. An audience favourite at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival, *Angry Indian Goddesses* is a riotous, genre-bending gem that explores the pressing issues of gender and sexism in contemporary Indian society.

DEMOLITION

Director: Jean-Marc Vallée | USA | 101 mins | In English

Jake Gyllenhaal shines alongside Naomi Watts in Jean-Marc Vallée's darkly comic drama about a man attempting to rebuild his life after the devastating loss of his wife. Davis Mitchell (Gyllenhaal), a successful investment banker, struggles after losing his wife in a car crash. Instead of grieving as expected, he writes elaborate, revealing letters of complaint to a vending machine company. The letters catch the attention of customer service representative, Karen (Watts) and the two form an unlikely connection. Meanwhile, Davis sets about understanding and rebuilding his life by taking everything in it apart, piece by piece. Vallée (*Wild*, *Dallas Buyers Club*, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*) daringly defies convention in this constantly surprising and frequently very funny film built around Gyllenhaal's standout performance.

DESDE ALLA (FROM AFAR)

Director: Lorenzo Vigas | Venezuela | 93 mins | In Spanish with English subtitles

Winner of the Golden Lion at Venice, this story of a middle-aged man's affair with a young street thug is a tense study of class conflict and desire in Venezuela's capital. *Desde Alla* translates to 'from afar', a title that aptly captures the literal and figurative distances that characterise this impressive debut feature from director Lorenzo Vigas. Wealthy, closeted Armando (Alfredo Castro) cruises the streets of Caracas looking for young men to pay for look-but-don't-touch sexual activities. When one of these clients assaults and robs him, he decides to track him down rather than report the incident. Quite unexpectedly, a relationship develops between these two very different but equally disenfranchised men. With an exacting visual style reminiscent of Michael Haneke, this absorbing and psychologically nuanced character study marks the arrival of an exciting new filmmaker.

EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!!

Director: Richard Linklater | USA | 117 mins | In English

Richard Linklater's follow-up to *Boyhood* (SFF 2014) is an infectiously funny 'spiritual sequel' to his cult classic *Dazed and Confused* about college kids in the early '80s. Set during the first weekend of university, Linklater's new film picks up where *Dazed and Confused* ended, at the tail end of the '70s with characters just about to finish high school. Jake, played by charismatic newcomer Blake Jenner, arrives at his Texan university and moves into the house reserved for the baseball team. In the space of a couple of days, he gets acquainted with his teammates – some friendly and welcoming, others less so. What follows for the group is a whirlwind weekend of drinking, dope-smoking, clubbing, chasing girls and ultimately bonding. The result is a hugely enjoyable, comedic romp, peppered with unforgettable punchlines, and crafted with much affection.

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FRANCOFONIA

Director: Alexander Sokurov | France, Germany, Netherlands | 87 mins | In French, Russian and German with English subtitles

After his love letter to the Hermitage Museum in *Russian Ark* (2002), the master Sokurov turns his gaze to the Louvre and the astonishing collaboration that preserved its treasures. Using a combination of fiction and documentary to dazzling effect, Sokurov (*Faust*, SFF 2012) tells the story of Louvre director Jacques Jaujard and Nazi occupation officer Count Franziskus Wolff-Metternich. Their unlikely alliance during World War II ensured that the Louvre's artworks stayed in France and survived the war. Alongside this historical account, Sokurov creates a contemporary tale of a distressed ship carrying the contents of a museum, and through Skype calls with the captain, discusses the notion of art in peril. In his sophisticated and profound cinematic essay, Sokurov deftly and movingly, appraises the value of art to humanity, particularly in times of conflict.

MAGALLANES

Director: Salvador del Solar | Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Spain | 109 mins | In Spanish with English subtitles

This suspenseful political thriller reaches deep into Peru's long-troubled history to tell a moving tale of a man's quest for redemption. Taxi driver Magallanes (Damián Alcázar) struggles to get by, and spends his spare time with his former military superior, a once-feared colonel during the civil conflict, who is now senile. One day Magallanes encounters Celina (Magaly Solier), an indigenous woman he knew decades before under very different circumstances. He begins following her, eager to help and protect her when he discovers that she is in trouble with nasty loan sharks. Magallanes decides that the only solution to Celina's troubles is a dangerous extortion scheme; one that will unearth a history of terrible abuse. Director del Solar has made a tense thriller with a strong humanist core, resulting in an unforgettable and emotional film.

MAGGIE'S PLAN

Director: Rebecca Miller | USA | 99 mins | In English

Greta Gerwig, Ethan Hawke and Julianne Moore star in this witty New York comedy about modern relationships from writer-director Rebecca Miller (*The Private Lives of Pippa Lee*, SFF 2009). Just when career advisor Maggie (Gerwig) decides to put her romantic misadventures behind her and embark on motherhood alone through artificial insemination, love blossoms with anthropology professor John (Hawke). To be with her, he ends his marriage to brilliant but domineering academic Georgette (Moore) – however, things with John don't go quite as Maggie had hoped. With a little help from married couple Tony (Bill Hader) and Felicia (Maya Rudolph), Maggie devises a madcap scheme to put everything right again. A delight from start to finish, *Maggie's Plan* is a satirical take on the follies of New York intelligentsia that both recalls and refreshes the Woody Allen model.

MORRIS FROM AMERICA

Director: Chad Hartigan | USA, Germany | 89 mins | In English and German with English subtitles

Winner of the Sundance Screenwriting Award, this is a fresh, funny film about how a shy African-American teen who relocates to Germany deals with culture shock and first love. 13-year-old Morris (Markees Christmas) finds himself entering puberty in the unfamiliar world of Heidelberg, Germany, a city rich in history, but seriously lacking in diversity. Alienated by both his lack of German, and the

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nastiness of the local kids, Morris is entirely reliant on his close relationship with his single father Curtis (Craig Robinson, *The Office*), with whom he shares a love of hip hop. That all changes when Morris falls in love with beautiful and rebellious 15-year-old local Katrin and their growing friendship starts to threaten the strong bond he has with his father. All the while, Morris harbours dreams of hip-hop stardom, and this strange new world may well provide the inspiration he needs to make this happen.

MUSTANG

Director: Deniz Gamze Ergüven | Turkey, France, Qatar, Germany | 94 mins | In Turkish with English subtitles

Winner of a Cannes Directors' Fortnight, six Césars and an Oscar nomination, this Turkish gem is a powerful portrait of sisterhood. On the last day of school in a village in northern Turkey, five lively sisters splash around on the beach with their male classmates. Their innocent games catch the eye of a nosy neighbour, who reports what she considers to be their illicit behaviour to the orphaned girls' overbearing grandmother and domineering uncle. The family overreacts, confiscating all 'instruments of corruption' like cell phones and computers. The girls become prisoners in their own home, forced to endure endless lessons in housework in preparation for marriage. Deniz Gamze Ergüven's debut is an understated, heartfelt feminist drama that highlights the sisters' fierce unity and resilience, and the bittersweet loss of their childhood.

SING STREET

Director: John Carney | Ireland | 105 mins | In English

John Carney's latest is a beguiling portrait of '80s Dublin, complete with stone-washed denim, wild haircuts and a nostalgic soundtrack of The Cure, Duran Duran and The Police. Forced to downsize amid Ireland's crippling recession, middle child Conor (Ferdia Walsh Peelo) must leave the comfort of his private school for its counterpart, a tough inner city public school. Bullied there and ignored at home, Conor forms a band in an attempt to woo a mysterious girl he spots across the schoolyard. *Sing Street* is a wonderfully authentic, sweet-natured tale of music's life saving abilities. Carney (*Begin Again*, SFF 2014; *Once*, SFF 2007) has mined his own teenage years, to deliver a fresh take on the teen musical genre, while giving a knowing wink to the decade that style forgot. And in true Carney fashion, he has composed some superb new songs that will stay in your head for weeks.

SUNSET SONG

Director: Terence Davies | UK, Luxembourg | 135 mins | In English

Legendary British director Terence Davies offers a richly cinematic take on a classic of Scottish literature, starring model turned actress Agyness Deyn and Peter Mullan. In rural Scotland, with WWI looming, Chris (Deyn) is a woman fighting her own war. Her father John (Mullan, *My Name is Joe*) is a fiery, brutish farmer, and both her mother Jean (Daniela Nardini) and brother Will (Jack Greenless) suffer from his abuse. Chris dreams of becoming a schoolteacher, though it's the land itself that exerts the greatest pull over her. The landscapes of *Sunset Song* – shot seamlessly between both Scotland and New Zealand – are absolutely ravishing. But it's director Terence Davies' (*Distant Voices*, *Still Lives*) realisation of Chris's struggle for independence against all odds that resonates the deepest, and provides the film with its indelible emotional core.

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THARLO

Director: Pema Tseden | China | 123 mins | In Tibetan with English subtitles

During a visit to a nearby town, the peaceful life of a reclusive Tibetan shepherd is upended by romance and bureaucracy, in this visually stunning black and white drama. “I know who I am. Isn’t that enough?” says Tharlo (played exquisitely by Shide Nyima), when a local policeman tells him to get a photo ID card. This simple process leads him to see his own life with fresh eyes, aided by his growing affection for local hairdresser Yangchuo (Yang Shik Tso). Her intentions, however, are not as pure as they initially appear. This fourth feature film from Pema Tseden comments incisively on the clash between tradition and modernity that defines life in contemporary Tibet. A slow-burning heartbreaker that unfolds with fable-like simplicity, *Tharlo* demands to be seen on a big screen for its austere, enveloping beauty.

THE COMMUNE

Director: Thomas Vinterberg | Denmark | 112 mins | In Danish with English subtitles

Trine Dyrholm won the Best Actress award at the Berlinale for her terrific performance in this new ‘70s-set drama by acclaimed Danish director Thomas Vinterberg (*The Celebration*, *The Hunt*). Vinterberg’s experience of living in a commune between the ages of seven and 19 has inspired this affectionate and moving film about the joys and perils of communal life. Anna (Dyrholm) and Erik (frequent collaborator Ulrich Thomsen), a professional couple with an adolescent daughter, inherit a large house, which they decide to populate with friends and eccentrics. Celebrating with a group nude swim, these idealists and dreamers begin the process of negotiating their new, joint life. This tense and humour-filled arrangement ultimately results in togetherness. A love affair, however, threatens to destroy this hard-won solidarity. *The Commune* is a gentle portrait of a generation finding a balance between its ideals and its reality.

THE DEVIL’S CANDY

Director: Sean Byrne | USA | 90 mins | In English

Heavy metal music, dark forces and a dream home with a hefty hidden cost are the elements of this red-hot horror by Australian writer-director Sean Byrne (*The Loved Ones*). *The Devil’s Candy* grabs you from the get-go with characters you care about – and a thumping soundtrack full of clamorous cuts by bands like Slayer, Metallica and Sunn O))), Ethan Embry is spot-on as Jesse Hellman, an artist who uses heavy metal music for inspiration. He’s a loving husband to wife Astrid (Shiri Appleby) and a great dad to teenage daughter and fellow metal fan Zooney (Kiara Glasco). When Jesse and Astrid snap up a huge Texas ranch home at a bargain-basement price, it seems like all domestic and artistic dreams have come true. The house, however, has other ideas. With local weirdo Ray added to the tasty mix, Byrne lets loose with a scary and stylish descent into madness and murder.

UNDER THE SHADOW

Director: Babak Anvari | UK, Jordan, Qatar | 84 mins | In Farsi with English subtitles

In war-torn Tehran, an evil entity invades the apartment of a mother and her young daughter. Babak Anvari’s debut combines scary supernatural suspense and potent cultural commentary. Shideh (Narges Rashidi) is a westernized woman in post-revolutionary Iran, whose past political affiliations have disqualified her from completing a medical degree. When her doctor husband is ordered to help in the long-running war with Iraq, Shideh is left to care for their daughter Dorsa (Avin Manshadi). As bombs fall on the capital and residents begin to flee, a malevolent *djinn* (genie)

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enters their home. Pure terror strikes Shideh when Dora announces the demon has promised to find her a better mother. With Shideh's sense of suffocation in a conservative society underpinning its atmosphere of mounting dread, and expertly executed fright scenes, *Under the Shadow* is a Persian horror to relish.

