



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00 WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 2014

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL REVEALS SOUNDS ON SCREEN: FOR MUSIC AND FILM LOVERS

Six documentary and feature films with the central theme of music make up the Sounds on Screen Program strand, supported by Foxtel's bio. channel at the 61st Sydney Film Festival.

This year's selection includes the music documentary *Pulp: A Film About Life, Death & Supermarkets*, following **Jarvis Cocker** and his iconic Britpop band on their return to hometown Sheffield for their final concert; 2014 Sundance Film Festival award-winning feature *God Help the Girl*, written and directed by Stuart Murdoch, lead singer of the group **Belle and Sebastian** and starring Australian actress **Emily Browning**; *Finding Fela!*, a politically charged documentary on the life and legacy of unorthodox Nigerian singer **Fela Kuti** directed by Alex Gibney; *Jimi: All Is By My Side*, based on the pre-fame years of **Jimi Hendrix**, starring **OutKast** frontman **André Benjamin**; *Keep on Keepin' On*, the documentary debut from Australian drummer and Festival guest **Alan Hicks**, recent winner of Best New Documentary Director and the Audience Award for Best Documentary at Tribeca, following 89-year-old jazz legend **Clark Terry** as he mentors 23-year-old blind piano prodigy **Justin Kauflin**; and the international premiere of *Johnny Winter: Down and Dirty*, an intimate reflection of Texan musician **Johnny Winter** and his life of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll.

"This line-up of films about music and musicians proves that music is a universal language – from Lagos to Sheffield, Glasgow to New York and small-town Texas – as well as an inspiration for established directors like Alex Gibney and John Ridley, and debut filmmakers like Australian Alan Hicks," said **SFF Programs Manager, Jenny Neighbour**.

SFF 2014 Sounds on Screen films:

Finding Fela!

USA | 2014 | 119 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Director: Alex Gibney | Producers: Alex Gibney, Jack Gulick | Distributor: Madman Entertainment

Fela Kuti, the superstar pioneer of Afrobeat, led a life as polyrhythmic as his music, as revealed in this latest work from the prolific Academy Award winning documentary maker Alex Gibney (*The Armstrong Lie*, *We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks* – SFF 2013). Not just a musician, Kuti was a human-rights activist, political agitator, cultural leader, nightclub owner – and a notorious ladies' man. Born into a highly educated and politicised Lagos family, he used his music to agitate as much as entertain. Despite brutal police beatings and regular raids on his family compound, he never changed tack. Gibney's film is packed with interviews and performances including funky archival footage from the '70s and '80s, full of wild jumpsuits and giant spliffs.

God Help the Girl

UK | 2014 | 111 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Director, Screenwriter: Stuart Murdoch | Producer: Barry Mendel | Cast: Emily Browning, Olly Alexander, Hannah Murray | Distributor: Transmission Films

The first feature from Belle and Sebastian's Stuart Murdoch is a poignant coming-of-age story turned indie-pop musical. Eve (Emily Browning) is a troubled dreamer with music on her mind – made clear in the first few scenes as she makes a stealthy escape from a clinic and sings her way down the streets of Glasgow. She meets James, a shy young musician, and fellow lost soul Cass (*Skins'* Hannah Murray). Together they embark on a once-in-a-lifetime summer of simple pleasures and unexpected loves, soundtracked with sweet and catchy songs (composed by Murdoch and performed by a band featuring members of Belle and Sebastian). The unique sound melds seamlessly into the narrative, much of which is autobiographical to Murdoch, swelling beautifully with the strange surrealism of musicals. The young cast are marvellous in depicting that moment when impending adulthood is thrown aside for one blissful season.