ESSENTIAL SCORSESE: SELECTED BY DAVID STRATTON

MEAN STREETS (1973)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 112 mins | In English

Scorsese's breakthrough feature, which is set in Manhattan's Little Italy, is a very personal exploration of the conflicts facing Harvey Keitel's protagonist as he finds himself torn between loyalties towards the Mob, the Church and his friends and family. There's a riveting performance from Robert De Niro as Keitel's dangerously reckless best friend and cinematic references to Old Hollywood as well as the French New Wave.

ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE (1974)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 112 mins | In English

In her Oscar-winning performance, Ellen Burstyn plays a young widow who leaves her home in New Mexico accompanied by her 11-year-old son and attempts to re-discover her idyllic childhood. With a supporting cast of Harvey Keitel, Kris Kristofferson, Diane Ladd and a very young Jodie Foster, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* has collected 5 wins and 11 award nominations.

TAXI DRIVER (1976)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 113 mins | In English and Spanish

Winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes, along with 4 Oscar nominations, another 21 wins and 15 award nominations *Taxi Driver* is one of the most iconic films of the 1970s. Robert De Niro stars as the social misfit, and Vietnam vet, attracted to porn and violence which leads to the film's powerfully ironic climax. The scene in which he addresses himself in the mirror ("Are you talking to me?") is one of the most famous in American cinema.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK (1977)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 155 mins | In English

Despite its title, this tribute to the Big Band era of the forties was filmed entirely in Hollywood and offers Scorsese the opportunity to evoke musical biopics like *The Glenn Miller Story*. The narrative follows saxophonist Robert De Niro and songstress Liza Minnelli – from the day World War II ended in a burst of giddy optimism and high energy to a less certain future in the disillusioned atmosphere of the fifties. Nominated for 4 Golden Globes, the musical numbers are superbly staged and the dialogue is naturalistic.

RAGING BULL (1980)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 129 mins | In English

Robert De Niro won Best Actor Oscar for portraying Middleweight boxer Jake La Motta in biopic that spans 25 years. *Raging Bull* also took home another Oscar for editing, 23 further wins and 24 nominations. Shot entirely in black and white, the film is not just about boxing, but also the human condition and about cinema itself.

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THE KING OF COMEDY (1982)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 109 mins | In English

In this black comedy about an obsessive fan, played by Robert De Niro, Scorsese seizes every opportunity to satirise the television industry. *The King of Comedy* has been named “Scorsese's forgotten masterpiece” - decried by critics and hounded out of cinemas on its initial release, the film and was only rediscovered after Scorsese helped get it into the New York Film Festival and co-financed its rerelease two decades later.

GOODFELLAS (1990)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 146 mins | In English

The Citizen Kane of gangster movies, *Goodfellas* sets out to explain the attraction mobsters held for impressionable young men in the 1950s. *Goodfellas* has won 27 awards, including one Oscar and received another 31 nominations. The world of corruption, drugs and crime collapses in an orgy of violence and destruction and is considered to be one of Scorsese's finest – and most disturbing – films.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE (1993)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA | 139 mins | In English

Based on Edith Wharton's 1920 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Age of Innocence* is Scorsese's attempt to tackle similar material to that of Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard*, which he has said is one of his favourite films. Starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer and Winona Ryder, the film is a beautifully evoked journey into the world of aristocratic New Yorkers in the 1870s. *The Age of Innocence* won 12 awards, including one Oscar and received a further 25 nominations.

CASINO (1995)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA, France | 178 mins | In English

After exploring the world of street crimes in Mean Streets and mid-level gangsters in *Goodfellas*, Scorsese enters the glittering yet tawdry world of Las Vegas in the 1970s. While De Niro and Joe Pesci are given roles rather similar to those they played in *Goodfellas*, the Oscar nominated film itself goes even further in dissecting the corruption at the heart of America.

THE AVIATOR (2004)

Director: Martin Scorsese | USA, Germany | 170 mins | In English

The Aviator is Scorsese indulging in his greatest passion – the cinema itself – in his depiction of Hughes' Hollywood career over twenty years, played by Leonardo DiCaprio. The film, which successfully attempts to duplicate the look of early Technicolor, is visually magnificent and won several Oscars, including one for Cate Blanchett as Katharine Hepburn.

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