Jimi: All Is By My Side

UK, Ireland | 2013 | 118 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Director, Screenwriter: John Ridley | Producers: Sean McKittrick, Jeff Culotta, Danny Bramson, Brandon Freeman, Anthony Burns, Tristan Orpen Lynch, Nigel Thomas | Cast: André Benjamin, Hayley Atwell, Imogen Poots | Distributor: Madman Entertainment

John Ridley, who won an Oscar for his screenplay for *12 Years a Slave*, directs an unconventional biopic of the great Jimi Hendrix. With a wonderfully convincing performance by André Benjamin (better known as André 3000 of OutKast), the film looks at Hendrix before he became a rock legend. Spotted by Linda Keith (Imogen Poots) at a New York club, Hendrix is convinced to make the transition from sideman to master of his own destiny. His new manager, Chas Chandler, suggests a move to London, and it is there that Hendrix comes into his own. The film looks unflinchingly at Hendrix's tempestuous, and sometimes violent, relationship with his girlfriend Kathy (Hayley Atwell), and his encounters with the Beatles and Eric Clapton. *Jimi: All Is by My Side* is an atmospheric and persuasive look at the shaping of a great, and deeply troubled, artist.

Johnny Winter: Down & Dirty

USA | 2014 | 94 mins | In English | International Premiere

Director: Greg Olliver | Producers: Jeremy Mack, Greg Olliver, Chris Robertson | Production Company: Secret Weapon Films

Johnny Winter says playing guitar "is the only thing I've ever been great at." He's been doing it since he was a kid. It was a tough childhood; as an albino in small-town Texas, he was picked on. His appearance got him noticed, but it was his guitar playing that hit the headlines. Muddy Waters called him "one of the greatest blues players in the business." In his teens, he appeared on hit TV shows and played at Woodstock, but alcohol, drugs, hard partying (think Hendrix and the Belushis), and a dud manager brought him down. By the 1990s, he was in bad shape. But now he's back on the road with his signature lightning-fast guitar sound. Director Greg Olliver (*Lemmy*, SFF 2010), spent two years following this iconic Texas musician, creating an intimate portrait of a man who truly lived a life of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll.

Keep on Keepin' On

USA | 2014 | 84 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Director: Alan Hicks | Screenwriters: Alan Hicks, Davis Coombe | Producers: Paula DuPre' Pesmen, Quincy Jones | World Sales: Submarine Entertainment

In 2010, Australian musician/filmmaker Alan Hicks convinced his surfing mate and cinematographer, Adam Hart, to travel to the USA to film a jazz legend and his pupil. Clark Terry is one cool dude; he's still playing his horn at the age of 89. He performed with Count Basie and Duke Ellington, and taught Miles Davis and Quincy Jones. Now, despite his advanced years, he's taken on another pupil. Gifted pianist Justin Kauflin is just 23; he's been blind from a young age. Terry is getting frail, but he still has the energy to mentor his young prodigy. Seeing the two of them riffing and jiving, the age gap just disappears. Terry has been said to have the happiest sound in jazz, and debut director Hicks, winner of Best New Documentary Director and the Audience Award for Best Documentary at Tribeca, captures this quality in this bebopingly delightful documentary.

Pulp: A Film About Life, Death & Supermarkets

UK | 2014 | 90 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Director: Florian Habicht | Screenwriters: Peter O'Donoghue, Florian Habicht | Producer: Alex Boden | Distributor: Entertainment One Australia

It's the 8th of December 2012, the day of Pulp's last UK concert, and both the band and Sheffield are getting ready for a big night out. All across the northern city, Pulp fans of every shape, age and size express their pride in the hometown boys. Their devotion is reciprocated, and while frontman Jarvis Cocker and his colleagues aren't blind to the city's lack of beauty, they revel in its working-class soul. As one fellow musician puts it, "In Sheffield, you usually know the person that's mugging you." New Zealand filmmaker Florian Habicht (*Love Story*) crafts a loving portrait of this iconic Britpop band full of wit and warmth; and when the gangly, geeky genius that is Jarvis takes to the stage with gusto, and the crowd sings 'Common People', there's every chance the cinema audience will feel like joining in.

The 61st Sydney Film Festival runs 4-15 June and brings a packed program of screenings and special events to even more venues across Sydney. For tickets and full up-to-date program information visit sff.org.au

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animated films across the city at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, the Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, the Apple Store, SFFTV at Martin Place, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, and the Festival Hub at Town Hall.

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

Sydney Film Festival also presents 12 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 Prize winners include: *Only God Forgives* (2013), *Alps* (2012), *A Separation* (2011) – which went on to win an Academy Award, *Heartbeats* (2010), *Bronson* (2009) and *Hunger* (2008).

The 61st 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: 4-15 June, 2014

Tickets & Info: 1300 733 733 sff.org.au

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Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners

