
FILM CIRCUIT RELEASE SCHEDULE

SPRING/SUMMER 2006



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Toronto International Film Festival Group is a charitable, cultural and educational organization devoted to celebrating excellence in film and the moving image.

What is the Release Schedule?

The Film Circuit Release Schedule provides information about current and upcoming niche films and is designed to be used as a resource tool for programming and promotional purposes by Circuit Groups. Most importantly, it provides a guide which approximates the timing of when these titles will be available for screening on the Circuit. Space and the timeliness of distributor release information prohibit the inclusion of all related film titles and dictate the degree of synopsis detail. The Release Schedule is researched and compiled on an ongoing basis and is distributed to Groups three times a year in anticipation of the most common periods of booking activity.

What films are included in the Schedule?

The film titles included in the Release Schedule represent a selected list of Canadian and international film product expected to have a limited theatrical release pattern — i.e. films that are unlikely to gain substantial (if any) screen time outside of key markets. However, it is worth noting that the term “limited release pattern” refers to a relative condition. Although the release may be “limited,” some titles may actually spill over to include an exhibitor run in some mid-ranged or larger Circuit markets. In other words, what is “limited” for some Circuit communities may not be for others. Given this variance, the information provided here strives to cover as wide a base of films as possible.

What does the listed information mean and how should it be used?

The Release Schedule is presented in its current form to serve Groups in two ways. 1) It provides programmers with information to assist with film selection. 2) It offers publicists a set piece that they may use to promote the film.

The following is an explanation of terms found within the Release Schedule:

Availability

Availability dates are approximations and, as such, are subject to change. For example: Prior to a title’s theatrical release, the availability date can be affected by an unexpected shift in the distributor’s release strategy, which can result in a title being available later than expected. After a title’s release, a film sometimes becomes available sooner than expected when distributor booking patterns become more clearly established. When distributors have assigned a season for release but not specifically dated the film, its availability will be listed as tbd (to be determined) — e.g. Fall tbd

Video

This information is provided to offer an idea of a current title’s booking “window.” Generally, a film is released on video four to six months after its theatrical release. Despite this “yardstick,” it is not a hard-and-fast rule. When listed, the approximated video release date provided is based on the best information at the time of this printing.

Distributor

The name of the company that owns the rights to distribute the specific film title in Canada, and the company that will receive payment from Groups.

Country

The production company’s country (or countries) of origin.

Rating

Films are rated separately by each province’s film review board. When available at the time of this release, the ratings listed here have been established by the Alberta Film Classification Board (780-427-2006), British Columbia Film Classification Office (604-660-6821), Maritime Film Classification Board (902-424-4498), Manitoba Film Classification Board (204-945-0889), Ontario Film Review Board (416-314-3626) and Saskatchewan Film Classification Board (306-787-5550). If a film has not been theatrically released in Canada (at the time of this printing), it will listed as NR (not rated). If you require a rating for a film, call the appropriate provincial board as listed above.

Runtime

This listing shows the length of the film, measured in minutes. If not known at the time of publication, it will be listed as N/A (not available).

Synopsis

The synopsis is drafted from a variety of sources and generally offers the Circuit the following information:

- A “press kit”-style synopsis of the film’s central themes, characters and plot line. The presentation of this information allows the film to “put its best foot forward” and does not necessarily reflect the qualitative view of the Circuit office. – An indication of the film’s performance at major film festivals.
- The film title’s record of distinction in terms of major awards, honours and nominations.
- Particularly notable performances are highlighted.
- Quotes from favourable reviews. If a quote is not attached to the synopsis, it does not mean that favourable reviews do not exist. It means that a representative review could not be found at the time of the Release Schedule’s printing. This could be for a variety of reasons. If a film has not been released, it will either not have been exposed to the press or it will only have been reviewed at a film festival, which may not provide sufficient coverage.

Overall, we hope that the Release Schedule proves to be an entertaining and informative package which maps out a world of intriguing possibilities for Circuit Groups engaged in planning their next programme of films.

EVE & THE FIREHORSE

Director: Julia Kwan

Cast: Vivian Wu, Chan Chit Man Lester, Phoebe Jojo Kut, Hollie Lo

Runtime: 92 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English, Cantonese with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG/ BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

EVE & THE FIREHORSE, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and won Best Canadian First Film at the 2005 Calgary International Film Festival and a Special Jury Prize at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival, is a beautifully filmed journey into the world of family life, spiritualism, imagination and religion through the eyes of a young girl.

Eve (newcomer Phoebe Jojo Kut) and her sister Karena (Hollie Lo) are impressionable young ladies. Prone to letting their imaginations run wild, they are guided more by superstition than common sense. Considering that they were raised by Buddhist parents who are not particularly devout, it comes as a bit of a surprise when the daughters develop a keen interest in religion.

Karena, the oldest daughter, turns to Catholicism and tries to convert everyone, including her Sikh classmate. Eve, however, born in 1966 under the sign of the firehorse, is a little more strong-willed and treats religion as a world of wonder and play. Eve and Karena's interest in religion however is not without motivation. After the family suffers a series of misfortunes which they superstitiously connect to their mother chopping down a tree in the front yard, the girls decide to put their newfound spirituality to good use. Convinced they can turn things around through prayer and devotion, Karena, with a book entitled "Living Together in Heaven on Earth" as her guide, sets demanding and stoic tasks for the two of them to pave the road to salvation. But Eve finds it hard to stick to one religion and creates her own belief system, based on a blend of Buddhism and Catholicism (hilariously depicted in a scene with Buddha and Jesus dancing together). While Dad (Chan Chit Man Lester) views the crucifixes in the house with some irritation, Mom (Vivian Wu, 8 1/2 WOMEN) is more practical in her belief that two faiths are better than one.

Loosely based on director Julia Kwan's childhood in seventies Vancouver, EVE & THE FIREHORSE offers an endearing look at how bewildering religion can be when interpreted by young minds.

"Both a finely wrought period piece and a slice of delicately captured childhood, EVE & THE FIREHORSE reps an exceptional feature debut for young helmer-scripter Julia Kwan, who loosely based this film on her own experiences growing up Chinese in the pre-multicultural Vancouver of the seventies." – Ken Eisner, Variety

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Director: Christian Carion

Cast: Diane Kruger, Benno Fürmann, Guillaume Canet, Gary Lewis

Runtime: 115 minutes

Country: France/Germany/United Kingdom/Belgium/Romania

Year: 2005

Language: English, French, German with English subtitles

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

MERRY CHRISTMAS, which screened to great acclaim at the 2005 Festival de Cannes, is the latest film from emerging French writer-director Christian Carion (his debut, THE GIRL FROM PARIS, met with popular success). This moving period piece – set in the dark, gloomy trenches of World War I – is both highly engaging storytelling and a relevant message of hope in today's era of global conflict.

It is 1914, and the British and French are allied against the Germans. Anglican priest Palmer (Gary Lewis) is devastated that his brothers Jonathan (Steven Robertson) and William (Robin Laing) are eagerly determined to leave Scotland for their tour of duty. In Denmark, soprano singer Anna Sorensen (Diane Kruger, TROY) watches as her lover, tenor Nikolaus Sprink (Benno Fürmann) is prevented from going on stage: a soldier has just arrived to announce that Germany is at war.

Soon, in war-torn France, Lt. Audebert (Guillaume Canet, LOVE ME IF YOU DARE) is put in the horrendous position of having to send his men into a gruesome battle from which they might not return. The soldiers were told they would "be home for Christmas," but this wasn't to be the case, and as Christmas day approaches, officers from all sides of the conflict – encouraged and inspired by support of their friends and loved ones – call a truce, and an intense night of bonding and ethical quandaries force them to consider the true nature of war.

Evocatively realized with humour and intelligence, MERRY CHRISTMAS is a graceful meditation on the absurdity of war and the universality of the soldier's plight. Carion tells a simple, humane story that speaks to the power of generosity and goodwill amid circumstances that all but obliterate the possibility for redemption. Elegant performances across the board capture the spirit of humanity that lies at the centre of this powerful, heart-rending drama.

"The message is powerful with storytelling to match in MERRY CHRISTMAS, an exploration of duty versus shared humanity based on authentic incidents from the first year of WWI. Even cynics, who might find the idea of enemies celebrating Christmas together a bit too tidy a theme, should be impressed by where this proudly old-fashioned pic is headed: A final reel with multiple resonances for the current world." – Lisa Nesselson, Variety

THE LAST TRAPPER

Director: Nicolas Vanier

Cast: N/A

Runtime: 94 minutes

Country: France/Canada/Switzerland/Germany/Italy

Year: 2005

Language: English only or French only

Distributor: Christal Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC G / AB NR / SK G / MB NR / QC G / Maritimes NR

Nicolas Vanier's third film, *THE LAST TRAPPER*, has won the hearts of audiences across France. It tells the story of Norman Whinter and his companion Nebraska (May Loo), who still live off the land in the Yukon in complete isolation, hunting grizzlies and wolves. The last representatives of a way of life that is almost extinct, they are uninterested in modern amenities and determined to remain true to tradition.

Vanier uses a hybrid fiction-documentary format to showcase Whinter's traditional ways and the gorgeous land from which he and Nebraska make a living. But industrial activities threaten their livelihood, which depends on the fur market in Dawson, a week's drive away by dog sled.

Animals are an integral part of Whinter's life; his sorrow is heartbreaking when his lead husky, Nanook, is hit by a car in Dawson. After this happens, a local shopkeeper gives him Apache, a racing pup, but Whinter is reluctant to accept Nanook's replacement until Apache saves his life during a treacherous icy crossing of a semi-frozen lake. As their day-to-day life unfolds on screen, the fact that Whinter and Nebraska might soon have to give up the wilderness for the city looms, inspiring the viewer to question the industrial machine that rules modern living.

Vanier, who himself has travelled extensively in the coldest parts of the northern hemisphere, has teamed up with the ideal cinematographer to best capture the majestic landscapes of the Yukon – Thierry Machado, of *WINGED MIGRATION* and *MICROCOSMOS* fame – whose exquisitely composed shots fill every centimetre of the screen with wondrous detail. The accompanying varied score by Krishna Levy is as pleasing as the imagery.

“Veteran extreme explorer and nature filmer Nicolas Vanier uses the crisp clean air and phenomenal light of the Canadian Yukon to fill the widescreen frame with scenery that will make an urban viewer long to strap on snowshoes and live off the land...” – Lisa Nesselson, *Variety*

“This film is a true hymn to the highlands, to nature and its wild open spaces.” – *Le Figaro*

THE WORLD'S FASTEST INDIAN

Director: Roger Donaldson

Cast: Sir Anthony Hopkins, Diane Ladd, Paul Rodriguez, Aaron Murphy, Annie Whittle

Runtime: 127 minutes

Country: New Zealand/USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: June 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB PG / SK NR / MB PG / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Screened to great acclaim as a Special Presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, *THE WORLD'S FASTEST INDIAN* stars a man and his bike – the title refers to the classic Indian Scout motorcycle that was the prized possession of New Zealander Burt Munro. All his life, he dreamed of reaching a goal that seemed impossible and sublimely innocent: to be the fastest man on earth. The riveting Sir Anthony Hopkins (*THE HUMAN STAIN*, *PROOF*) stars as the famous speed king in this celebration of a singular obsession with motorcycle racing and a boundless lust for life.

Born in 1899 in the small town of Invercargill, New Zealand, Munro longed to break through the barriers of provincial anonymity and make an enduring name for himself. After spending a lifetime fine-tuning his beloved bike, Munro headed to barren Utah in 1967 to fulfill his destiny. At an advanced age, he broke the world record for speed, setting one that stands to this day.

Munro is now considered one of New Zealand's national heroes. Director Roger Donaldson brings his extraordinary life to the screen in this period piece with the same focused attention and enthusiasm Munro had for his motorcycle. Donaldson is a veritable expert on the subject: *THE WORLD'S FASTEST INDIAN* is based on his own 1971 documentary about the racing hero, *OFFERINGS TO THE GOD OF SPEED*.

Donaldson and cinematographer David Gribble have captured the stunning natural splendour of the bleached white terrain Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats and the glorious landscape of New Zealand's South Island with the consummate skill of master photographers. And Hopkins – the acclaimed performer who brought such unforgettable figures as Hannibal Lecter, Titus Andronicus and Richard Nixon to the screen – embodies Munro's legendary finesse with equal commitment. The boundless vitality of this passionate, dynamic man who sought to defy all the odds will leave you cheering.

“Hopkins has become most celebrated for portraying commanding, often evil men (he was a revisionist Captain Bligh in his first teaming with Donaldson 21 years ago in *THE BOUNTY*), but here, for once, he's relaxed, humorous and enormously likable in an unpredictable turn that entirely avoids lovable-old-codger clichés.” – Todd McCarthy, *Variety*

THE BOYS OF BARAKA

Director: Heidi Ewing, Rachel Grady

Run Time: 84 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Winner of a special jury prize at the 2005 SXSW Film Festival, *THE BOYS OF BARAKA* is a powerful, hard-hitting film – lovingly crafted by emerging documentary filmmakers Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady – that takes the viewer on an emotional journey from the inner-city United States to the volatile environment of East Africa.

Each year, a small group of eleven- and twelve-year-old students living in the drug-ravaged slums of Baltimore is hand-picked to join an intensive programme in Baraka, Kenya. There, at an experimental boarding school, they undergo a strict regimen of academic and other disciplinary programmes intended to discourage them from giving into the temptations of drugs and gangs when they return home.

THE BOYS OF BARAKA follows four of these children as they are uprooted and assimilated into their new homes, geographically and psychologically removed from anything they have ever known. At first cynical, unenthusiastic and rebellious, they soon settle into their new environment. Before long, however, political unrest hits East Africa and the two-year programme is abruptly cut in half. What begins as a journey of renewal and learning becomes a harrowing story about unrealized dreams and the failings of the American educational system.

Gorgeously shot, this uncompromising documentary is a much-needed account of what happens when educational reform is not a priority. Not every story has a happy ending; the filmmakers infuse this emotionally affecting film with the perfect blend of compassion and political intent.

“The results are amazing, though bittersweet, and demonstrate how complicated and expensive it is (though not impossible) to break the cycle of poverty, crime and lack of education.” – Jami Bernard, *New York Daily News*

“THE BOYS OF BARAKA’s greatest service is in shining a light on a problem many people don’t want to talk about: our willingness to throw away the lives of kids who grow up in dangerous neighborhoods far from quality schools.” – Kenneth Turan, *Los Angeles Times*

WAH-WAH

Director: Richard E. Grant

Cast: Gabriel Byrne, Miranda Richardson, Nicholas Hoult, Emily Watson,

Julie Walters, Zachary Fox

Run Time: 97 minutes

Country: United Kingdom/South Africa/France

WAH-WAH, Richard E. Grant’s impressive directorial debut, is a big-hearted, crowd-pleasing film that opened the 2005 Edinburgh Film Festival and was presented at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®. Lifting an early chapter from Grant’s own life, *WAH-WAH* depicts his coming-of-age in Swaziland in the final days of the British Empire, offering an intimate perspective on Britain’s imperial venture while vividly revealing one boy’s creative awakening.

With neither cynicism nor false nostalgia, *WAH-WAH* paints a remarkable portrait of people overtaken by history. Ralph Compton (a surrogate for Grant played as an adult by Zachary Fox and as a teenager by *ABOUT A BOY*’s Nicholas Hoult) grows up among military men and restless colonials whose sources of amusement are limited to gin and adultery. Ralph’s father (Gabriel Byrne, *THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY*, *SPIDER*) is a cuckold bent on drinking himself clear of his misery. Wife Lauren (Miranda Richardson, *FALLING ANGELS*, *SPIDER*) flaunts her bad behaviour and runs off with the square-jawed neighbour.

When Emily Watson appears as Ralph’s new stepmother, the candour of the film’s perspective comes into focus. A brassy American, she looks at this tribe of Brits – with their white linens and foppish slang – and cannot help but laugh. Grant cuts close to the bone in portraying the comical white mischief in this African outpost. The chaos at home has its sobering effects, driving Ralph against his father and stoking an inner turmoil that, soon enough, will forge his creative mind.

Watson is a thrill to watch, while Byrne, in an impressively textured and committed performance, perfectly conveys Harry’s quicksilver mood changes. Richardson, meanwhile, manages her switches from devoted mother to acid-tongued bitch and back again with frightening ease.

“Shooting in Swaziland, cinematographer Pierre Aim and designer Garry Williamson splendidly recapture the colonialist past of white linen, teatime and cricket.” – Kirk Honeycutt, *Hollywood Reporter*

“Flavoursome performances by a seasoned cast, held in check by Grant’s traditional but well-crafted, always cinematic direction.” – Derek Elley, *Variety*

THE ROCKET

Director: Charles Binamé

Cast: Roy Dupuis, Patrick Robitaille, Rémy Girard, Julie Le Breton

Runtime: 123 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English and French with English subtitles

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG / BC PG / AB NR / SK PG / MB PG / QC PG / Maritimes PG

In 1996 Maurice Richard stood in the Montreal Forum to a standing ovation that lasted more than ten minutes. "Enough," he said, "I was only a hockey player." But Maurice 'the Rocket' Richard was so much more. Charles Binamé (SERAPHIN) brings hockey's greatest legend to the big screen in his latest feature, THE ROCKET. With Roy Dupuis (LOOKING FOR ALEXANDER, MONICA LA MITRAILLE) laced up in Richard's skates, the film captures the culture of hockey in its early days, and more importantly conveys what Richard meant and still means to Québécois and hockey fans everywhere.

Initially discounted as having bones too brittle for the game, Maurice Richard's intensity on the ice made him a force to be reckoned with during his tenure with the National Hockey League from 1942 to 1960. Richard was the first player to score 50 goals in 50 games, and the first to score 500 regular season goals. But Richard represented much more than career statistics to the sport, and especially to the Montréal Canadiens. His fiery temper got him slapped with a controversial suspension in 1955 that not only kept him out of the next game, but the entire play-off season. A game against Detroit at the Montreal Forum erupted into the infamous 'Richard Riot,' resulting in a level violence the NHL has not seen since. It is said Richard's suspension that day in March fanned the flames of Quebec's Quiet Revolution.

The film's script, written by Ken Scott (LE GRAND SÉDUCTION), captures the essence of Quebec's icon. With a keen eye for detail, Binamé has recreated not only Montréal's historic Forum but also the game as it was played at the time, and to fulfill this task recruited a number of NHL stars: former Canadiens defenceman Stephane Quintal, San Jose Sharks' Mike Ricci and Ian Laperriere and Tampa Bay Lightning's Vincent Lecavalier.

The film also boasts a supporting cast comprised of some of Quebec's best actors, including Rémy Girard (BARBARIAN INVASIONS, AURORE), Julie Le Breton (WHITE SKIN, QUÉBEC-MONTRÉAL) and Patrice Robitaille (HORLOGE BIOLOGIQUE, QUÉBEC-MONTRÉAL). MAURICE RICHARD succeeds in capturing the iconic character of Richard and his role in a tumultuous time in Canadian history. Film-goers and fans alike will be transported to hockey's glorious past and revel in the story of its greatest player.

TSOTSI

Director: Gavin Hood

Cast: Presley Chweneyagae, Terry Pheto, Kenneth Nkosi, Mothusi Magano,

Zenzo Ngqobe

Run Time: 94 minutes

Country: United Kingdom/South Africa

Year: 2006

Language: Tsotsi-taal with English subtitles

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

An audience award winner at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and an Academy Award® nominee for Best Foreign Language Film, TSOTSI is a riveting and important film about the legacy of deprivation and violence in South Africa. Adapted from a novel by the eminent South African playwright Athol Fugard and set in the gritty, hair-trigger environment of the Johannesburg ghettos, the film is relentless in its portrayal of one man's battle with his own brutal nature and the past that bred it.

One night, after winning a bloody bar fight, Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae) comes upon an opportunity for a spontaneous carjacking. After discovering a small infant in the car, he abandons the vehicle and the baby. Moments later, compelled to return, he scoops the baby into a shopping bag and hustles through the darkness to his ramshackle home in the townships. Realizing he has neither the skills nor the temperament to care for a child, Tsotsi zeroes in on Miriam (Terry Pheto), a young mother in his neighbourhood, and forces her at gunpoint to care for "his" baby. Tsotsi's uneasy, negotiated relationship with Miriam provokes a volcanic chain of events that only results in further confrontation.

Utterly believable as a powder keg of potential violence that conceals an aching, childlike core, Chweneyagae displays extraordinary charisma and power. Ably guided by Hood and surrounded by the raw energy of South African Kwaito music, Tsotsi and Miriam become symbols of the struggle towards dignity and away from poverty, violence and a cold, hard world.

"Fresh and vivid crime story set in South Africa." – Ray Bennett, *Hollywood Reporter*

"A spiritually riveting film about a nasty thug in a Johannesburg shanty town whose violent and selfish life is totally transformed." – Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spirituality and Health*

NIAGARA MOTEL

Director: Gary Yates

Cast: Wendy Crewson, Kevin Pollak, Craig Ferguson, Anna Friel, Caroline Dhavernas, Tom Barnett, Peter Keleghan

Runtime: 93 minutes

Year: 2005

Country: Canada

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

From director Gary Yates (SEVEN TIMES LUCKY) comes a wonderful new film based on George F. Walker's celebrated Suburban Motel cycle of plays.

In a budget motel in Niagara Falls, we meet a group of characters at various points of crisis in their lives. Loretta (Caroline Dhavernas, THE BARONESS AND THE PIG, THESE GIRLS) is a young, sexy and pregnant waitress at the motel restaurant who is coping with the demands of the men in her life. Dave (Tom Barnett), a stapler salesman, is dating Loretta to impress his boss. Michael (Kevin Pollak, SEVEN TIMES LUCKY), a small-time hustler, wants to get Loretta into porn videos, and the father of Loretta's unborn baby wants her back home in Quebec.

Staying in the motel are Lily (Wendy Crewson, A HOME AT THE END OF THE WORLD, PERFECT PIE) and Henry (Peter Keleghan, DEATH TO SMOOCHY), a middle class couple whose marriage is falling apart. Henry has lost his job as a corporate manager and is looking for a new one while Lily, accustomed to a higher standard of living, is unhappy with their impending bankruptcy. She befriends Sandy, a prostitute working out of the motel, and sees the possibility for earning some money.

In another room are Denise (Anna Friel, THE WAR BRIDE), a recovering drug addict, and her husband R.J. (Kristen Holden-Reid, TOUCH OF PINK), an ex-con who discovered religion in prison. They are desperately trying to regain custody of their baby from social services. The drunken motel's janitor, Phillie Phillips (Craig Ferguson, LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS), moves in and out of the lives of each guests while heading towards his own crisis.

NIAGARA MOTEL is a deft comedic film and Yates's best work to date. While all the performances are solid, well-rounded and moving, it is both Pollak and Friel whose work stands out in this stellar dramedy of conscience and happenstance.

"There's a sparky charm to this multi-strand black comedy about tangled romance in the land of the honeymoon, Niagara Falls." – Rich Cline, *Shadows on the Wall*

Canadian director Gary Yates brings us a wry ensemble comedy ... There's a lot of heart in this film and not a few tearful moments ... Quietly enjoyable." – Dylan Young, *The Hour*

NEIL YOUNG: HEART OF GOLD

Director: Jonathan Demme

Cast: Featuring Neil Young and Emmylou Harris

Run Time: 103 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Paramount Classics

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: June 2006

Ratings: ON G / BC G / AB G / SK G / MB G / PQ G / Maritimes G

Academy Award®-winning director Jonathan Demme has had a successful and acclaimed career alternating between documentary and fiction; he's mastered his technique in both feature films (THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, PHILADELPHIA) and non-fiction works (STOP MAKING SENSE, THE AGRONOMIST). His keen eye has also granted him access to the music-video world, where he has made classic videos for artists ranging from Bruce Springsteen to Pretenders. With NEIL YOUNG: HEART OF GOLD – which premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival – Demme relates the impressive impact of Canadian legend Neil Young's riveting performances.

Demme combined footage from two shows by Young and his über-talented band at Nashville's legendary Ryman Auditorium in August of 2005. Months before these concerts, Young was diagnosed with a brain aneurysm that could have been fatal, and with this diagnosis, he set about writing his next album with frenzy and creative flourish. The result was "Prairie Wind," which in many ways harkens back to his earlier classics – "Harvest," "Harvest Moon" – inspired by his upbringing in Canada's Prairies.

NEIL YOUNG: HEART OF GOLD chronicles the trip to Ryman as well as the performances, weaving interviews with meticulously choreographed Steadicam shots from the two concerts. Though much of the documentary focuses on Young's new album, it is very much a tribute film made from a career-defining tour.

One of the many rich rewards offered by this documentary is witnessing Young at the top of his game. His ability to express through word and song is, in the minds of many, unsurpassed. Demme captures the performances with the respect of an undying fan, letting the music – and the musician – speak for themselves. The result is a melding of cinema and performance that any music fan will savour.

"The concert film has never looked or sounded classier than Jonathan Demme's superbly crafted NEIL YOUNG: HEART OF GOLD." – Robert Koehler, *Variety*

TRISTRAM SHANDY: A COCK AND BULL STORY

Director: Michael Winterbottom

Cast: Steve Coogan, Rob Brydon, Gillian Anderson, Jeremy Northam, Naomie Harris, Kelly Macdonald, Stephen Fry

Runtime: 91 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: May 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A Special Presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, TRISTRAM SHANDY: A COCK AND BULL STORY is a breezy, witty and widely acclaimed love poem to cinema. Director Michael Winterbottom (24 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE, WONDERLAND) approaches Laurence Sterne's unruly book "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman" by crafting a film about the making of a film adaptation of the novel. In the process, he remains remarkably true to the spirit of Sterne's energetic and inventive comic creation.

Moving from the powdered wigs and battle scenes that comprise the filmed world of the novel to the efforts of the production staff struggling to make the film, Winterbottom lets the two realities play off each other to great effect. Steve Coogan (24 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE, HAPPY ENDINGS), plays Shandy, the hero of the novel, as well as himself playing Shandy. While Shandy struggles with watching the torturous and humorous antics that accompany his birth, Coogan struggles to balance competing forces in his life: a girlfriend who has come four hundred miles with their newborn baby to see him, an agent trying to cover up a potential scandal, an attractive assistant director and a coterie of selfish hangers-on. Soon, the boundaries between past and present, fiction and reality become blurred. Is Coogan Shandy? Or is Shandy Coogan?

Winterbottom's cast, bravely led by Coogan, also features finely understated performances from Rob Brydon and Gillian Anderson, among others. All revel in the collision of present escapades and novelistic fantasies.

"... the first great, mind-tickling treat of the new movie year." – Lisa Schwarzbaum, *Entertainment Weekly*

"Diabolically clever and nothing short of hilarious...one of the most radically original comedies in years..." – Aaron Hillis, *Premiere Magazine*

THE THREE BURIALS OF MELQUIADES ESTRADA

Director: Tommy Lee Jones

Cast: Tommy Lee Jones, Barry Pepper, Julio Cesar Cedillo, Dwight Yoakam, January Jones, Melissa Leo

Runtime: 120 minutes

Country: USA/France

Year: 2005

Language: English and Spanish with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A Gala Presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and winner of the Best Screenplay and Best Actor (Tommy Lee Jones, A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION, MEN IN BLACK) awards at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival, THE THREE BURIALS OF MELQUIADES ESTRADA is a modern-day Western that imaginatively straddles the present and the past.

The consistently superb Jones delivers another sublime performance as Pete Perkins, a fiercely moral, slightly renegade ranch foreman disconsolate at the murder and unceremonious burial of his Mexican ranch hand, Melquiades Estrada (Julio Cesar Cedillo, THE LIFE OF DAVID GALE). Perkins undertakes a redemptive mission to unearth the sordid truth of his friend's death, a truth that lays bare the bigotry and injustice of the territory's mixed culture. The jigsaw narrative recalls Pete's relationship with Estrada as he lovingly transports the corpse to a final sacramental resting place, all the while wreaking vengeance on those responsible.

Jones paints a finely measured portrait that oscillates between quiet humanity and lascivious excess. Screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga, whose earlier features AMORES PERROS and 21 GRAMS galvanized Festival audiences, has crafted another taut and courageous fable. With its combination of expert writing, visceral cinematography and Jones's inspired artistic choices, this film does not just tell a good tale – it inaugurates new mythologies.

"Tommy Lee Jones's bracing big-screen directorial debut, which copped acting and writing awards from the Cannes Film Festival jury, connects with both the head and the heart." – Todd McCarthy, *Variety*

"Incisive yet supple, wrenching yet deeply pleasurable, THE THREE BURIALS OF MELQUIADES ESTRADA easily ranks among the year's best pictures." – Kevin Thomas, *Los Angeles Times*

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON

Director: Jeff Feuerzig

Cast: Daniel Johnston, Bill Johnston, Mabel Johnston, Jeff Tartakov, Louis Black

Runtime: 109 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: June 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Winner of the directing award for documentary at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival and a presentation of the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, Jeff Feuerzig's fascinating documentary THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON retraces the eponymous musician's wayward steps to discover the extent to which famed descriptions of the very talented and very troubled artist fit this ill-fated yet celebrated subject.

Using family interviews, home videos and sifting through art the songwriter made in his tumultuous teens, Feuerzig chronicles Johnston's life in detail, from the pinnacle of his career to the tragic depths it would eventually sink to. We see the 1985 MTV special on the music scene in Austin, Texas, which a driven Johnston somehow commandeered. On camera, he proudly brandishes a freshly minted cassette of his self-produced "Hi How Are You," perhaps his defining musical statement.

From this point on, Johnston's story turns dark. He experimented with LSD and grew increasingly unstable, frequently retreating to mental hospitals, obsessed with notions of satanic conspiracy. Even as word spread about his legend in the American underground – attracting such influential fans as Kurt Cobain and Sonic Youth – Johnston was tumbling into an abyss marked by repeated withdrawals from society and erratic behaviour, his career eventually coming to depend solely on the fervent love of his fans.

Providing audiences with an up close look into troubled genius, THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON examines a great paradox: the artist who wants success, but can't assimilate into the world that offers it. Yet almost evoking the gentle, yearning nature of a Daniel Johnston love song, Feuerzig's film is a far more tender portrait of an artist overwhelmed by creativity and inner conflict.

"Lo-fi icon Daniel Johnston's music speaks for itself: simultaneously clenched and soaring, naive and weary, abrasive and beautiful – it's the manic-depressive soul of its author put to tape. Jeff Feuerzig understands this, and doesn't bother trying to justify or fetishize his subject with this heartbreaking film." – Kieran Grant, *eye Weekly*

"A sensitive, often heartbreaking mix of talking heads and archival sounds and images, the hagiographic THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON is a compelling and obsessive humanization of American eccentricity." – Ed Gonzalez, *Slant Magazine*

LIVE AND BECOME

Director: Radu Mihaileanu

Cast: Yaël Abecassis, Roschdy Zem, Moshe Agazai, Mosche Abebe, Sirak M. Sabahat

Runtime: 140 minutes

Country: France/Israel

Year: 2005

Language: French/Hebrew/Aramaic with English subtitles

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB PG / QC G / Maritimes NR

A crowd favourite at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and winner of the audience prize at the 2005 Berlin International Film Festival, Radu Mihaileanu's LIVE AND BECOME examines a little-known moment in modern history: the migration of the Ethiopian Jews – or Falasha – to Israel in 1984. Mihaileanu (TRAIN OF LIFE) draws from his own childhood experiences to create an engrossing and emotionally engaging film about culture, identity and belonging.

As the film begins, thousands of Africans from numerous famine-ravaged nations find themselves in refugee camps in Sudan. A cooperative mission of the American and Israeli governments called Operation Moses swoops in to take thousands of Falashas to Israel. Faced with certain death, a Christian Ethiopian mother steers her young son Soloman (Moshe Agazai) to the lineup, quietly insisting he declare himself to be Jewish. Once in Tel Aviv and officially an orphan, the newly re-named Schlomo is adopted into a Jewish family of mixed heritage and begins to familiarize himself with Hebrew, French, the Jewish faith and his new family.

Though he would appear to have been rescued, Soloman's very survival depends on the perpetuation of a lie. He must cope with the constant fear of being discovered at any moment. Not only is he a Christian pretending to be Jewish and an orphan with two mothers, but as an African in a Western culture he must deal with the not-so-latent racism and prejudice simmering within his schoolmates and their families. The flight to Israel that was meant to be his salvation has instead thrown him into a den of discrimination and turmoil.

Mihaileanu has crafted an intricate, epic story (more than two hours in length) that deals intelligently and sensitively with the complexities of race and religion in a rapidly changing world. Soloman's journey to adulthood is a parable not only of contemporary Israel, but of the immigrant experience everywhere.

"The heartbreaking story is full of all the pains of immigration: racism, suspicion, displacement and anger. Winner of the audience prize at Berlin 2005, VA, VIS ET DEVIENS [LIVE AND BECOME] is... well worth your time." – Deirdre Swain, *NOW Magazine*

A SIMPLE CURVE

Director: Aubrey Nealon

Cast: Kris Lemche, Michael Hogan, Matt Craven, Pascale Hutton, Sarah Lind

Runtime: 92 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Domino Film

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

A Canada First! presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, A SIMPLE CURVE is a truly remarkable first film for acclaimed short film director Aubrey Nealon that was named one of Canada's Top Ten films of 2005.

Rebelling against one's parents is generally considered a rite of passage for teenagers. Twenty-seven-year-old Caleb (Kris Lemche, GINGER SNAPS, SAINT JUDE), however, has somehow missed this crucial step. Maybe it's because he was raised in British Columbia by laid-back, hippie parents who didn't give him much to rebel against. But his growing dissatisfaction with his life and his relationship with his father has Caleb making up for lost time.

Caleb has always had an easygoing relationship with his dad, Jim (veteran TV actor Michael Hogan). They run a small carpentry shop together and relate more as friends than family. Outward appearances present a rather idyllic picture, but tensions between father and son are mounting. Jim is an idealist: he escaped the American draft to the natural splendour of the majestic Kootenays region, eking out a living as a craftsman of fine woodwork. Jim's ideals, however, are not paying the bills. He and Caleb simply cannot compete with mass-produced particleboard and Caleb is increasingly fed up with his father's perfectionism. Then Matthew (Matt Craven, THE STATEMENT), an old friend of Jim's, arrives in the valley with plans to develop a high-end fishing lodge – a project Jim opposes but Caleb secretly hopes will save their business. As he navigates his way through the opposing visions of Jim and Matthew, Caleb realizes the time to forge his own path has arrived.

A SIMPLE CURVE is a thoroughly delightful and assured film with nary a misstep in storytelling nor characterization. Lemche is charming as the conflicted but confident Caleb, while Hogan embodies Jim's relentless high-mindedness with aplomb. As Caleb increasingly finds himself surrounded by newcomers certain they have found nirvana, he realizes that finding his own paradise may require leaving this one behind. Aubrey Nealon is a filmmaker to watch for.

“A refreshing take on an overused theme – dysfunctional father-son connections – starts gently and gets more compelling as it glides along like a woodworker’s sharpened plane over smooth surfaces ... it’s difficult to believe Nealon’s hands have not been calloused by making features before this elegant gem.” – Ken Eisner, *Variety*

WHAT THE BLEEP!?! – DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

Directors: William Arntz, Betsy Chasse, Mark Vicente

Cast: Marlee Matlin

Runtime: 154 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Hot on the heels of the wildly original international cult hit WHAT THE BLEEP DO WE KNOW?! comes the much-anticipated WHAT THE BLEEP!?! – DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE. This fascinating cinematic journey contains new scientific findings on the link between quantum mechanics, neurobiology, human consciousness and day-to-day reality.

We rejoin the protagonist Amanda (Marlee Matlin, WHAT THE BLEEP DO WE KNOW, “The West Wing”) in her fantastic “Alice in Wonderland”-like experiences. As her uninspired daily life begins to unravel, the uncertain world of quantum mechanics hidden beneath her normal, waking reality is revealed. But the stars of this film are undoubtedly the scientists. Indeed, the film's power and magic lies in explaining how human beings are connected to each other and the universe and how we all affect reality.

Quirky animation highlights much of the film, introducing extremely complex scientific concepts in a simple, understandable way. Executed with humour, precision and irreverence, these scenes are only part of what makes WHAT THE BLEEP!?! – DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE a unique cinematic experience.

3 NEEDLES

Director: Thom Fitzgerald

Cast: Lucy Liu, Chloë Sevigny, Olympia Dukakis, Stockard Channing, Shawn Ashmore, Tanabadee Chokopikultong

Runtime: 123 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English, French, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Mandarin with English subtitles

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: May/June 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Epic in scope but intimate in presentation, Thom Fitzgerald's visually stunning 3 NEEDLES, a Special Presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, seamlessly weaves together three narratives set on different continents. Each story confronts our inability to address the great plague of the late-twentieth century. But Fitzgerald doesn't simply catalogue our innumerable failures in dealing with epidemics; he also focuses on our capacity to exploit those who suffer.

With epidemic levels of AIDS infection in South Africa, a group of nuns – Sister Hilde (Olympia Dukakis, THE EVENT, MOONSTRUCK), Sister Mary (Sandra Oh, WILBY WONDERFUL, SIDEWAYS) and the devout but rebellious novice Clara (Chloë Sevigny, DOGVILLE, BROKEN FLOWERS) – arrive to save as many souls as possible, but soon realize their help is needed more in the here and now.

Meanwhile, young Montreal actor Denny (Shawn Ashmore) works in porn to support his parents while struggling to hide secrets of his own from his employers and his mother (Stockard Channing, BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS, THE PIANO MAN'S DAUGHTER). And in rural China, Jin Ping (Lucy Liu, CHARLIE'S ANGELS, KILL BILL: VOL.1) sets up a blood-donor clinic, paying five dollars apiece to contributors. When his family and neighbours begin to fall ill, young farmer Tong Sam (Tanabadee Chokopikultong) courageously sets out to uncover the truth.

Ignorance, of both disease and cultural difference, plays a central role in the film; characters' seemingly altruistic acts have unforeseen, negative repercussions. Poverty is a prime motivator for many of those who exploit or endanger others here – tellingly, though, it's only in the North American story that the principals seem to do so consciously. Fitzgerald demonstrates a complex awareness of his characters – all realized with inspiration by the gifted cast – and their contexts. His sweeping, poetic but complicated narrative constantly disrupts our expectations, placing us – like his characters – in situations we don't entirely understand. Driven by an all-encompassing sense of grief and anguish, 3 NEEDLES also recognizes the possibility of hope and redemption in taking positive action.

“Director Thom Fitzgerald (THE HANGING GARDEN) builds toward scenes of great power and complexity, not to mention stunning natural beauty. Lucy Liu stands out as a blood collector in rural China who gives birth alone, in agony, on a hillside.” – Kim Linekin, *eye Weekly*

CINEMA, ASPIRIN AND VULTURES

Director: Marcelo Gomes

Cast: Peter Ketnath, João Miguel, Madalena Accioly, Jeane Alves

Run Time: 99 minutes

Country: Brazil

Year: 2006

Language: Portugese with English subtitles

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Summer 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

CINEMA, ASPIRIN AND VULTURES, director Marcelo Gomes's impressive second feature, has screened at several international festivals, including the 2005 Festival de Cannes, where it won the Cinema Prize of the French National Education System. Rooted in reality, this Brazilian period piece is inspired by a story told to Gomes by his grandfather.

It is 1942, and Brazil is about to declare war against Germany. Johann (Peter Ketnath), has fled Germany to avoid fighting in the war and, after arriving in a small rural town, begins promoting his new business: the sale of aspirin, a brand new commodity at the time. Johann sets up a film projector and begins showing his advertisements to mesmerized crowds. With his business soon thriving, he stays in Brazil and one day meets the surly Ranulpho (João Miguel), who becomes Johann's projectionist and assistant. The two could not be more different: the mild-mannered Johann absorbs the great outdoors with relish, while Ranulpho grumbles about the backwater he comes from. He wants nothing more than to move to Rio.

Meanwhile, severe drought in the region force many homeless refugees into plantations along the Amazon, where they will make rubber for the United States war effort. The war is encroaching and, before long, Johann is informed he must either return to Germany to serve or enter a concentration camp in São Paulo.

Gomes's rendering of this wartime story is reflective and delicately observed. The relationship that develops between the two protagonists, at times comical but increasingly emotive, is conveyed with poignancy amid a harrowing backdrop that gives their plight a sense of urgency and builds to an emotionally moving climax.

“Marcelo Gomes makes an impressive if sober feature ... set in Brazil's desert-like sertao in 1942 as the country prepares to enter war against the Axis ... [The] film's pared-down look has a stylish simplicity ...”
– Deborah Young, *Variety*

FATELESS

Director: Lajos Koltai

Cast: Marcell Nagy, Áron Dimény, András M. Kecskés, József Gyabronka

Runtime: 134 minutes

Country: Hungary/Germany/United Kingdom

Year: 2005

Language: Hungarian with English subtitles

Distributor: ThinkFilm

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG / BC 14A / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC G / Maritimes NR

The directorial debut of virtuoso cinematographer Lajos Koltai, *FATELESS*, a Special Presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, is destined for worldwide critical acclaim and a lasting place in the hearts of audiences. Based on 2002 Nobel Prize-winner Imre Kertész's semi-autobiographical first novel, the film follows a fourteen-year-old Hungarian Jewish boy as he is separated from his family and interned in a succession of Nazi concentration camps during World War II.

After his father loses his business and is taken to a labour camp, György Köves (Marcell Nagy) soon finds himself baffled and alone at Auschwitz-Birkenau, struggling to find meaning in his tragic fate. György stoically suffers the trials of concentration-camp life, which we see through his innocent eyes. Amid the deprivation and brutality, he takes solace in the kindness of an array of characters played by a fine cast of Hungarian performers. György will have to draw on the memory of these small gestures of humanity when he returns to Budapest and realizes that the horrors he has experienced while interned have left him profoundly alienated from his post-war community.

The young Nagy shows astonishing maturity as the precocious György; his transformation over the course of the film is breathtaking. Kertész, who wrote the screenplay, offers a nuanced, original and deeply philosophical take on occupation-era Europe that sets *FATELESS* apart from other Holocaust dramas.

Although he deftly handles sprawling themes, Kertész knows it is not grand gestures but private, intimate details that make this story potentially devastating. Koltai expertly renders these through an atmospheric use of colour and lighting and an assortment of memorable, eccentric supporting characters. *FATELESS* offers an incisive, unflinching view of personal despair and tenacious perseverance.

"This is an extremely powerful piece of work." – Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

"Exquisitely modulated and superbly mounted, the directing debut of skilled cinematographer Lajos Koltai went through an extended, unpredictable production history to emerge as a genuinely new way of looking at the Holocaust ..."

– Eddie Cockrell, *Variety*

THESE GIRLS

Director: John Hazlett

Cast: David Boreanaz, Caroline Dhavernas, Amanda Walsh, Holly Lewis

Runtime: 92 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: June 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Screened as part of the Canada First! programme at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, *THESE GIRLS* turns sexual blackmail on its head in this hilarious tale of teenaged girls determined to spend their post-graduation summer on something more interesting than saving for college.

Set in small-town New Brunswick, the film focuses on Keira (Caroline Dhavernas, *THE BARONESS AND THE PIG*, *NIAGARA MOTEL*) and her two best friends: ultra-conventional, pink-obsessed Glory (Amanda Walsh) and Seventh Day Adventist Lisa (Holly Lewis). With the exception of Lisa (who's destined for a religious college), their futures are pretty much up in the air. Keira in particular has no idea what she wants to do and is especially annoyed with her father's constant pestering about university. Her disinterest in the local boys her age who are proud to be going nowhere quickly changes when an alternative presents itself in the form of hunky local tough-guy Keith Clark (David Boreanaz, "Buffy and the Vampire Slayer," "Angel"). When the girls learn that Keith is growing marijuana in his back yard, Keira and Lisa sneak in to steal some, only to find babysitter Glory and Keith (who's slightly older and quite married) together in bed. Envious, both Keira and Lisa become determined to sleep with Keith, and all three blackmail him into sex. The highly comic conflict hinges on the increasingly exhausted Keith's attempts to defend his honour from their endless teenaged desires.

Based on Vivienne Laxdal's witty play, *THESE GIRLS* updates the classic sex farce genre for the twenty-first century. Lewis brings a joie de vivre to her character that makes her loss of virginity one of the most entertaining scenes of a film chock full of comedy of errors.

THE CHILD

Directors: Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne

Cast: Jérémie Renier, Déborah François, Olivier Gourmet

Runtime: 95 minutes

Country: Belgium/France

Year: 2005

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: May 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC G / Maritimes NR

Taking the 2005 Festival de Cannes and the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® by storm, *THE CHILD* won the talented Dardenne brothers their second Palme d'Or – world cinema's most coveted award.

Determined to avoid anything resembling a nine-to-five existence, twenty-year-old Bruno (Jérémie Renier, *CAVALCADE*, *BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF*) pan-handles for cash to make ends meet. Bruno's irresponsible existence is threatened when his young girlfriend Sonia (promising newcomer Deborah François) comes home with their newborn baby. Desperate for money and terrified of being a father, Bruno decides to sell the child on the black market. Sonia, who has supported Bruno's illegal schemes in the past, goes into catatonic shock and is hospitalized when she learns what Bruno has done. Purely out of fear that Sonia will tell the police, Bruno sets out to retrieve the child.

Shooting on location in the Belgian steel town of Seraign in their signature, stripped-down style (working with only a few actors and a hand-held camera), the Dardennes brothers have created a direct and sparse masterpiece of enthralling drama and complex human emotion. As in their previous, widely-heralded work, they focus on characters that do whatever necessary to survive harsh, often inhumane conditions. Bruno is brilliantly portrayed by Renier, who has developed into a lankily charismatic leading man with a hard, working-class face. In the film's key sequence, Bruno puts his baby on the auction block, which takes place in an abandoned building in almost total darkness. The Dardennes capture this scene in a single, riveting shot.

Shot by acclaimed cinematographer – and long-time Dardennes collaborator – Alain Marcoen, *THE CHILD* is characterized by a stark visual texture of unfiltered natural light and elegantly evocative grittiness. In this world, even humans become merchandise. A gripping study in greed, *THE CHILD* is one of the most moving and provocative films audiences will see this year.

“Masters of small-scale realism, Belgian brothers Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne, have created yet another beautifully acted, exquisitely observed morality tale.” – Scott Foundas, *Variety*

“The remarkable thing about the Dardennes is their complex single-mindedness. Each film is an odyssey (toward grace?) in a world that could hardly seem more material.” – J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*

C.R.A.Z.Y.

Director: Jean-Marc Vallée

Cast: Michel Côté, Marc-André Grondin, Danielle Proulx, Pierre-Luc Brillant

Brilliant

Runtime: 127 minutes

Year: 2005

Country: Canada

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: TVA Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: April 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB 14+ / SK 14+ / MB 14+ / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Yet another great film to emerge from Quebec, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, which won the Best Feature Award at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® – and went on to be named one of Canada's Top Ten films of the year – reveals the full extent of Jean-Marc Vallée's (*LISTE NOIRE*) touching and inspirational talent. The story of a son's struggle with identity and his quest for acceptance from his family, *C.R.A.Z.Y.* is potently set against the backdrop of Quebec's 'Quiet Revolution' that began in the sixties.

Born Christmas Day, 1960, the fourth of five brothers, Zac Beaulieu (Marc-André Grondin) is different but desperate to fit in. To win the approval of his father, Gervais (Michel Côté, *LE DERNIER TUNNEL*), Zac tries to deny his homosexuality; he dates his childhood neighbour while harbouring a secret crush on his cousin's boyfriend. Set in suburban Montreal, the film seamlessly unfolds over the course of forty years, during which Zac must come to terms with a whirlwind of experiences in order to accept his true nature.

Inspired by co-writer François Boulay's own childhood, Vallée brings to the screen a poignant coming-of-age tale set amidst an uncanny depiction of family life in Montreal from the sixties to the present. Boulay and Vallée's engrossing script makes expert use of familial interactions, filmed by Vallée with a light hand and touches of magic realism that reveal the inner workings of the suburban Québécois family. At the heart of Vallée's dynamic and inventive film is the pairing of key scenes with popular songs from the likes of Patsy Cline and David Bowie. Audiences will embrace the Beaulieu family and be moved by the magical spirit of *C.R.A.Z.Y.*

“C.R.A.Z.Y. is undeniably one of the greatest cinematographic surprises of the year.” – Marc-André Lussier, *La Presse*

“...Vallée has created an engaging and touching family story that traces the social and moral evolution of Quebec over the last forty years.” – Louis-Paul Rioux, *Media-film.com*

WHOLE NEW THING

Director: Amnon Buchbinder

Cast: Rebecca Jenkins, Robert Joy, Daniel MacIvor, Callum Keith Rennie, Aaron Webber

Runtime: 92 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: ThinkFilm

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14+ / BC NR / AB 14+ / SK NR / MB 14+ / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

WHOLE NEW THING, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, is Amnon Buchbinder's (THE FISHING TRIP) delightfully unconventional coming-of-age story of one rather exceptional thirteen-year-old boy.

Emerson Thorsen (newcomer Aaron Webber), unlike most boys his age, is clever, well-adjusted and can hold his own in conversation with most adults. He has just finished writing and illustrating his first novel and is reacting to the onset of puberty with nonchalance. Home-schooled by his eco-hippie parents in the wilds of Nova Scotia, he has been raised in a household of casual nudity and openness about sex. But when his poor math skills see him sent off to the local school, the change for Emerson – as well as those around him – proves to be seismic.

His fellow students treat Emerson's maturity and intellectual curiosity with suspicion. However, his teachers, in particular his English teacher, Mr. Grant (Daniel MacIvor, PAST PERFECT, WILBY WONDERFUL), are delighted. At forty-two, Don Grant's life is a solitary routine of toiling to engage the minds of his students and escaping into park washrooms for sexual trysts. Emerson's arrival in his class shakes up his staid routine; impressed with his new pupil, Don even sees a bit of his younger, more enthusiastic self in the precocious Emerson. When Emerson develops a crush on Don, however, it will challenge everything the man thinks he knows about being a teacher and a role model. Back at home, Emerson's absence forces his parents, Rog (Robert Joy, THE SHIPPING NEWS, PRETTY PERSUASION) and Kaya (Rebecca Jenkins, REPUBLIC OF LOVE, WILBY WONDERFUL), to confront the gulf that has emerged between them.

Smart, funny and poignant, WHOLE NEW THING is a charming look at the ability of an extraordinary kid to embrace his life and his emotions with abandon. Webber wonderfully captures the conflicted Emerson, torn between boyish feelings and adult concerns. Racing toward maturity, Emerson must discover that he is still a child, while the adults around him realize they need to grow up.

"This dramedy marks the engrossing debut of Aaron Webber as Emerson, a 13-year-old who lives with his eco-nudist parents (Rebecca Jenkins and Robert Joy) in rural Nova Scotia ... the characters are all original and memorable." – Kim Linekin, *eye Weekly*

"Here's a coming-of-age film that could become a Canadian classic." – Glenn Sumi, *NOW Magazine*

PARADISE NOW

Director: Hany Abu-Assad

Cast: Kais Nashif, Ali Suliman, Lubna Azabal, Amer Hlehel

Runtime: 90 minutes

Country: France/Germany/Netherlands/Israel

Year: 2005

Language: Arabic with English subtitles

Distributor: Warner Independent Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: Late March, 2006

Ratings: ON PG / BC PG / AB PG / SK PG / MB PG / QC G / Maritimes NR

Hany Abu-Assad's stirring new film PARADISE NOW screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® to critical and popular acclaim and won numerous awards, including the prestigious Blue Angel and the Amnesty International Film Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival, as well as the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Film.

Inspired by the often gruesome reality of life in the contemporary Middle East, Abu-Assad dramatizes the Palestinian struggle by focusing on the lives of two would-be suicide bombers. The entire story takes place in what could possibly be the last forty-eight hours of their lives. These two young men have been friends their whole lives, and both have recently been recruited to set off a bomb in Israel.

After the planning is complete, they set off to cross the very heavily-secured border into Israel. Not surprisingly, they are stopped and forced into interrogation. While there, they meet a young woman who feels very passionately that they are making a big mistake. She pleads with them to reconsider, but is met with equal fervour on the men's side. With hours to go before the mission is to be completed, suspense continues to build, and no one – including the parties involved – knows what the outcome will be.

Opting to avoid emotional contrivances, Abu-Assad lets the natural tensions and drama emerge through the actors' startlingly organic performances. PARADISE NOW, which handles very sensitive subject matter in an elegant, thought-provoking and highly moving way, will not leave audiences untouched.

"Handsomely shot in widescreen, mostly on actual West Bank locations, and well-played by the cast." – Derek Elley, *Variety*

"PARADISE NOW may not succeed in inspiring sympathy for these hapless terrorists, but it does compel and appreciation for the unbearable sense of humiliation that may fuel such acts" – J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*

SIX FIGURES

Director: David Christensen

Cast: J.R. Bourne, Caroline Cave, Deborah Grover, Frank Adamson, Joyce Gordon

Run Time: 108 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Late Spring 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

The Genie Award-nominated SIX FIGURES – which premiered at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® – is a quietly riveting drama that plays out amid the domestic details of everyday life.

Warner (J.R. Bourne, *GINGER SNAPS BACK: THE BEGINNING*) and Claire (Caroline Cave) are a happily married couple with two kids and rewarding careers. Warner is the new director of a not-for-profit organization and Claire is employed at an art gallery. Preferring to do what they love, money has rarely been a primary motivator – until recently. In a boomtown like Calgary, where everyone seems to have more than them, Warner and Claire are tired of getting by with less.

After spending more than they anticipated on a house, they learn that Warner's probationary period at work has been extended. The timing couldn't be worse. As the pressure mounts to keep up with family, job and financial obligations, the stress begins to take its toll on Warner. But is it enough to trigger a murderous rage? When Claire is viciously attacked, Warner emerges as the prime suspect.

Bourne deftly portrays Warner as a man desperately trying to hang on to the life he has known. A finely tuned study of the nature of brutality and trust, SIX FIGURES asks that simple, maddening question: how well can we ever really know someone?

“Artfully balancing mystery and specificity, writer-director David Christensen does a masterful job of sustaining suspense in debut feature SIX FIGURES. – Joe Leydon, *Variety*

THREE TIMES

Director: Hou Hsiao-hsien

Cast: Shu Qi, Chang Chen, Mei Fang, Liao Su-jen, Di Mei

Run Time: 139 minutes

Country: Taiwan

Year: 2006

Language: Mandarin with English subtitles

Distributor: Filmswelike

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Three exquisite tales are braided together in perfect harmony in THREE TIMES, Hou Hsiao-hsien's new masterpiece. A film of composed, sumptuous maturity that uses epochal moments in Taiwanese history as touchstones, Hou's finely balanced creation (which screened as a Masters presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®) follows a timeless couple in love as they take on different identities through three separate periods.

In “A Time for Love,” Chen (Chang Chen) meets May (Shu Qi) at his favourite pool hall. It is 1966 and their fleeting, dreamy romance is defined less by words than by the smoky atmosphere and the radio hits of the time. Moving from this musical snapshot, the film flows smoothly into “A Time for Freedom,” a solemn drama about a concubine (Shu) and her master (Chang) in 1911. He is obsessed with his nation's freedom, yet incapable of giving liberty or emotional security to his beloved. The third segment, “A Time for Youth,” shifts from an era of stately quiet to chaotic, contemporary Taipei. Jing (Shu), an epileptic singer, lives through the intense disarray of her youth, sharing her love with both a woman and a man (Chang).

Weaving contrasting cinematic images and poignant fragments of time into a highly evocative narrative, Hou plays with the idea of reincarnation; the characters bear not only a consistent physical appearance but also the memories of other lives. Gracefully mining the depths of Taiwan's history, THREE TIMES shines like a gem firmly set in Hou's glittering array of masterpieces.

“[The first segment's] long-take linearity and use of classic Western pop songs (especially ‘Rain and Tears’) is wondrously hypnotic and just about perfect.” – Aaron Hills, *Premiere*

WATER

Director: Deepa Mehta

Cast: Lisa Ray, Seema Biswas, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Rishma Malik

Runtime: 114 minutes

Country: Canada/India

Year: 2005

Language: Hindi with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC PG / AB PG / SK PG / MB PG / QC G / Maritimes PG

After the renowned FIRE and EARTH, veteran Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta (THE REPUBLIC OF LOVE) returns with WATER, the final installment in her highly acclaimed trilogy about women in India. The Opening Night Gala at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, WATER was also named one of Canada's Top Ten films of the year. Mehta (THE REPUBLIC OF LOVE) clearly put her heart and soul into WATER, her most lush, accomplished and mature film to date.

Kalyani (Lisa Ray, BOLLYWOOD/HOLLYWOOD) is one of several widows living in an ashram on the banks of the sacred Ganges River who befriend a young girl who arrives there one day. According to Hindu tradition, widows cannot remarry and are considered "lower" than other women; consequently, Kalyani and the others take solace in the ashram and, through each other, find a sense of normalcy and family. The women find themselves invigorated, but none more so than the sad Kalyani, who takes a particular shine to the girl.

Meanwhile, increasing media reports tell of a Western Indian named Gandhi who may be leading an independence movement. During this exciting time of optimism and unrest, a renewed Kalyani pours affection on everyone around her, including the new man in town, Narayana (John Abraham, KAAL). But as Gandhi's movement approaches Varanasi, the widows are forced to make some difficult choices in order to keep their quiet ashram refuge afloat.

WATER was shot on location in Varanasi, where it was met with public outrage; many people were threatened by what they believed was Mehta's intention to depict the widows' oppression at the hands of local men. On the first day of filming, 2,000 protesters stormed the ghats and destroyed the main film set, burning and throwing it into the Ganges. Effigies of Mehta were burned, threats to her life were issued and production was called off for nearly a year. In the end, Mehta persevered to complete the film in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Clearly a cathartic film to finish, Mehta has said she can now retire. Rich with metaphor and symbolism, WATER is truly great cinema.

"Deepa Mehta's WATER is a magnificent film. The ensemble acting... is exceptional: intimate, painful, wounded, jaundiced, corrupted, tender, tough. The fluid lyricism of the camera provides an unsettling contrast to the arid difficulties of the characters' lives. The film has serious, challenging things to say ... but, to its great credit, it tells its story from inside its characters, rounding out the human drama of their lives, and unforgettably touching the heart."

- Salman Rushdie

OMAGH

Director: Pete Travis

Cast: Stuart Graham, Brenda Fricker, Peter Balance, Gerard McSorley,

Michelle Forbes, Pauline Hutton, Paul Kelly

Runtime: 106 minutes

Country: Ireland/United Kingdom

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A/ BC PG / AB NR / SK PG / MB 14+ / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Winner of several awards, including the Discovery Award for director Pete Travis at the 2004 Toronto International Film Festival®, OMAGH tackles with tremendous force the subject of the Irish Troubles with an intimate portrait of one family's experience of loss.

The Omagh bombing on August 15, 1998 was a confused mess that turned into a disaster. A misinterpreted warning call led police to herd people towards the bomb, resulting in the single greatest atrocity of the Troubles: the deaths of twenty nine people and over 200 hundred injured. Using a convincing and compelling documentary style, Travis painstakingly recreates, with great attention to physical and emotional detail, the chaos that ensued after the explosion. Aidan Gallagher (Paul Kelly), the apple of his father's eye, was one of the people shopping in the vicinity where the bomb went off. After the explosion, his family frantically tries to locate Aidan. When it is all over and the harsh reality has sunk in, the Gallaghers must try to move on with their lives.

Aidan's father Michael (Gerard McSorley, THE CONSTANT GARDENER) is a soft spoken auto mechanic whose undying love for his son sends him on a mission to uncover the truth behind what transpired. Gathering strength from other victims' families, he forms the Omagh Self Help and Support Group, made up of Catholics and Protestants alike. In their quest for answers they encounter political stonewalling and police cover-ups; eventually they come to the shocking realization that the government is loathe to make any arrests, lest they stymie the ongoing, and always shaky, peace process.

There has been no finer and humanistic film made about the unsung victims and the grieving families left behind by catastrophe. McSorley's restrained performance as the heartbroken father is simply outstanding. OMAGH is a powerful, illuminating and uncompromising account of an unspeakable tragedy.

"Thanks to McSorley's superb performance and Pete Travis' disciplined direction, OMAGH powerfully conveys the devastation wrought by sectarian violence on both individuals and the wider community." - Jason Anderson, eye Weekly

WHY WE FIGHT

Director: Eugene Jarecki

Cast: N/A

Runtime: 98 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: May 2006

Ratings: ON PG / BC PG / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and screened to great acclaim at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, WHY WE FIGHT is an urgent, moving and forceful documentary that challenges politicians, soldiers and citizens alike to address the grave implications of an American system hooked on military and economic power.

WHY WE FIGHT opens with Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1961 farewell address, in which he warned against letting the military-industrial complex get too big, and against the United States becoming imperial. Forty-four years later, the military-industrial complex, it goes without saying, is huge (\$750 billion is spent on defense every year) and many view American foreign policies as examples of blatant imperialism.

Rather than using his film to illustrate President George W. Bush's foolishness, Eugene Jarecki (THE TRIALS OF HENRY KISSINGER) presents the facts and lets them speak for themselves (much in the same way as THE FOG OF WAR was presented). One of the most frightening of these facts is former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney's 1992 directive that the United States do all it can to keep itself as the world's only "superpower," including acting unilaterally, if necessary, to preserve America's "interests."

With this in mind the documentary argues persuasively that the United States is a nation pre-programmed to wage war: corporate America needs war to make money; congress needs the defense contracts for the jobs back home; politicians need to look strong to get re-elected; the economy needs war to remain stable; and the military needs to justify its place as the most powerful force in the world. As retired Lt. Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski, a former Pentagon insider, states "If you join the military now, you are not defending the United States of America; you are helping policy-makers pursue an imperial agenda."

WHY WE FIGHT is engaged filmmaking of the highest order. Jarecki visits arms shows and military complexes and uses archival newsreel footage spanning more than half a century to illustrate how entrenched militarism has become. WHY WE FIGHT is an important and necessary film that exposes the corrupt intentions and blatant lies behind yet another misconceived war.

"Stands as a class-act, stylistic rebuttal to FAHRENHEIT 9/11 – it asks questions rather than bludgeons us with ridicule, and it has the grace to hint that we can think for ourselves." Tim Burr, *Boston Globe*

LUCID

Director: Sean Garrity

Cast: Jonas Chernick, Callum Keith Rennie, Michelle Nolden, Lindy Booth

Runtime: 89 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

A presentation of the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, LUCID is Sean Garrity's remarkable follow-up to INERTIA, which won the award for Best First Canadian Feature at the 2001 Festival. His inventive visual style and strong sense of character announced a significant new talent on the Canadian scene; LUCID sees him venture into darker, more unpredictable dramatic territory.

Joel Rothman (Jonas Chernick, SEVEN TIMES LUCKY), a thirty-two-year-old psychotherapist, is having trouble sleeping. His wife (Kristen Harris) has left him after an adulterous incident at the cottage. He fills the hours of insomnia obsessively listening to her angry voicemail message and drawing sheep on the wall. He finds it tough to work and, worse, can no longer communicate with his distressed daughter. And then there's the notable decline of his driving skills.

Joel's newest patients are suffering from various symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and, under his compromised care, are rapidly deteriorating. Victor (Callum Keith Rennie, WILBY WONDERFUL, NIAGARA MOTEL), who is aggressive and violent, begins to carry a firearm for protection. Chandra (Michelle Nolden, SHOW ME) suffers from depression and delusions. Sophie (Lindy Booth) is dependent on prescription drugs and experiences frequent nightmares.

Hitting rock bottom – he begins to hear profanities erupting from a children's cartoon show – Joel finds his life has completely unravelled and he is in serious danger of losing his job. Although he persists in trying to understand what is happening to him and his charges, he has become as unstable as they are and the line between doctor and patient starts to blur.

The black humour of LUCID's script, a collaboration between Garrity and Chernick, plays to the actor's gift for clever repartee and to his natural vulnerability. Strong performances from the entire cast lend a precise realism to Garrity's strange, illusory world, in which Joel must confront, decipher and conquer the puzzle-like realm of his psyche.

"LUCID is thick with queasy tension and dark wit." – Jason Anderson, *eye Weekly*

HIDDEN

Director: Michael Haneke

Cast: Daniel Auteuil, Juliette Binoche, Maurice Bénichou, Annie Girardot

Runtime: 117 minutes

Country: France/Austria/Germany/Italy

Year: 2005

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: May 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB NR / SK NR / MB 14+ / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

The films of Michael Haneke consistently leave audiences transfixed by their formal audacity and their ability to evoke the menacing feeling of a society on the edge of an abyss. This feeling of suspense and impending doom permeates the masterful HIDDEN. A presentation of the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and of numerous other international film festivals, HIDDEN won several awards at the 2005 Festival de Cannes, including Best Director.

In typical Haneke style, the film begins with the comfortable but complacent life of a bourgeois European family. However, someone has been videotaping their home from the street outside. The unknown voyeur mails the tapes – accompanied by strange, disturbing drawings – to Georges (Daniel Auteuil, *APRÈS VOUS ...*), Anne (Juliette Binoche, *THE ENGLISH PATIENT*, *CHOCOLAT*) and their son Pierrot (Lester Makedonsky). As the “gifts” become more personal and begin to appear the work of someone who knows him, Georges begins to fear that he is being punished for wronging an Algerian boy named Majid (Maurice Bénichou, *LE TEMPS DU LOUP*), at the height of France’s colonial occupation of that North African nation. Wracked with paranoia and rage, Georges suspects a former friend is taking revenge, but when he tracks him down we soon begin to question who is victimizing whom.

Auteuil is brilliant in the difficult role of an average man whose capacity for hostility is revealed under duress. Binoche, who reunites with Haneke after her star turn in his sublime *CODE INCONNU*, is luminous as Anne, who, while more detached from the crisis than Georges, is nonetheless at risk of being pulled to the brink along with him. Both actors perfectly capture their characters’ slow drift from tranquil certainty into panic and chaos.

Haneke has a remarkable way of exposing the way political conflicts and prejudices irreparably damage the psyche and the potential for human intimacy and communication, and HIDDEN deftly incorporates questions of personal responsibility, justice and the racism of France’s past into an incredibly gripping and tightly-wound psychological thriller.

“Mr. Auteuil and Ms. Binoche are alternately graceful and scary as people pushed to the brink of madness through sheer duress, and the director does a tense job of capturing their panic as they drift from tranquility into chaos.”

– Rex Reed, *New York Observer*

WHERE THE TRUTH LIES

Director: Atom Egoyan

Cast: Kevin Bacon, Colin Firth, Alison Lohman, Sonja Bennett

Runtime: 107 minutes

Country: Canada/United Kingdom/USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: ThinkFilm

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: March 2006

Ratings: ON 18A / BC 18A / AB 18A / SK NR / MB 18A / QC 16ANS+ / Maritimes NR

One of Canada’s most widely acclaimed and internationally successful filmmakers, Atom Egoyan has made such remarkably diverse films as *CALENDAR* (1993), *THE SWEET HEREAFTER* (1997) and the Film Circuit hit *ARARAT* (2002). With his latest film, *WHERE THE TRUTH LIES*, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, he takes his craft in yet another direction, with the impressive, provocative results that audiences have come to expect.

Based on a Rupert Holmes mystery novel of the same name, *WHERE THE TRUTH LIES* is set in the world of fifties show business, where glitz, glamour, ambition and deception are the order of the day. The duo of Lanny Morris (Kevin Bacon, *IN THE CUT*, *THE WOODSMAN*) and Vince Collins (Colin Firth, *GIRL WITH THE PEARL EARRING*) are the biggest act in comedy – that is, until the body of a gorgeous woman ends up in their hotel bathroom. The pair denies any knowledge of the woman and they’re cleared of any wrongdoing, but the scandal forces them to dissolve their act.

Cut to fifteen years later, and Karen O’Connor (Alison Lohman, *WHITE OLEANDER*), a young writer, is paid handsomely by a publisher to write a tell-all exposé about Vince Collins. As her research progresses, startling revelations emerge about both comedians and the sordid events surrounding their break-up. Meanwhile, Karen becomes embroiled in a one-night stand with Lanny, who is writing his own book. The relationship becomes a game of cat-and-mouse, but Karen can’t be sure if she is pursuer or prey.

A well-crafted mystery, *WHERE THE TRUTH LIES* is equally masterful in its depiction of the entertainment industry, which shifts from elegant to seedy at the drop of a hat. Brilliant cinematography and set design evoke this noir atmosphere in all its intrigue, and stellar performances help vividly round out this picturesque and deliciously moody film.

“A sumptuous tale of show business hype and duplicity.” – Ray Bennett, *The Hollywood Reporter*

TRANSAMERICA

Director: Duncan Tucker

Cast: Felicity Huffman, Kevin Zegers, Fionnula Flanagan, Elizabeth Peña, Graham Greene

Run Time: 100 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: May 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 18A / AB 14A / SK NR / MB NR / QC 16ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Winner of the Siegfessäule Readers Award at the 2005 Berlin International Film Festival and a presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, TRANSAMERICA netted the Best Actress Award for Felicity Huffman (“Desperate Housewives”) at the 2006 Golden Globe Awards. The film has since garnered Academy Award® nominations for Best Actress and Best Original Song (Dolly Parton). Duncan Tucker’s directorial debut, TRANSAMERICA is a poignant story of self-acceptance centring on Bree, the film’s transsexual heroine.

A week away from the final procedure that will make her a woman, Bree learns a young man jailed in New York has named her as his father. Bree realizes Toby (Ontario native Kevin Zegers) must be the result of a barely recalled episode of early sexual experimentation. When therapist Margaret (Elizabeth Peña, LONE STAR, THE INCREDIBLES) threatens to withhold the signature necessary to approve Bree’s surgery unless she makes peace with her past, Bree takes the first flight to Manhattan. Toby mistakes her for a kind-hearted church worker and Bree can’t bring herself to tell him the truth. After learning Toby wants to start over in California, Bree hatches a plan.

At cross purposes, this unlikely pair sets out on a rollicking road trip across America. What ensues is a compressed course in parenthood for Bree, a lesson in trust for Toby and a trunk-load of fun for viewers. The film’s charming, offbeat and often wry humour stems from the heroic efforts of each character to keep secrets from the other. Their façades become increasingly difficult to maintain as they encounter a hippie hitchhiker, an affable rancher (Graham Greene, PHIL THE ALIEN) and, in a moment of desperation, Bree’s frenetic parents in Arizona.

Huffman has created an extraordinary character in Bree, about as far from her lipstick-lined suburbanite of DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES as one could imagine. The talented Zegers’ belligerent insouciance masks a scared, damaged boy. Director Tucker perfectly modulates the film’s tone, finding just the right balance between farce and melodrama.

“Huffman’s performance is a technical marvel.” – Deirdre Swain, *NOW Magazine*

“Impressively realized on all levels, this transgender spin on the road trip boasts an extraordinary central performance.” – Sheri Linden, *Hollywood Reporter*

LADY VENGEANCE

Director: Park Chan-wook

Cast: Lee Yeong-ae, Choi Min-sik, Kim Shi-hu, Nam Il-woo, Kim Byeong-ok

Runtime: 112 minutes

Country: South Korea

Year: 2005

Language: Korean with English subtitles

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Summer 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

LADY VENGEANCE, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, is the highly anticipated follow-up to now legendary filmmaker Park Chan-wook’s enormously popular SYMPATHY FOR MR. VENGEANCE (and the third in the trilogy, which also includes OLD-BOY). It is a perilous venture into the psychology of a woman pursuing her personal sense of justice – without ever finding salvation.

The ornate, vindictive plan of Lee Geum-ja (Lee Yeong-ae) unfolds like a sickeningly beautiful rose blossoming in the midst of the harshest winter. Imprisoned for thirteen years for allegedly kidnapping and murdering a six-year-old boy, Geum-ja – with her fascinating mixture of evil wisdom and naïveté – wastes no time in winning over her cellmates’ sympathies. From the former prostitute who strangled her pimp to the old North Korean spy who hands her the “Sutra of revenge” – illustrated instructions for crafting a handmade gun disguised as a prayer book – all the prisoners become instrumental in the scheme Geum-ja has meticulously drafted for her future as a free woman.

Deprived of her baby daughter and of her youth, Geum-ja at first seems to accept her tragic destiny. However, she never strays from her plans to take a mighty revenge on the former teacher who betrayed her and slaughtered her innocence.

Walking on the thin tightrope between the feelings of compassion and repulsion that the protagonists of this dark thriller generate in the audience, Park confidently masters the complex narrative of this scalding moral tale. He sculpts edgy characters whose strength is defined by their ambiguity: irreparably damaged by wrongs committed against them, their obsessive drive for revenge nonetheless takes on a sinister hue.

Without failing to cast a piercing glance at a society that abandons its citizens to their own private rule of law, LADY VENGEANCE investigates the lonely recesses of a lucid, wounded mind and renders the astonishing portrait of a sombre heroine whose heart is as pure – and as cold – as snow.

“... performances are all aces on a slightly stylized level, and casting is first-rate. Choi, especially, carves a portrait of unrepentant evil that’s remarkable considering his limited screentime, and among the large supporting cast Nam stands out as the wry cop.” – Derek Elley, *Variety*

TOWNES VAN ZANDT: BE HERE TO LOVE ME

Director: Margaret Brown

Cast: With Townes Van Zandt, Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, Emmylou Harris, Steve Earle

Run Time: 99 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Filmwelike

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Late March 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A masterfully-crafted documentary from Austin-based director Margaret Brown, TOWNES VAN ZANDT: BE HERE TO LOVE ME garnered heartfelt praise following its world premiere at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and enjoyed considerable success on the international festival circuit. It succeeds in answering the deceptively simple question: Who was Townes Van Zandt?

Steve Earle offered to “stand on Bob Dylan’s coffee table in my cowboy boots” to declare Van Zandt the world’s greatest songwriter. In concert, Lucinda Williams often dedicates “2 Kool 2 Be 4-Gotten” to him. A songwriter’s songwriter, the kind of artist whose idiosyncratic charms and introverted focus resonate more strongly after his passing, Van Zandt’s songs have been recorded by artists as diverse as Emmylou Harris and The Meat Puppets. Fans of his music will be pleased to find virtually all of his signature compositions haunting this impressively compelling biography. For those new to the music and to the man, the lonesome, evocative song-poems are a revelation: sad and beautiful and perfect.

Born into wealth, but oblivious to it, Townes was an outsider from the get-go. His itinerant youth was followed by bouts with clinical depression – for which he endured months of shock therapy as a teen – and drug and alcohol abuse. Having set out with “some kind of vague notion of making it,” Van Zandt eventually had a hit – the Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard cover of “Pancho and Lefty” – but found himself ill-suited to the mainstream spotlight.

That Van Zandt is so achingly present in this tender documentary portrait owes much to Brown’s feel for his art, expressed with an elegant assembly of lively archival footage and reverent interviews.

“Telling the story of Texas songwriter Townes Van Zandt with the kind of compassion and grace filmmaker Margaret Brown uses in BE HERE TO LOVE ME requires delicate balance: tender but unsparing, heartfelt and unapologetic.”

– Joel Selvin, *San Francisco Chronicle*

PROTOCOLS OF ZION

Director: Marc Levin

Cast: N/A

Runtime: 93 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: ThinkFilm

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB NR / SK NR / MB 14+ / QC G / Maritimes NR

A presentation of the 2005 Sundance Film Festival, PROTOCOLS OF ZION is a provocative examination of the contemporary influences of the anti-Semitic book “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” condemned in the documentary as “the oldest recorded bigotry in history.”

Written and published in Russia in 1905, the book purported to be the real minutes, furtively recorded, of a secret meeting of Jewish leaders intent on world domination. Exposed by the London Times in 1921 as completely fraudulent, it is alarming to note that the book continues to be an international bestseller. The Times article also speaks to how much attention this book received, even years after its publication.

With anti-Semitism arguably on the rise after 9/11, director Marc Levin, himself a Jew, discovered the insidious and lasting effects of the libelous “Protocols” when an Egyptian taxi driver in New York City quoted the book as “proof” that the Jews had known about the World Trade Center attacks, which is why they escaped before the buildings were hit. Interviewing people on the street, Levin finds, in addition to anti-Semitism, a deep well of ignorance. One man at Ground Zero proclaims that all world leaders have been Jewish, including New York’s mayors, citing Michael Bloomberg and Rudy “JEWliani” as examples. Searching abroad, Levin discovers that “Protocols” has been used as the basis for disturbing made-for-TV movies in the Middle East; one film contains the depiction of Christian children being murdered so their blood can be used for matzoh production.

One hundred years since the publication of “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” Levin uncovers the surprisingly enduring effects of this fictitious work of hate. Laying bare the reality of anti-Semitism in today’s world, PROTOCOLS OF ZION is an important and relevant film for our time.

“A peripatetic meditation on anti-Semitism.” – John Anderson, *Variety*

“Powerfully conveys the despicably fictitious ways in which scapegoats are manufactured.”

– Nicholas Schager, *Slant Magazine*

DON'T COME KNOCKING

Director: Wim Wenders

Cast: Sam Shepard, Jessica Lange, Tim Roth, Gabriel Mann, Sarah Polley, Eva Marie Saint, Fairuza Balk

Run Time: 122 minutes

Country: Germany/USA/France/United Kingdom

Year: 2006

Language: English, French and German with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Two decades after collaborating on the classic *PARIS, TEXAS*, which won the prestigious Palme d'or at the Festival de Cannes in 1984, award-winning director Wim Wenders (*BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB*) teams with influential playwright and actor Sam Shepard (*THE NOTEBOOK*) on *DON'T COME KNOCKING*, a bittersweet ode to family, personal identity and the power of the movies.

Howard Spence (Shepard) has seen better days. A former star of Western pictures, he now finds himself relegated to thankless supporting roles. He leads an utterly selfish life, drowning his bitterness and resentment with alcohol, drugs and young women. One day, he learns from his mother that he might have a child somewhere. The very idea is like a ray of hope that his life hasn't all been in vain. Ditching his current film project, Howard sets out to search for that child and finds Doreen (Jessica Lange, *BROKEN FLOWERS*), a woman he once loved, and Earl (Gabriel Mann, *THE BOURNE SUPREMACY*), a young singer who doesn't need a father anymore. To complicate things, there's also Sky (Sarah Polley, *BEOWULF AND GRENDEL*, *SIBLINGS*), who might be his daughter of another short liaison, and Sutter (Tim Roth, *THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY*, *NOUVELLE FRANCE*), a bounty hunter determined to take Howard back to the movie set that he abandoned.

With glorious shots of Monument Valley and a lead character struggling to come to terms with the actions of his past and his relationship to those around him, *DON'T COME KNOCKING* pays homage to the films of John Ford while staking out emotional and thematic ground that is pure Wenders. Jessica Lange and Sarah Polley deliver incisive, heartfelt performances, while Shepard shines in one of his best roles to date.

"Shying away from sentimentality... DON'T COME KNOCKING expresses itself with deadpan humour, striking imagery, Western iconography and outbursts of strong emotions. – Kirk Honeycutt, *Hollywood Reporter*

"Working on themes having to do with an errant father, the wages of irresponsibility and the inability to look within, the team strikes some resonant chords." – Todd McCarthy, *Variety*

ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

Director: Terry Zwigoff

Cast: Max Minghella, John Malkovich, Jim Broadbent, Angelica Huston, Matt Keeslar

Run Time: 102 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: June/July 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A hit at this year's Sundance Film Festival, *ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL* reunites the creative team behind the widely acclaimed, Academy Award®-nominated cult hit *GHOST WORLD*. Adapted by director Terry Zwigoff (*CRUMB*) from artist-writer Daniel Clowes's cult comic strip and produced by co-star John Malkovich (*THE DANCER UPSTAIRS*), the poignant *ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL* is filled with wry humour and boasts a breakthrough performance from newcomer Max Minghella.

Art student Jerome (Minghella) dreams of becoming the greatest artist in the world. Arriving as a freshman at a prestigious East Coast art school filled with every artsy type imaginable, Jerome quickly discovers his affected style and arrogance won't get him very far. When he sees that a clueless jock is attracting the glory rightfully due him, he hatches an all-or-nothing plan to hit it big in the art world and win the heart of the most beautiful girl in school. But all is not as it seems, and he quickly learns that sometimes you really should be careful what you wish for. When he is arrested as a suspected murderer, Jerome discovers that crime might actually pay.

No one is spared in this biting, but hilarious, exploration of the random and subjective nature of art. Featuring a number of enjoyably perverse performances – including Malkovich as a slimy, self-absorbed teacher, Joel David Moore as a wise-ass student and Angelica Huston as a savvy, world-weary professor – *ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL* is infused with sardonic empathy and an underground comic consciousness.

"While Zwigoff and Clowes have a refreshingly oddball, cynical sensibility that will keep smart audiences amused, the chief element making ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL hang together is Minghella in his first lead role."

– David Rooney, *Variety*

THE PASSENGER

Director: Michelangelo Antonioni

Cast: Jack Nicholson, Maria Schneider, Jenny Runacre, Ian Hendry, Steven Berkoff

Run Time: 119 minutes

Country: France/Italy/USA/Spain

Year: 1975/2006

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Re-released to celebrate its thirtieth anniversary after being unavailable for the last twenty years, THE PASSENGER proves to be every bit the masterpiece it was when first released. A collaboration between Italian master Michelangelo Antonioni (BLOW-UP) and American icon Jack Nicholson (ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST, THE SHINING, CHINATOWN) at the height of their careers, THE PASSENGER is regarded by many as one of the best films of the seventies.

David Locke (Nicholson) is an American journalist sent to North Africa to report on a rebel group. Believing he can no longer be objective because his personality filters into every piece of reporting, he assumes the identity of a man named Robertson who dies of a heart attack in Locke's hotel. Locke substitutes all of Robertson's belongings with his own, making it appear as though he is the one who has died. Assuming Robertson's identity, he goes about keeping appointments that Robertson had arranged in Munich and Barcelona. However, his new identity becomes problematic when he discovers that Robertson is involved in supplying arms to the rebel group.

Things get worse when David's wife and colleague both want to question the real Robertson about Locke's alleged death. Locke goes to elaborate lengths to dodge them, enlisting the help of a French architecture student (Maria Schneider, LAST TANGO IN PARIS).

As attractive, powerful and understated as ever, Nicholson gives one of his best performances while Antonioni's main thematic concerns – alienation and identity set against a harsh mixture of desolate rural landscapes and cramped city architecture – are honed to perfection. The film is capped by one of the most famous final shots in cinematic history, a bravura seven-minute closing sequence, filmed in a single take.

"It's a movie from the past that still points ahead to the future: a cinematic rite of passage that raptly recalls a time when the world may have been as uncertain as now, but the movies were often lovelier and more daring." – Michael Wilmington, Chicago Tribune

"THE PASSENGER has lost none of its power in thirty years." – Rex Reed, New York Observer

THE NEW WORLD

Director: Terrence Malick

Cast: Colin Farrell, Christian Bale, Christopher Plummer, Q'orianka Kilcher

Runtime: N/A

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: May 2006

Ratings: ON PG / BC PG / AB PG / SK PG / MB PG / QC NR / Maritimes PG

The release of a Terrence Malick film is an event to celebrate. Arguably one of the greatest American filmmakers of the last half century, he is also extremely deliberate and conscientious. He made only three films between 1973 and 1998 – BADLANDS, DAYS OF HEAVEN, and THE THIN RED LINE – each considered a masterpiece in its own right.

Sweeping and epic in scope, Malick's highly anticipated THE NEW WORLD is set in the pristine wilds of early seventeenth-century Virginia, during the clash between European and Native American cultures that arose as the Jamestown Settlement was being founded in 1607. Against this historical backdrop, Malick tells a tale inspired by the legendary love story between John Smith (Colin Farrell, ALEXANDER) and Pocahontas.

John Smith is a forceful personality, a young and ambitious soldier of fortune out to conquer the New World and Pocahontas – an equally strong-willed native woman of noble disposition. When their paths cross, each must balance the needs and requirements of their respective civilizations and the demands of their yearning hearts.

In Malick's expert hands, THE NEW WORLD strikes a strong and unforgettable emotional chord. As with all his films, the breathtaking cinematography creates the perfect tableau for this saga of pride, perseverance and passion. An impressive supporting cast and riveting performances in the lead roles make this film well worth the wait.

"Malick is a writer-director of extraordinary vision who is like an endangered species." – Jami Bernard, New York Daily News

FREE ZONE

Director: Amos Gitai

Cast: Natalie Portman, Hanna Laslo, Hiam Abbass

Runtime: 90 minutes

Country: Israel/France/Spain/Belgium

Year: 2005

Language: English, Hebrew, Arabic with English subtitles

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

FREE ZONE, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, is the latest film by veteran Israeli director Amos Gitai (KADOSH, PROMISED LAND). He is in top form with his newest film, pushing his camera into an Israeli reality little seen in today's media. He also uses a major American star, Natalie Portman, to impressive effect, alongside co-stars Hanna Laslo and Hiam Abbass, whose performances are equally superb.

FREE ZONE is as simple as it is effective, opening on a young woman weeping silently in a car. It is only later that we understand why Rebecca (Portman, GARDEN STATE, CLOSER) is so upset. Setting out on a car trip with Hanna (Laslo, in an award-winning performance), Rebecca is a visiting Jewish American whose eyes are being opened to the reality of contemporary Israel and its neighbours. Hanna is on her way to the Free Zone, a region in northeast Jordan bordered by Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, a customs- and tax-free space where people from countries at war with each other rub shoulders to sell cars. Hanna is owed money by her husband's partner, "The American," and she is determined to bring it home with her. The film takes on its powerful momentum when the two women arrive and Leila (Abbass), a Palestinian woman, explains that The American isn't there – and that the money has vanished.

Gitai's world is predominantly female in FREE ZONE; it is a world he examined with great sensitivity in one of his most successful films, KADOSH. Women are both central and powerless here, victims yet perpetrators. They are as conflicted as the region itself, carrying the pain and complexities of life in the Middle East within them. But they also carry a willingness to go beyond these struggles, to find some kind of common ground. Gitai's camera is as marvellous as usual, a silent observer of people and landscapes, and his actors are exemplary – immediate and present – crafting characters defined pointedly against each other and the territory that delineates and traps them.

"[The] deliberately untouristy look of the film, with well-known spots like the Wailing Wall and Roman Jarash hardly glimpsed, is enhanced by Laurent Brunets functional, everyday lensing. In many respects, the physical journey is the freshest aspect of 'Free Zone'" – Derek Elley, Variety

LA NEUVAINNE

Director: Bernard Émond

Cast: Élise Guilbault, Patrick Drolet, Denise Gagnon, Isabelle Roy,

Stephane Demers

Runtime: 97 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: Independent – K-Films Amérique

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC G / Maritimes NR

LA NEUVAINNE, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and has won several awards internationally, is the third feature film for director Bernard Émond, who masterfully engages with the difficult matter of retaining a sense of faith when faced with death and senseless violence. Set in smalltown Quebec, LA NEUVAINNE weaves together the stories of two strangers brought together by chance but absorbed in their individual journeys into the true meaning of belief.

Jeanne, (Élise Guilbault, LA FEMME QUI BOIT), a committed and successful Montreal physician, has always believed in her ability to help and heal those in need. When she becomes overly involved in caring for an abused woman and her child, there are violent repercussions. The event unleashes a profound sense of helplessness in Jeanne, evoking earlier experiences of loss and shattering her faith in humanity and in her capacity to effect positive change.

Driving aimlessly afterward, Jeanne arrives in the town of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, home of the well-known Catholic shrine. In the depths of despair, she tries to summon the courage to drown herself in the St. Lawrence River, but is dissuaded by the young François (Patrick Drolet, 20h17 RUE DARLING). He has been dutifully driving in to Saint-Anne to perform a novena, a Catholic prayer offered over nine days, to aid his ailing grandmother; he believes he can save her through the power of prayer.

Émond, who masterfully renders the town itself a primary character, elicits nuanced performances from both Guilbault and relative newcomer Drolet. LA NEUVAINNE is a profoundly moving film that goes far beyond simple oppositions of belief or disbelief to touch upon broader questions of how we each define faith and let it guide our actions, while ultimately affirming the beautiful power of human relationships.

"Performances all around are superb, with Guilbault, previously seen to great effect in helmer's LA FEMME QUI BOIT, bringing a sharp intelligence, combined with hard-shelled compassion, to her portrayal of anguish and loss. Visuals are a strong point, thanks to regular Emond DOP Jean-Claude Labrecque, who dignifies all the characters, and beautifully captures the calm, rich texture of Quebec's autumnal landscape.– Jay Weissberg, Variety

DAVE CHAPELLE'S BLOCK PARTY

Director: Michel Gondry

Cast: Featuring Dave Chapelle, Mos Def, Erykah Badu, Kanye West, The Fugees

Run Time: 100 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April/May 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

What do you do when your net worth tops \$50 million? Throw a party! Dave Chappelle's wicked, ultra-edgy comedy series "Chappelle's Show" caused a sensation and catapulted him to a massive contract renewal. In 2004, the future looked infinite – and so did the pressure. To unwind, Dave decided to put together a little block party. Filmed by directorial wizard Michel Gondry (ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND), DAVE CHAPELLE'S BLOCK PARTY is an electric documentary that screened to packed houses at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®.

The concert gathers some of music's hippest performers – Kanye West, Mos Def, Erykah Badu, Dead Prez, Jill Scott, The Roots and a top-secret closing act – at a mystery location in Brooklyn. No tickets. No advertising. Instead, Chappelle tapped underground networks to reach his audience.

Gondry follows Chappelle back to his Cleveland, Ohio neighbourhood, where he calls upon unsuspecting former neighbours to hand out invites. He even finds a marching band and brings along its members. Chappelle can be brutally funny, but he reserves his most searing lines for himself. As the concert begins, it becomes clear that he needs this party as much as his audience craves it. The skies threaten all day, but the music wins out. "This is the concert I always wanted to see," Chappelle crows.

Then, after interspersing the music with his own freestyle comedy all day, Chappelle comes out to announce the headline act: The Fugees. For the first time since 1997, Lauryn Hill, Pras and Wyclef Jean hit the stage together. There are gasps. And then the music explodes forth in this tantalizing blend of filmmaking, comedy and sound.

"Before he impressed the world with Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, wunderkind director Michel Gondry made his name directing videos for musicians like Björk, the Chemical Brothers and the White Stripes. He's got great instincts and a real sense of play ... That same talent must have come in handy during the filming of DAVE CHAPELLE'S BLOCK PARTY." – Glenn Sumi, NOW Magazine

THE NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE

Director: Mary Harron

Cast: Gretchen Mol, Lili Taylor, Jonathan M. Woodward, David Strathairn, Jared Harris

Runtime: 100 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: June 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A world premiere at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, where it played to sold-out houses, THE NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE is an intelligent and affectionate look at the life of the famous and influential fifties pin-up queen.

The film follows Page (Gretchen Mol, SWEET AND LOWDOWN, DONNIE BRASCO) from her childhood in Nashville to New York. Intent on pursuing her acting dreams, Page starts modelling to make ends meet and soon gets into nude photography; it is not long before she is posing for sado-masochistic fetish pictures. As the first celebrity bondage model in the United States, she finds herself at the centre of a Senate investigation into pornography. Soon after, in 1958, she undergoes a sudden religious conversion and disappears from the public eye.

Frankly recounting the darker chapters of Page's personal history – such as physical and sexual abuse – the film stops short of drawing conclusions about the trajectory of her life. It offers moments of incredible visual beauty and joie de vivre provided primarily by the stunning Mol who, posing with sweet abandon, bears an uncanny resemblance to Page.

Director Mary Harron (I SHOT ANDY WARHOL) refuses to portray Page as a victim or a feminist ahead of her time, wisely leaving this debate to the viewer. This entertaining yet thought-provoking film will have audiences discussing THE NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE.

"A delightful celebration of the 'Pin-Up Queen of the Universe,' as well as a delicious appreciation of the texture and flavor of images from the fifties." – Jim Emerson, RogerEbert.com

THE WHITE COUNTESS

Director: James Ivory

Cast: Ralph Fiennes, Natasha Richardson, Vanessa Redgrave, Hiroyuki Sanada

Runtime: 135 minutes

Country: United Kingdom/USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: April 2006

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB PG / QC NR / Maritimes PG

THE WHITE COUNTESS is the newest film by Academy Award®-winning director James Ivory, whose films (HOWARD'S END, A ROOM WITH A FEW) have met with critical and popular acclaim. THE WHITE COUNTESS is a delicious evocation of the turbulent romances and turmoil of thirties Shanghai from the perspective of a disaffected American diplomat.

After losing his family to political violence that also left him blind, Todd Jackson (Ralph Fiennes, THE ENGLISH PATIENT, THE CONSTANT GARDENER) can no longer work effectively; he languishes in Shanghai's grand hotels and elite gentlemen's clubs, desperate to escape reality. Before long, however, a chance meeting with the shadowy Matsuda (Hiroyuki Sanada, THE LAST SAMURAI, RINGU) allows him to set about realising a dream he never knew he had: opening the perfect bar, which would be the home of an exquisite mix of romance, intrigue and political tension.

Jackson willfully ignores the circulating rumours that Matsuda has come to Shanghai to oversee a Japanese invasion of the city. Soon he meets Sofia (Natasha Richardson, ASYLUM, THE HANDMAID'S TALE), a Russian countess who fled the Bolshevik Revolution and is now the sole supporter of her husband's aristocratic family: she works as a taxi-dancer in night clubs and is ostracized by her family for her unseemly occupation. Thus begins a relationship that will slowly coax Jackson out of his isolated world. The timing is fateful: the Japanese invade Shanghai and the entire world is soon on the brink of World War II.

Ivory's ability to elicit the best in his actors – he has directed many to Oscar nominations – has not wavered, and Fiennes gives a perfect performance as the refined, damaged Jackson. The cinematography is outstanding; THE WHITE COUNTESS is an unforgettable, epic period piece that deftly captures a licentious, glittering and sordid era in our collective past.

METAL: A HEADBANGER'S JOURNEY

Director: Sam Dunn, Scot McFadyen, Jessica Joy Wise

Cast: Featuring Tony Iommi, Bruce Dickinson, Rob Zombie, Alice Cooper, Dee Snider, Geddy Lee, Ronnie James Dio, Lemmy Kilmister, Vince Neil

Runtime: 96 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Raise your fist and yell! Get ready to tease your hair and hold up the horns: the dark gods of musical mayhem have risen from the fiery depths to rip through METAL: A HEADBANGER'S JOURNEY, a raucous documentary and a presentation of the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®.

From high school through graduate studies, Sam Dunn has had a passion for screaming guitars, blinding pyrotechnics and blown-out eardrums. In this impassioned documentary, Dunn is joined by co-directors Scot McFadyen and Jessica Joy Wise on a mission to glean the riotous rhyme and reason of metal. An often vilified genre, metal has always maintained its rabid international following, whether in or out of the mainstream spotlight.

Journeying through America and Europe, following tours and attending open-air metal fests, the filmmakers document a wide cross-section of opinions regarding the scene. Fans weigh in, as do such metal gods as Rush's Geddy Lee, Ronnie James Dio, Alice Cooper, Motörhead's Lemmy, musician and horror icon Rob Zombie, Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil and Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson.

Between thunderous shows and beer-soaked bonding with diehard fans, the filmmakers manage to overturn some of the myriad pre-conceptions regarding the phenomenon. Black Sabbath's Tommy Iommi – who obviously preserved more brain cells than former bandmate Ozzy Osbourne – shares the reasoning behind the band's use of crucifix imagery. Dee Snider of Twisted Sister talks about spandex, sexual stage theatrics and his eloquent and articulate testimony to the U.S. Senate concerning allegedly obscene song lyrics – a response to Tipper Gore's mid-eighties witch hunt.

Dunn's co-conspirators enjoy capturing his clashing priorities: as a fan thrust into the spotlight, he finds a balance between investigating the scene and overheating with star worship when he interviews the idols of his teenaged years. A study of teen angst and rebellion and a rockfest that teaches fans a new lick or two, this film is proof that metal is about more than just the spectacle of evil.

“What will it take to earn the metal-head some respect? METAL: A HEADBANGER'S JOURNEY is an excellent start ... While [it] earnestly investigates such issues as gender, censorship, religion and violence in metal, it only rarely comes off as an academic treatise. One reason is Dunn's unabashed fandom.” – Jason Anderson, eye Weekly

ON A CLEAR DAY

Director: Gaby Dellal

Cast: Peter Mullan, Brenda Blethyn, Jamie Sives, Billy Boyd

Runtime: 98 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Summer 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

In the tradition of *THE FULL MONTY* and *CALENDAR GIRLS* comes the internationally acclaimed *ON A CLEAR DAY*, Irish director Gaby Dellal's witty, smartly observed tale of one man's struggle to overcome the odds.

Frank (Peter Mullan, *THE MAGDALENE SISTERS*), a Glaswegian shipyard worker for nearly thirty years, has just learned he's being made redundant. Unable to face this devastating change, he finds himself adrift in life. When his old colleagues invite him to the local swimming pool for a little exercise and camaraderie, he begins to envision the challenge that will salvage his dignity and self-esteem – swimming the English channel.

Unsure how his devoted wife, Joan (Brenda Blethyn, *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*, *SECRETS AND LIES*), will handle his surprising decision, Frank keeps it a secret, unaware that Joan has her own agenda. Compounding the family's recent hardship is the tragic drowning of their son, Stuart, when he was seven. Frank's inability to deal with these old feelings of loss and frustration has led to a strained relationship with his other son Robert (Jamie Sives, *WILBUR WANTS TO KILL HIMSELF*), a stay-at-home dad. As Frank begins his training, he finds that his emotional journey through life has just begun.

Mullan gives an inspired performance while Billy Boyd (*THE LORD OF THE RINGS*) steals every scene as Frank's best friend. Skilfully capturing the humanity of ordinary people facing extraordinary challenges, Dellal has crafted an uplifting, humorous and heartwarming film that will leave audiences cheering.

"...a superb centre in the form of Peter Mullan, who winningly conveys Frank's initial despondency and later determination." – Matthew Leyland, BBC

AKEELAH AND THE BEE

Directors: Doug Atchison

Cast: Angela Bassett, Laurence Fishburne, Keke Palmer

Runtime: TBD

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Maple Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Late Spring 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Drawing on the uniquely entertaining world of spelling bees, *AKEELAH AND THE BEE* is a heartwarming tale of a precocious eleven-year-old girl from south Los Angeles whose incredible talent for words takes her on a poignant journey of self discovery.

Akeelah Anderson (newcomer Keke Palmer) doesn't spend much time on her school work but still maintains perfect scores on her spelling tests. With encouragement from her teacher she reluctantly enters the school spelling bee. After winning the competition, she goes on to the state championship in spite of her mother's (Angela Bassett, *HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK*, *SUNSHINE STATE*) demands that she concentrate on her studies. Desperate to have one of his pupils win the spelling bee, the principal introduces Akeelah to Dr. Larabee (Laurence Fishburne, *THE MATRIX*, *MYSTIC RIVER*), a university professor and himself a former spelling-bee champion. Working with Dr. Larabee isn't easy. He demands a lot from his young pupil but slowly begins to make her aware of her own potential. Her gift takes her to the National Spelling Bee, the most famous competition of its kind in the world.

Along the way, Akeelah's journey evokes pride in the neighbourhood. She is helped by a cast of colourful characters from the community who are all inspired by the courage and inspiration of one amazing girl. Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne give beautifully restrained performances as the guiding forces in this moving story of a young girl's triumph over adversity.

TIDELAND

Director: Terry Gilliam

Cast: Jeff Bridges, Jodelle Ferland, Janet McTeer, Brendan Fletcher

Runtime: 122 minutes

Country: Canada/United Kingdom

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Fall 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, TIDELAND, a new film by widely celebrated filmmaker Terry Gilliam (BRAZIL, 12 MONKEYS, FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS), is a vividly imaginative modern take on the classic fairy tale genre.

Based on Mitch Cullin's novel of the same name, TIDELAND centres on the endearing Jeliza-Rose (Jodelle Ferland, in a career-making performance), who is raised in near isolation with only her dolls' heads and a very active imagination for company. After her mother (Jennifer Tilly, SAINT RALPH) dies of a drug overdose, her father (Jeff Bridges, SEABISCUIT, THE DOOR IN THE FLOOR) haphazardly gathers a few of their belongings and moves them from the big city to a ramshackle barn in the middle of nowhere.

The barn is abandoned and vandalized and Jeliza-Rose's father barely makes it livable before embarking on yet another drug "vacation," leaving his young daughter to fend for herself. Strange things start to happen, made all the more surreal by Jeliza-Rose's frequent escapes into fantasy. While her father sits immobile in his chair, she keeps hearing strange noises from the attic. Soon she is having imaginary conversations with her dolls, and has found only two other humans in her midst – her mysterious neighbour Dell and the epileptic, mentally-challenged Dickens (Brendan Fletcher, THE LAW OF ENCLOSURES), who thinks of himself as a shark hunter.

The story of a girl trying to cope with the very harsh circumstances of her life, TIDELAND is infused with an off-kilter zaniness that makes it a rival to such darkly whimsical tales as "Alice in Wonderland," one of Jeliza-Rose's favourite books. Shifting between tender and disturbing, with a brilliant performance from Ferland (a gifted young actress to watch for), this is an enchanting film that takes you deep into the psyche of a special little girl.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Director: David Cronenberg

Cast: Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello, Ed Harris, William Hurt

Runtime: 95 minutes

Country: Canada/USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: March 2006

Ratings: ON 18A / BC 18A / AB 18A / SK NR / MB 18A / QC 16+ / Maritimes NR

A gripping thriller with an all-star cast, A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE, the latest offering from David Cronenberg, was one of the most talked about films at last year's Festival de Cannes and at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, where it was lauded by critics as a contemporary masterpiece. It went on to be named one of Canada's Top Ten films of 2005.

The cleverly plotted, tautly constructed movie follows Tom Stall (Viggo Mortensen, THE LORD OF THE RINGS), who is living a happy and quiet life with his lawyer wife (Maria Bello, THE COOLER) and their two children in the small town of Millbrook, Indiana. But their idyllic existence is shattered one night when Tom foils a vicious attempted robbery in his diner, saving his customers and friends in the self defense killings of two sought after criminals. Suddenly, he becomes the hero of his small town and reporters begin arriving from everywhere to interview him. Just as all the fuss is calming down, a certain Carl Fogarty (Ed Harris, THE HOURS) rolls in with his henchmen, convinced he has recognized Tom as Joey, a long lost former member of his gang. No matter how vehemently Tom denies it, Fogarty continues harassing him. Tom's life is turned upside down, and it's only the beginning.

Rich with detail and slick cinematography, the film finds Cronenberg skillfully navigating a more mainstream tone while still delivering the disturbing and intriguing undercurrents his fans have come to expect. Comparing the film to a Hitchcock thriller where an innocent man is mistaken by some very scary people and drawn into a world he'd rather not know anything about, Cronenberg has delivered perhaps his most engrossing film to date.

"One of the Canadian director's more straightforward pictures, it should delight mainstream audiences who prefer their action pictures to have some depth of character, several twists in the plot and a satisfying conclusion."

– Ray Bennett, *The Hollywood Reporter*

MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS

Director: Stephen Frears

Cast: Dame Judi Dench, Bob Hoskins, Kelly Reilly, William Young, Christopher Guest

Runtime: 103 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: April 2006

Ratings: ON PG / BC PG / AB 14A / SK PG / MB 14A / QC NR / Maritimes 14A

A Gala presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS is a lively and invigorating love letter to a famous London theatre, an homage to Britain's wartime experiences and an evocation of the great musicals that lit up the screen during the thirties and forties.

Dame Judy Dench (LADIES IN LAVENDER, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE) plays the eccentric Laura Henderson who, widowed and at loose ends at the age of seventy, buys an abandoned Soho cinema and turns it into what would become the historic Windmill Theatre. Knowing nothing about theatre, she hires the irascible Vivian van Damm (Bob Hoskins, BEYOND THE SEA, VANITY FAIR) to run it and re-opens its doors as Revueville. Nothing seems to bring the vaudeville house to life until Mrs. Henderson has a flash of inspiration: produce a nude revue. She neatly sidesteps the censorship laws by freezing the performers as "tableaux vivants" in which the showgirls do not move a muscle. The Windmill Theatre becomes a smash hit, and when the war begins, the theatre provides a haven for thousands of young soldiers.

Meanwhile, the young models that provide the on-stage glamour are involved in their own backstage dramas, including a romance between a soldier and one of the beautiful Windmill girls. But the core of the film is the tumultuous relationship between owner and impresario. Van Damm insists on artistic freedom, but Mrs. Henderson's constant stream of ideas means the two are bound to butt heads, and indeed, they do.

MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS is a triumphant mix of deft comedy and stunning stage numbers that recreate the nude revues that made the Windmill the British equivalent of the Moulin Rouge. Stephen Frears (DIRTY PRETTY THINGS, DANGEROUS LIAISONS) is unquestionably at the top of his form.

"Sherman's words and Dench's delivery are a match made in movie heaven, while Hoskins makes for an equally committed sparring partner. There's a palpable Hepburn-Tracy vibe to their lively exchanges."

– Michael Rechtshaffen, *The Hollywood Reporter*

THE SQUID AND THE WHALE

Director: Noah Baumbach

Cast: Jeff Daniels, Laura Linney, Jesse Eisenberg, Owen Kline, William Baldwin, Anna Paquin

Runtime: 88 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: March 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 18A / AB 18A / SK NR / MB 14A / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® and winner of the prizes for best direction and screenwriting at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival, THE SQUID AND THE WHALE is a dramatic yet funny coming-of-age story set against the elite literary backdrop of eighties Brooklyn.

Finding it progressively difficult to live together in their Brooklyn brownstone, Bernard (Jeff Daniels, IMAGINARY HEROES, PLEASANTVILLE) and Joan (Laura Linney, KINSEY, P.S.) are long past the point of saving their marriage. Both have Ph.Ds in literature and are published writers, though Bernard's success has gone to seed while Joan's career is blossoming. As they enter into a seemingly amicable separation, their two sons seem to be caught in the middle. Bernard moves to the far side of Prospect Park, taking his sons on alternate nights filled with shameless self-pitying and arrogant comments.

Teenaged Walt (Jesse Eisenberg, THE VILLAGE) increasingly chooses to emulate his father's pompous and pretentious mannerisms by disparaging classmates and schoolwork and, eventually, his mother with thoughtless, hurtful quips. Eventually Walt turns against Joan, helped every step of the way by his father, and moves in permanently with Bernard. Walt's younger brother Frank (Owen Kline, THE ANNIVERSARY PARTY) gravitates toward his mother in this time of crisis while simultaneously coping with his gawky sexual awakening and a keen taste for alcohol.

Complications arise as Joan begins seeing Frank's tennis coach (William Baldwin, BACKDRAFT) and one of Bernard's young students (Anna Paquin, ALMOST FAMOUS) moves into his house. Walt begins to have girl problems of his own, and Frank's sexual pursuits land him in trouble at school.

Inspired performances by Daniels and Linney propel the film while Eisenberg gives a superbly nuanced performance as a teenager who comes to the momentous conclusion that his parents aren't perfect. Based on autobiographical events in writer-director Noah Baumbach's (THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU) life, THE SQUID AND THE WHALE offers a compelling look at the toll a divorcee takes on a family.

"Tender, cruel, and very funny, Baumbach's fourth feature turns family history into a sort of urban myth."

– J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

Director: Ang Lee

Cast: Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Anne Hathaway, Randy Quaid, Michelle Williams

Runtime: 130 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: April 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB 14A / SK NR / MB 14+ / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Acclaimed director Ang Lee's newest film and a Masters presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN is destined to be recognized as one of the greatest love stories ever put to film. The film represents a new and lofty level of achievement for Lee, talented young actors Heath Ledger (CASANOVA, LORDS OF DOGTOWN) and Jake Gyllenhaal (PROOF, JARHEAD) and a powerhouse trio of writers.

In 1963, two young, poor-as-dirt cowboys, Jack Twist (Gyllenhaal) and Ennis Del Mar (Ledger), are hired to tend cattle on top of Brokeback Mountain, Wyoming's most picturesque grazing slope. Suspicious of one another at first, they become fast friends. Increasingly rebellious in their isolated universe, their friendship takes on a dangerous, revolutionary tone. Soon comes a frank and powerful sexual encounter that blossoms into a dreamlike, heart-pounding romance.

But the summer ends and their inevitable parting leaves them pained and yearning. Ennis marries his long-time sweetheart and settles down to a life of poverty and screaming kids in Wyoming, while Jack joins the rodeo and eventually makes his fortune with the burgeoning Sun Belt business of his Texan father-in-law. When Jack finally contacts Ennis, sending a postcard to say that he is coming through Wyoming for business, they embark on a painful lifelong relationship fraught with forbidden desire.

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN is based on Annie Proulx's (THE SHIPPING NEWS) much-lauded short story, originally published in "The New Yorker" in 1997 and adapted for the screen by acclaimed novelists Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana. This literary pedigree gives the film a rare precision and economy of gesture that make its devastating emotional moments rich and resonant.

The film can be read many ways: as a chronicle of shifting attitudes towards sexuality, or as the representative moment when the Old West became the New West. But it is ultimately and fundamentally a film about love of the most evocative kind – impossible, lustful, all-consuming, passionate love, born in a place of overwhelming beauty at a time of great innocence and hope. It would be hard to remain unmoved as society's mores and the inexorable vagaries of the world slowly undermine this love.

"BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN will appeal to moviegoers who enjoy grand filmmaking and poignant love stories, whether gay, hetero or otherwise." – Ray Bennett, *Hollywood Reporter*

FAMILIA

Director: Louise Archambault

Cast: Sylvie Moreau, Mylène St-Sauveur, Macha Grenon, Juliette Gosselin, Vincent Graton, Micheline Lanctôt

Runtime: 102 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: Christal Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 18A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB 14+ / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

FAMILIA, a gripping family drama, had the honour of opening the Canada First! programme at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, where it went on to win Best Canadian First Feature Film. Award-winning short filmmaker Louise Archambault makes her feature debut with a confident, energetic and at times humorous work; FAMILIA is a smart and tightly scripted slice of life for a delightfully interesting extended family.

Michèle (Sylvie Moreau, CAMPING SAUVAGE, LOVE AND MAGNETS) – known as Mimi – is a free-spirited aerobics instructor who also happens to be a desperately cash-strapped gambling addict. When she is caught at yet another gaming table and her boyfriend threatens to cut off her finances, Mimi starts packing – a not particularly healthy coping mechanism.

This time, Mimi plans to take her fourteen-year old daughter Marguerite (Mylène Saint-Sauveur, THE INCOMPARABLE Mlle C.) to California. They make a pit stop at the home of Mimi's mother – the young-at-heart, sex-crazed card sharp Madeleine (Micheline Lanctôt, BARBARIAN INVASIONS), who thinks they should settle down but can't help them out financially. So it's back on the road for Mimi and Marguerite. Next stop: Mimi's childhood friend Janine's place. Janine (Macha Grenon, BARBARIAN INVASIONS) is an interior designer who seems to have the perfect family and ideal suburban life. Reluctantly, Janine takes her old friend in; as both women try to refine their mothering skills and set an example for their daughters, conflicting values and character traits clash.

Archambault provides a rich tapestry of subplots and characters to enrich the two women's stories: the growing friendship between kids Margot and Gabrielle; a crisis of Margot's own, plus a host of other people in Mimi and Janine's overlapping, extended families. Capturing the complexity of family dynamics, FAMILIA is many things at once: intense, all-consuming, funny and heartbreaking.

"FAMILIA's best moments are when the comedy of situations is allowed to come to the fore, which shows the keen sense of humour in Archambault's characters. Grenon's Janine gradually steals the film in a beautifully calibrated performance matched on the older side by Lanctôt as Mimi's free-thinking mum and on the younger by both Gosselin as tweenie Gabrielle and Saint-Sauveur as Marguerite, who shows surprisingly mature smarts as Mimi's daughter." – Derek Elley, *Variety*

BREAKFAST ON PLUTO

Director: Neil Jordan

Cast: Cillian Murphy, Liam Neeson, Stephen Rea, Brendan Gleeson, Gavin Friday

Runtime: 135 minutes

Country: Ireland/United Kingdom

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: January 2006

Video: April 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

BREAKFAST ON PLUTO, a Masters presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, is the newest work in the distinguished career of award-winning director Neil Jordan (THE CRYING GAME, THE GOOD THIEF). The film is a delirious frenzy that tells the wild story of Patrick “Kitten” Braden, a catty, beleaguered Irish transvestite who becomes involved with the Irish Republican Army while on a quest to reunite with his mother.

This is the second collaboration of Neil Jordan and author-screenwriter Patrick McCabe, who gave us the equally inventive THE BUTCHER BOY. Outrageous star Cillian Murphy (COLD MOUNTAIN) shines as the “svelte gamine” Kitten, supported by the venerable Liam Neeson (GANGS OF NEW YORK, KINSEY) as a sympathetic local priest.

BREAKFAST ON PLUTO is a tale of a young, Irish pretty-boy who moves from pubescent youth to a kind of maturity over the film, while remaining true to his anarchic character despite attempts to reform him. Abandoned at birth, Kitten grows into an effeminate and sharp-tongued boy who suffers at the hands of an abusive foster mother. The chic, often confused Kitten is propelled from one bizarre situation to another as he travels from Ireland to London’s steamy Soho nightspots in search of his birth mother. Falling carelessly into a succession of freakish encounters that involve the IRA and a magician with a penchant for gory tricks (Stephen Rea, THE CRYING GAME, GUINEVERE), Kitten remains gloriously immune to the vicissitudes of life.

Jordan, perhaps Ireland’s best-known filmmaker, once again fashions a cinematic gem that is Irish to the core: interior, complex and liberating. He is magnificently served by Murphy’s brazen performance: with his bee-stung lips and foul mouth, the flighty, flaky Kitten is a commanding presence. A film of bright colours and offbeat art design, its cheeky humour brings to life the beatings, break-ups and bombings that punctuate the drama. With its off-beat charm, nostalgic pop soundtrack and dark edge, BREAKFAST ON PLUTO is an electrifying, if bizarre, adventure.

“Neil Jordan doesn’t make bad movies ...the visuals are always stunning and the acting is consistently so striking that you’re never bored by what you see ...You’re guaranteed to walk out stimulated by the events that occurred. The same holds true for his latest, BREAKFAST ON PLUTO.” – Rachel Gordon, *filmcritic.com*

JAMES DEAN: FOREVER YOUNG

Director: Michael J. Sheridan

Cast: Narrated by Martin Sheen

Runtime: 88 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Warner Brothers

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB G / QC NR / Maritimes PG

One would be hard-pressed to come up with a more legendary figure than James Dean. From his matinee-idol looks to his bad-boy image to the utter tragedy of such a talented force dying before his time, in many ways Dean is the iconic image of an era in American history. Long overdue, JAMES DEAN: FOREVER YOUNG, a documentary on the actor, has finally arrived to coincide with the newly struck 35mm prints of Dean’s films.

Dean famously made three films before he died in a tragic car crash: EAST OF EDEN (1955), REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (1955) and GIANT (1956). A mere three films, yet he was given the opportunity to work with some of the most groundbreaking filmmakers of the time, including Elia Kazan and Nicholas Ray. Remarkably, this all happened within the period of two years – it’s almost hard to remember Dean was a real person and not a mythological figure who lived too hard and too fast to really have been part of this world.

FOREVER YOUNG does a remarkable job of tapping into the Dean we know less about. Using rare footage, it chronicles the TV career that came before the films that would give Dean his immortality. Countering the image we have of a young man who came from nowhere to capture the hearts of teenagers everywhere, is evidence of Dean’s hard work: he made more than thirty-five TV appearances from 1951 until he made EAST OF EDEN. Thanks to the tremendous research efforts of the people behind this documentary, we also gain access to another Dean – the man behind the image – as he makes appearance after appearance on TV, in hopes on one day making it big.

As subject matter for a documentary, it would be hard to go wrong with Dean. But director Michael J. Sheridan, obviously a lifelong fan of the actor, goes beyond the conventional biography format to portray a Dean who grew from novice to superstar within the span of four years; he uses a vast stream of interviews and archival footage to allow the audience to watch the legend come alive. Narrated by Martin Sheen, FOREVER YOUNG is a captivating glimpse into one of the most memorable figures of the twentieth century.

“Some of Dean’s [television] work has been glimpsed before, but never to the significant extent provided here. Resulting impression is of a versatile young actor testing his range and stretching into areas that went well beyond the brooding image created by his bigscreen features.” – Todd McCarthy, *Variety*

BALLETS RUSSES

Director: Dan Geller, Dayna Goldfine

Cast: N/A

Runtime: 118 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: September 2006

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB PG / QC G / Maritimes NR

Screened in the Real to Reel programme at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, *BALLET RUSSES* is a fascinating and intimate portrait of the Ballets Russes dance company, which completely revolutionized dance in the first half of the twentieth century.

From 1909, when Sergei Diaghilev premiered his Ballet Russe company in Paris, to 1962, when Serge Denham's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo performed its final show in Brooklyn, the Ballets Russes brought their groundbreaking and provocative performances to international venues large and small. This amazingly productive period left an indelible mark not only on dance but on stage design, painting, music, film and theatre.

Through interviews with many of the famed ballerinas – now elderly and instructing a new generation in the joys of dance – and carefully researched archival material, co-directors Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine explore the early, legendary production collaborations between such artistic giants as Nijinsky, Stravinsky, Ravel, Picasso and Matisse; the contentious splits in the company and bitter rivalries, and the immensely popular American tours of the thirties and forties that electrified a nation whose only familiarity with dance came from vaudeville.

All of the many interview subjects are glorious and unforgettable figures, from the final surviving member of Diaghilev's original troupe to the dazzling preteen ballerinas in the thirties to the first Native American and African American dancers. Geller and Goldfine illustrate the dancers' fond remembrances with a wonderful array of rare home movies and pioneering dance cinematography and fan footage. *BALLETS RUSSES* will charm audiences with this glamorous story of the most influential, illustrious and beloved dance company of all time.

“Even viewers who would rate their interest in and knowledge of ballet somewhere between little and nil should be enthralled by this history of the Ballet Russes.” – Jason Anderson, *eye Weekly*

THE LIFE AND HARD TIMES OF GUY TERRIFICO

Director: Michael Mabbott

Cast: Matt Murphy, Kris Kristofferson, Phil Kaufman, Natalie Radford, Donnie Fritts

Runtime: 86 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: Late April, 2006

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB 14+ / SK NR / MB 14+ / QC G / Maritimes NR

One of the two Best First Canadian Feature winners at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, *THE LIFE AND HARD TIMES OF GUY TERRIFICO* takes as its starting point the making of a contemporary tribute album for the notorious Guy (newcomer Matt Murphy), a hard-drinking, hard-living legend who never quite made it. Alternative country and its booze-fuelled macho mythmaking get a well-deserved work-over in Michael Mabbott's impressive debut film.

Guy starts out as a small-town prairie boy who just wants to play music. Then, an improbable, unexpected windfall leaves him newly wealthy and he soon acquires the requisite shady entourage, who encourage him to indulge in enough intoxicants to fell a water buffalo. As he starts to unravel, his dreams go up in smoke – quite literally. A spectacularly disastrous appearance on a Christian TV show in Nashville seems like the last straw, but our spectator culture often confuses notoriety with fame and, soon enough, Guy's career is back on the rails.

The portrait of Guy is fleshed out by his sketchy manager; his childhood sweetheart Mary Lou (Natalie Radford), who has issues with bodily processes and alcohol; plus hangers-on including Mr. Stuff (Lyriq Bent), Guy's drug dealer and confidante, and Guy's horrifically foul-mouthed mistress (Jane Sowerby). Mabbott also includes hysterically funny testimonials to his hero from such legends as Kris Kristofferson, Levon Helm and Merle Haggard. All of them go on record as adoring Guy's songs (the few they've heard) but can't seem to wrap their heads around his boorish behaviour. Mixing in footage of notorious incidents in country-music history – such as Kristofferson's infamous acceptance speech at the 1970 Country Music Awards – Mabbott creates a persistently witty portrait of the music industry and its need to cannibalize and glamorize its past. Countless experts and rock critics weigh in on the profound importance of Guy and his career, despite the fact he was never sober enough to actually record an album.

This is a satire – superbly acted, well played and masterfully paced – that's both hilarious and long overdue. *Guy Terrifico* might be the most talented and notorious musician Canada never had.

“Michael Mabbott's first feature boasts some inspired comedy and very fine tunes.” – Jason Anderson, *eye Weekly*

CAPOTE

Director: Bennett Miller
Cast: Philip Seymour Hoffman, Catherine Keener, Clifton Collins Jr., Mark Pellegrino, Bruce Greenwood, Chris Cooper
Runtime: 110 minutes
Country: USA
Language: English

Year: 2005
Distributor: Mongrel Media
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: Late March, 2006
Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB 14+ / SK NR / MB 14+ / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

A Special Presentation at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, CAPOTE features the immensely gifted actor Philip Seymour Hoffman (OWNING MAHOWNY, PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE), who channels the spirit of Truman Capote in this deeply engaging portrait of the great American writer. Director Bennett Miller's film focuses on Capote's research and writing of "In Cold Blood," the pioneering non-fiction novel that skyrocketed him to unheralded acclaim – but not without a price.

It is 1959 and Capote is stunned into silence by a newspaper article detailing the brutal murder of the entire Clutter family in rural Kansas. Perry Smith (Clifton Collins Jr.) and Richard Hickock (Mark Pellegrino, NATIONAL TREASURE) are arrested for the savage crime; strangers to the family, they killed them all for a few dollars. Capote decides he must write about the case and convinces his close friend Nelle Harper Lee (Catherine Keener, THE BALLAD OF JACK AND ROSE) – who will soon have "To Kill a Mockingbird" published – to be his "researcher and body-guard." They immediately travel from the literary salons of libertine New York to the dusty farmlands of the culturally backward Midwest.

Capote sincerely sympathizes with the convicted killers. He identifies strongly with Perry, who is soft, sensitive and creative like himself and is dominated by the calculating Richard. But the book that will cement Capote's reputation, it turns out, is more important than his blooming relationship with a poor, weak young man in a death-row cell.

Hoffman is brilliant as Capote; he superbly captures Capote's pinched high voice, animated face and ego-decimating wit with fascinating authenticity.

Uncovering the fierce inner demons that lie behind his coiffed, carefully-orchestrated persona, Miller and Hoffman vividly evoke a delicate literary legend whose ambitions threaten to transform him into a treacherous scoundrel.

"[CAPOTE is] the most intelligent, detailed, and absorbing film ever made about a writer's working method and character – in this case, a mixed quiver of strength, guile, malice, and mendacity." – David Denby, *New Yorker*

"...the film itself is mere background dressing to Hoffman's savviest performance to date." – Aaron Hillis, *Premiere Magazine*

BEOWULF AND GRENDDEL

Director: Sturla Gunnarsson
Cast: Gerard Butler, Stellan Skarsgård, Sarah Polley, Ingvar E. Sigurdsson
Runtime: 103 minutes
Country: Canada/Iceland/United Kingdom
Year: 2005

Language: English
Distributor: Equinoxe Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Following his award-winning RARE BIRDS, Sturla Gunnarsson brings the epic Anglo-Saxon poem Beowulf to the screen in BEOWULF & GRENDDEL a presentation of the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®. Gorgeously shot, this bloody, medieval adventure tells the gory tale of a Norse warrior's battle against a great and murderous troll.

The setting is barbarous Northern Europe, where the rise of Christianity is slowly usurping the reign of Pagan gods. Beowulf (Gerard Butler, DEAR FRANKIE, LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER) is caught in the middle of this great shift, his simple code transforming and falling apart before his eyes. The much respected Lord of the Danes, he leads a troop of warriors across the sea to rid a village of the marauding monster Grendel (Ingvar E. Sigurdsson) – not a creature of mythic powers, but one of flesh and blood, driven by vengeance. Beowulf's willingness to kill on behalf of King Hrothgar (Stellan Skarsgård, KING ARTHUR, DOGVILLE) wavers when it becomes clear that the King plays a greater role in Grendel's rampages than was first apparent.

Cleverly adding a new and contemporary twist to the classic character of Beowulf, Gunnarsson seeks to strip away heroic qualities from the victorious warrior, who has become increasingly troubled by his own mythical status. Beowulf's relationship with the mesmerizing witch Selma (Sarah Polley, SIBLINGS, MY LIFE WITHOUT ME), creates deeper confusion.

Gunnarsson succeeds in crafting a unique and provocative rendition of the historical epic while keeping the story true to the traditions of its literary source. Artfully combining the cinematic elements of the poem, Gunnarsson has created a visual feast worthy of the poem's spirit that will keep viewers enthralled from the captivating beginning to the inevitable and terrible battle at the end. BEOWULF & GRENDDEL is a grippingly entertaining film in which vengeance, loyalty and mercy powerfully entwine.

HER MAJESTY

Director: Mark J. Gordon

Cast: Sally Andrews, Vicky Haughton, Liddy Holloway, Mark Clare, Craig Elliot

Runtime: 105 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2004

Language: English

Distributor: Independent

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG / BC G / AB PG / SK G / MB PG / QC NR / Maritimes G

Writer-director Mark J. Gordon's HER MAJESTY has won numerous awards – including several audience awards – at film festivals internationally. It's a wonderful – and wondrous – tale about a little girl's dream come true that has tugged hearts everywhere it has screened.

HER MAJESTY is set in 1953 in Middleton, New Zealand, a quiet, provincial hamlet on the west coast of the North Island. Nearly thirteen years old, Elizabeth Wakefield is consumed by a desire to go to London someday to meet her idol: Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Fascinated by the beautiful young monarch, Elizabeth has made her bedroom into a shrine with countless pictures of the Royal Coronation plastered on her walls. When word arrives that the queen is planning to visit Elizabeth's small hometown, the girl is euphoric.

And so is the rest of the town, with the exception of Hira Mata, a very old Maori woman who has outlived all of her tribe and relations – and has few endearing feelings for the British monarchy.

As Middletonians eagerly prepare for the Queen's upcoming visit, the dilapidated old wooden shack where Hira lives stands out like a sore thumb. Hira, however, refuses to sell it. After Elizabeth's delinquent brother Stuart and his pals throw a brick through Hira's front window, Elizabeth goes to her house to compensate her for the damage – and has a frightening, mystical encounter with the old woman. Eventually, Elizabeth and Hira become friends, as Elizabeth recognizes a great wisdom and kindness in the old woman, and loves to hear her tell stories about her tribe's history and culture.

However, this friendship is soon put to the test. With the queen's arrival on the horizon, Elizabeth learns details about her town's history and the role played by her ancestors, particularly in relation to the brutal treatment of Hira's tribe. In this evocatively rendered film – beautifully acted and shot – a little girl finds herself caught between fulfilling a lifelong desire and coming to terms with a complicated history she can no longer ignore. This is a powerful film for all ages.

"An exceptional movie – a must see!" – San Diego Family Magazine

"Andrews' impeccable performance as the starry-eyed preteen helps HER MAJESTY live up to its intentions as an endearing and inspirational story." – Micky Michalec, Orlando Weekly

SOMETHING NEW

Director: Sanaa Hamri

Cast: Sanaa Lathan, Simon Baker, Alfre Woodward, Blair Underwood

Run Time: 99 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A critic's darling upon its Valentine's Day release, SOMETHING NEW – the feature directorial debut of Sanaa Hamri – is a winning romantic comedy about finding love where you least expect it.

If love is an adventure, it's one yet to be embarked upon by Kenya (Sanaa Lathan, OUT OF TIME), a beautiful L.A. career woman who is on the verge of making partner at a prestigious accounting firm. But she has yet to find her own partner and a fulfilling personal life. After another Valentine's Day spent working late, Kenya agrees to a blind date with Brian (Simon Baker, L.A. CONFIDENTIAL, LAND OF THE DEAD), a sexy and free-spirited man who turns out to be white – not exactly the IBM (ideal black man) that Kenya had pictured for herself. Then again, she does need the yard of her new house fixed up, and Brian, an accomplished landscape architect, is the perfect candidate.

Kenya's socially prominent parents (Alfred Woodard, THE FORGOTTEN and Earl Billings) and womanizing younger brother Nelson (Donald Faison, SCRUBS) voice their own opinions about Kenya's new beau. But when her perfect match, Mark (Blair Underwood, MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION), enters the picture, Kenya is thrown into confusion. Ultimately, she has to decide for herself and follow her heart – no matter where it takes her.

Featuring sensitive, star-making turns from Sanaa Lathan and Simon Baker and a strong supporting cast of delightful, underrated performers, SOMETHING NEW promises to delight and surprise.

"SOMETHING NEW delivers all the usual pleasures of a love story, and something more. [It] has frank dialogue about race – not platitudes about how we're all really the same, but realistic observations about race in modern America... The movie truly is something new: A touching story about a black professional woman facing problems in the workplace and the marriage market. I found myself unexpectedly moved." – Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times

"Sanaa Hamri's brisk, refreshingly understated romantic comedy SOMETHING NEW is the rare movie that delivers on its title's promise." – Mark Holcomb, Village Voice

THE PROPOSITION

Director: John Hillcoat

Cast: Guy Pearce, Ray Winstone, Danny Huston, John Hurt, Emily Watson

Runtime: 104 minutes

Country: Australia/United Kingdom

Year: 2005

Language: English

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: June 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Following the success of their first collaborative effort – the cult classic *GHOSTS...OF THE CIVIL DEAD* – acclaimed Australian filmmaker John Hillcoat and singer-songwriter Nick Cave have reunited to make *THE PROPOSITION*, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®. *THE PROPOSITION* is already being called a masterpiece, an anti-Western that dissects the outback romanticism of colonial Australia. The film contrasts unflinching, Darwinian brutality with the silence and isolation that form the inner worlds of frightened characters, making their bloody encounters all the more painful and exhilaratingly dramatic.

In the late 1800s, newly appointed lawman Captain Stanley (Ray Winstone, *COLD MOUNTAIN*, *LAST ORDERS*) does everything in his power to protect his dainty wife Martha (Emily Watson, *GOSFORD PARK*, *ANGELA'S ASHES*) from the Australian outback's wicked frontier culture. When he captures Charlie Burns (Guy Pearce, *MEMENTO*, *L.A. CONFIDENTIAL*) and his psychologically unsound younger brother, Mikey – Irish outlaws whose family is linked to atrocities in the region – Stanley makes Charlie a proposition: bring his psychotic, poetry-spewing older brother Arthur (Danny Huston, *THE CONSTANT GARDENER*, *THE AVIATOR*) to justice and Mikey will live. This “deal” plays out in a violent maelstrom that consumes everything in its path.

It is hard to overemphasize the dramatic tension of this film or the excellence of its cast. Winstone is at his thundering best, vulnerable and headstrong, embodying the contradictions of colonial duty. Huston's mad poet and Watson's delicate ersatz princess are also extraordinarily well realized. John Hurt (*OWNING MAHOWNY*), playing a kind of dark sentinel drunk who pushes the story to its logical conclusion, is also wonderful, but it is Pearce's deceptively wistful ambivalence that fuels the film's mind-blowing shifts and forms its veiled moral core.

“Production design, costuming and director of photography Benoit Delhomme's non-travelogue widescreen compositions unite in birthing the first genuine, blood-and-thunder Aussie Western.” – Richard Kuipers, *Variety*

“Visually gorgeous, stunningly violent, and entirely gripping throughout.” – Scott Weinberg, *FilmCritic.com*

RHINOCEROS EYES

Director: Aaron Woodley

Cast: Michael Pitt, Paige Turco, Gale Harold, Matt Servitto

Runtime: 92 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Capri Releasing

Distributor Estimates Availability As: April 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB NR / SK 14A / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

It's difficult to describe what goes on in this startling first feature from Canadian writer-director Aaron Woodley, which won the Discovery Award at the 2003 Toronto International Film Festival®. On the one hand, it pays homage to the conventions of horror films; on the other, it has little or nothing to do with them. On the third hand (entirely appropriate for this odd and quirky film), it is a twisted and innovative take on movie history.

RHINOCEROS EYES unfolds in a prop shop, the last stop for the detritus of pop culture. The hero, Chep (Michael Pitt, *LAST DAYS*), is a slightly addled orphan who has been adopted by the shop's belligerent, easily distracted owners – a motley crew who leave Chep alone to fetch the items clients request. Actually, they pretty much leave Chep to do all the work since his comically ferocious boss, Bundy (Matt Servitto, *HITCH*), is obsessed with tracking down a bunch of gorillas who roughed him up in a bar.

Chep becomes fixated on a stunning art director named Fran (Paige Turco, *THE EMPATH*). He's immediately smitten and doesn't blink when she asks for a truly bizarre “prop.” Determined to impress her, he becomes increasingly reckless in his pursuit of her weird requests. Unfortunately, Chep has a rather idiosyncratic take on reality: the objects in the shop gradually start to talk to him and eventually give him some disturbing advice.

RHINOCEROS EYES has much in common with 2001's indie hit *DONNIE DARKO*, but you could just as easily mention *LOLITA* or the Cavalcanti episode in 1945's *DEAD OF NIGHT*. In the end, however, the film is a unique commentary on our need to believe in the most tawdry pop clichés and the necessity of getting past them. It's no accident that Chep uses a mask that evokes a character from schlockmeister Ed Wood's *PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE* to liberate some of the more unusual items Fran asks for. At times, *RHINOCEROS EYES* feels like a collaboration between Wood and Vladimir Nabokov, completed under the watchful and amused eye of B-movie king Roger Corman.

“** ... delightful animations and twisted humour recall Tim Burton's early works and the hallucinatory power and overheated sexuality of the climactic sequence confirms that Woodley has learned some lessons from his uncle, David Cronenberg.” – Jason Anderson, *eye Weekly***

HEADING SOUTH

Director: Laurent Cantet

Cast: Charlotte Rampling, Karen Young, Louise Portal, Ménothy Cesar, Lys Ambroise

Runtime: 105 minutes

Country: France/Canada

Year: 2005

Language: English, French, Creole with English subtitles

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: April 2006

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

HEADING SOUTH, which screened to great acclaim at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, has already been showered with awards, including Best Actor and Best Director awards at the 2005 Venice International Film Festival. HEADING SOUTH brings a powerful series of short stories by acclaimed Montreal-based Haitian author Dany Laferrière to the screen.

Director Laurent Cantet, perhaps the most exciting new figure in French cinema of the last decade, explores the dynamic between three women on holiday, and their young lover. Sounds like familiar French cinema, except in this case the three women are all North American sex tourists in eighties Haiti and the young man in question is a local Adonis: teenaged, gorgeous, wily – and accidentally mixed up in the cruel political world of “Baby Doc” Duvalier’s murderous régime.

The three women approach their vacation and part-time paramour in very different ways. Ellen (Charlotte Rampling, SWIMMING POOL) is every bit the Boston Brahman: bossy, haughty and affected. Brenda (Karen Young) is the Midwestern innocent, with an underlying vicious, masochistic streak. Earthy, joyous Sue (Louise Portal, BARBARIAN INVASIONS) loves sex and play and tries to keep everyone in good spirits. The tug-of-war between the women is epic and fraught with revenge and betrayal – but also tenderness.

Meanwhile Legba (Ménothy Cesar), the object of the shared affection and desire, has unclear allegiances – first bouncing from bed to bed, exuberantly proclaiming his freedom to do as he pleases, then terrified by the Tonton Macoutes. The women’s world is aptly mirrored in the dispassionate economic calculations of the resort’s young gigolos, trading stories and tips on their days off.

Cantet, holding true to Dany Laferrière’s stories, has no interest in judging the women or Legba. He seeks instead to rethink the entire political economy of sex, class and prostitution – to imagine that, in this coldest example of globalised trade, an entirely new catalogue of emotions might reside. This is a powerful film with truly gifted performances.

“Cantet as usual elicits top performances from his cast ... Rampling, one of the joys of cinema in the past five years, is the ideal actress to convey Ellen’s blend of liberated carnality, Bostonian snobbery and racism, plus a deep vulnerability.”
– Jay Weissberg, *Variety*

SALT

Director: Bradley Rust Gray

Cast: Brynja Thora Gudnadóttir, David Örn Haldórsson

Run Time: 86 minutes

Country: Iceland/USA

Year: 2006

Language: Icelandic with English subtitles

Distributor: Vagrant Films Distribution

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A hit on the international festival circuit, SALT is an impressive debut feature from American director Bradley Rust Gray. Shot entirely in Iceland, SALT has won several prizes, including the Caligari Film Award at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Sisters Hildur and Svava have lived their entire lives in a remote town on the east coast of Iceland. They work in the local fish factory and appear to be thoroughly settled in the rhythms of small-town life. But the calm waters of Hildur’s life become troubled when Svava decides to move to Reykjavík. After Svava abruptly leaves town, Hildur teams up for a road trip with Svava’s boyfriend. Originally bound for Reykjavík, they end up instead on a journey of self-discovery.

Shooting in an intimate, Dogme style, director Bradley Rust Gray immerses us in the precise details of Hildur’s life – blustery afternoons hanging out, wanly executed calisthenics breaks at the fish factory and the spare beauty of the surrounding countryside. Both coming-of-age story and intimate character portrait, SALT is a small film with a huge, resounding heart.

“Salt is a teen movie with a DV Dogme aesthetic and a most un-Dogme-like sensibility – i.e., a heart. As a close-quarters character portrait, it resembles the Dardennes’ Rosetta.” – Dennis Lim, *Village Voice*

“Salt may be the best Dogme film the Dogme conspirators never made... Gray blends a camcorder intimacy with an emotional reticence reflected in the serene, featureless landscape to pin down adolescent indecisions and certainties.”
– Tony Rayns, *Sight & Sound*

UN DIMANCHE À KIGALI

Director: Robert Favreau

Cast: Luc Picard, Fatou N'Diaye, Maka Kotto, Céline Bonnier, Alexis Martin

Run Time: 119 minutes

Country: Canada

Year:

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: Equinoxe Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: May/June

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Directed by Robert Favreau (THE ORPHAN MUSES), this eagerly awaited film adaptation of Gil Courtemanche's best-selling novel "Un dimanche à la piscine de Kigali" follows a Québécois journalist in Rwanda who falls in love with a Hutu waitress as violent civil unrest breaks out.

In 1994, the swimming pool of Rwandan hotel Mille-Collines is a magnet for privileged Kigali residents: aid-workers, Rwandan bourgeoisie, soldiers and assorted expatriates. Among these patrons is Bernard Valcourt (Luc Picard, L'AUDITION), a Canadian journalist and filmmaker documenting AIDS in Rwanda. He is quickly taken with the beautiful Gentille (Fatou N'Diaye). In spite of their differences, Gentille and Bernard fall passionately in love and marry. When violence breaks out between Gentille's people and the Tutsi, the pair is separated by desperate circumstances and Bernard embarks on a challenging mission to find her.

Resonating on many levels, Courtemanche's story addresses global politics, racial tension and powerful human emotions. Director Favreau, who also wrote the screenplay, seamlessly transports the story to the big screen with lucidity and compassion. Portraying the beauty of a love complicated by racial politics, UN DIMANCHE À KIGALI is set against the horrific Rwandan genocide yet leaves viewers with the uplifting message that humanity is more capable of good than evil.

Lusciously shot on location, cinematographer Pierre Mignot (C.R.A.Z.Y.) deftly captures the beauty and the tragic reality of the Rwandan countryside. Stand-out performances abound from a star studded cast that includes Céline Bonnier (MONICA LA MITRAILLE, LE DERNIER TUNNEL), Maka Kotto (MÉMOIRES AFFECTIVES, LE GOUT DE JEUNES FILLES), and Alexis Martin (L'AUDITION). Yet another impressive film to emerge from Quebec, UN DIMANCHE À KIGALI is a cinematic experience not to be missed.

A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION

Director: Robert Altman

Cast: Woody Harrelson, Tommy Lee Jones, Kevin Kline, Virginia Madsen, John C. Reilly, Meryl Streep

Run Time: 100 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

The quintessential independent American filmmaker, Robert Altman's insightful and masterly films – often characterized by a roving camera and intimate character portraits – will be honoured this Spring when the five-time Academy Award® nominee receives an honorary Oscar from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His recent films GOSFORD PARK and THE COMPANY (which screened at the 2004 Toronto International Film Festival®) have only affirmed his outstanding and lasting contribution to cinema.

His latest film, A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION, premiered at the 2006 Berlin International Film Festival. In typical Altman fashion, it boasts a gifted ensemble cast, including Woody Harrelson (NORTH COUNTRY), Tommy Lee Jones (MANDERLAY), Kevin Kline (DE-LOVELY), Virginia Madsen (SIDEWAYS), John C. Reilly (CHICAGO) and Meryl Streep (THE HOURS). The film follows the backstage antics during the final broadcast of America's most popular radio show, which is being shut down after thirty years on the air.

A fictionalized account of a real show – Garrison Keillor's – currently running in the United States, A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION features singing cowboys, a country music diva (Streep) and many interweaving storylines involving secrets, strangers and power struggles. Pure fun and intrigue, A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION is Robert Altman at his best.

“Amusement comes from many sources, although first among equals are Kline, whose comic timing in an uproariously silly phone scene is in a class comparable to Buster Keaton and Cary Grant, and Harrelson, who locks in a hitherto unknown dry drollness that lifts his every line.” – Todd McCarthy, *Variety*

WHITE PLANET

Co-Directors: Stéphane Milliere, Thierry Piantanida, Jean Lemire

Cast: N/A

Runtime: 90 minutes

Country: France/Canada

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Following such wildly popular films as MARCH OF THE PENGUINS, GRIZZLY MAN and THE WILD PARROTS OF TELEGRAPH HILL comes WHITE PLANET, a dazzling new documentary that shows how life thrives in the arctic despite extreme and harsh conditions.

In an immense landscape where man has no place, the forces of nature are boundless. The ever-present ice barrier breaks under the thrust of invisible forces while boreal whales and bizarre-looking narwhals lurk beneath the surface. Musk oxen curve their spines under the blinding blizzards while caribou gallop across the tundra by the thousands. The polar bears that rule the land are themselves a wonder of nature.

With breathtaking footage, emerging directors Stéphane Milliere, Thierry Piantanida and Jean Lemire capture the majestic and forbidding beauty of the arctic. Audiences will be profoundly moved by the powerful and highly anticipated WHITE PLANET.

SUNFLOWER

Director: Zhang Yang

Cast: Sun Haiying, Joan Chen, Liu Zifeng, Zhang Fan, Gao Ge

Runtime: 129 minutes

Country: China

Year: 2006

Language: Mandarin with English subtitles

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON 14A/ BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, the mature and luminous SUNFLOWER – which centres on the emotional hardship and conflicts of a father-son relationship that spans three decades in China – is an ode to change and an engaging exploration of the importance of family.

It is 1976 and the death of Chairman Mao has brought an end to the tyranny of the Gang of Four. The painter Gengnian (Sun Haiying) has spent years in a labour camp where his hands were permanently damaged. He returns home to his beloved wife Xiuqing (Joan Chen, SAVING FACE) and to his nine-year-old son, Xiangyang (Zhang Fan), who, besides not recognizing him, is deeply disturbed by the imposition of this new presence in his life. Refusing to acknowledge his clearly burgeoning talent in painting, Xiangyang lets a firecracker blow up in his hand – a desperate attempt to mirror his father's injury and shatter Gengnian's dreams for his son's artistic career.

Decades go by in a whirlwind of events that produce a new China oblivious to its past. Ironically, Xiangyang has become a renowned painter, yet still has a difficult relationship with his father.

Zhang Yang's prodigious talent was well in evidence when the Festival screened his films SHOWER and QUITTING in 1999 and 2001, respectively. Shot by cinematographer Jong Lin (BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM), SUNFLOWER is a brilliantly focused portrait of a turbulent time in Chinese history that is destined to remain in the viewer's memory.

"SUNFLOWER is melodrama done right..." – Adam Nayman, eye Weekly

HOUSE OF SAND

Director: Andrucha Waddington

Cast: Fernanda Montenegro, Fernanda Torres, Ruy Guerra, Seu Jorge, Luiz

Melodia

Run Time: 103 minutes

Country: Brazil

Year: 2006

Language: Portuguese with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

THE HOUSE OF SAND, which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®, brings together for the first time two of Brazil's most celebrated actresses. Academy Award®-nominee Fernanda Montenegro and Palme d'Or winner Fernanda Torres shine in this unique film about the lives of three generations of women. Brought to life by the stunning cinematography of Ricardo Della Rosa, THE HOUSE OF SAND celebrates the struggles, passions and deep hidden desires of people trapped by their fate.

Aurea (Fernanda Torres) is brought to the northern Brazilian town of Maranhão by her insane husband Vasco (Ruy Guerra), who suffers from delusions. A calamitous turn of events leaves Aurea, now pregnant, and her mother Maria (Fernanda Montenegro, CENTRAL STATION) alone in the desert in a house full of sand. They eventually find friendship and food through Massu (Seu Jorge, THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU), who lives at a quilombo (a self-sustaining society originally formed by escaped slaves). Aurea wrestles with her unhappy fate but slowly grows accustomed to the new rhythm of life in the dunes. Years pass and we find Aurea (now played by Montenegro) at peace in the desert, while her wild and sexually promiscuous daughter Maria (played by Torres) lacks social propriety and longs to see the outside world.

Deftly handling a story that spans nearly sixty years, Waddington artfully incorporates seminal moments of human history into his narrative; we glimpse American warplanes escaping German U-boats and witness the 1919 solar eclipse that proved Einstein's theory of General Relativity. The passage of time, the significance of world events and the strength of Nature – manifested through sweeping shots of the horizon, the sound of the wind skimming the sand and the soft, assured pacing of Waddington's direction – are beautifully captured in this powerful film.

BON COP, BAD COP

Director: Erik Canuel

Cast: Colm Feore, Patrick Huard, Patrice Bélanger, Sylvain Marcel, Lucie Laurier, Rick Mercer

Run Time: TBD

Country: Canada

Language: English and French with English subtitles or French subtitles

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: August 2006

Video: N/A

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

One of the most hotly anticipated Quebec films in years, *BON COP, BAD COP* is Erik Canuel's follow up to the multiple Genie Award-nominated *LE SURVENANT*. A bilingual Canadian film, *BON COP, BAD COP* pits two provincial officers – one a reserved Ontario Anglophone, the other more Québécois than poutine – against one another to solve a murder.

When a dead body is found draped over a highway sign on the border dividing Quebec and Ontario, both provincial police forces arrive to claim the case. Quebec officer David Boucher (Patrick Huard, *MAMAN LAST CALL*, *MONICA LA MITRAILLE*) sets the film's wry, humorous tone by claiming that the head of the case belongs to Quebec, while its ass fell in Ontario. Ontario cop Martin Ward (Colm Feore, *THIRTY-TWO SHORT FILMS ABOUT GLENN GOULD*, *THE BARONESS AND THE PIG*) finds himself on a crash course in Québécois slang as he wrestles with Boucher's questionable interpretation of the law and tries to figure out whodunit.

One of Quebec's most sought-after directors, Canuel yet again proves his talent and diversity as *BON COP, BAD COP* effortlessly combines sharp wit and the hot-button topic of Canada's official languages in a taut, action-packed murder case. In addition to coming up with the original idea and co-writing the script, Huard's stellar performance in a tailor-made role is perfectly matched by an ideal cast. Feore gives an insightful, smart portrayal of the dignified letter-of-the-law officer. The two leads are complemented by some of Quebec's best performers, including Patrice Bélanger (*20h17 RUE DARLING*), Sylvain Marcel (*LA FEMME QUI BOIT*), and Lucie Laurier (*SEDUCING DOCTOR LEWIS*). *BON COP, BAD COP* is sure to thrill audiences from coast to coast.

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE

Director: Nicholas Ray

Cast: James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo

Runtime: 111 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 1955

Language: English

Distributor: Warner Brothers

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB PG / QC NR / Maritimes AA

James Dean is perhaps the most famous actor of all time. He made only three films before his untimely death, and of them, REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE is undoubtedly his most well-known. Nominated for three Academy Awards® (strangely, Dean wasn't nominated), and arguably the best film by legendary director Nicholas Ray – who defines a generation here – REBEL became an instant classic and only gets better with each viewing.

Dean plays Jim Stark, the new kid in town and a born outsider. His family has moved before due to Jim's various behavioral problems, and it doesn't look like things will change anytime soon. Jim has a natural repulsion to his parents' middle-class way of life and cannot fit into their version of domestic happiness, so he looks for love and a sense of belonging elsewhere. He meets Judy (the lovely Natalie Wood, SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS, WEST SIDE STORY), who has emotional issues of her own, and the wealthy, disturbed Plato (Sal Mineo, GIANT, EXODUS).

Jim's parents are trying to keep him out of trouble, but their efforts – his mother is the dominant type and his father tries hard but ends up alienating Jim further – are futile. This is the time for a new generation to make their mark, and the teen protagonists boldly and recklessly hurl forward to meet their fates: the aura of doom hovering over them seems cosmically ordained.

Lushly shot in CinemaScope, REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE is an astonishing feat on the visual level alone; Ray masterfully created an entire cinematic universe replete with Gothic overtones that evoke the heart of fifties youth culture (who can forget Dean's red jacket?). The theme of discord between parent and child is as relevant today as it was then, and the performances are simply iconic: Dean's brooding, tough-yet-vulnerable Jim is unforgettable. The film's recent re-release is something to be celebrated.

“Dean's finest film... still the best of the youth movies.” – Time Out Film Guide

“...it is not just Dean's mesmerizing performance that strikes; the director Nicholas Ray's extraordinarily fluid camera-work is just as much a star. He makes the film feel as alive and unpredictable as the messed-up kids it follows.”

– Wendy Ide, London Times

EAST OF EDEN

Director: Elia Kazan

Cast: James Dean, Julie Harris, Richard Davalos, Raymond Massey,

Jo Van Fleet

Runtime: 115 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 1955

Language: English

Distributor: Warner Brothers

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

EAST OF EDEN, one of director Elia Kazan's masterpieces, has won numerous awards, including Best Dramatic Film at the 1955 Festival de Cannes and the Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actress; it was also nominated for four more Academy Awards that year, among them Best Direction for Elia Kazan and Best Actor for James Dean. Bringing John Steinbeck's classic melodrama to the screen, EAST OF EDEN was Dean's electrifying silver-screen debut: it defined his captivating and tragically short-lived screen persona as an alienated teen desperate for love.

This Cain and Abel story centres on twin brothers: the docile Aron Trask (Richard Davalos, COOL HAND LUKE) and the troubled Cal (Dean), the black sheep of the family. They fight for the affection of their stern father (Raymond Massey, MACKENNA'S GOLD), a Salinas valley lettuce farmer. Aron gets the respect from their father that Cal desperately yearns for, and when he doesn't get it, rebellion sets in. After a series of misadventures, Cal goes looking for the mother he believed died in childbirth after he hears rumours that she works in a Monterey bordello. A cold, ruthless shell of a woman, Kate (Jo Van Fleet, COOL HAND LUKE) at first wants nothing to do with her son, who seems to have inherited her wild streak. With time, however, she thaws just enough to loan Cal some money, which he invests in a secret business venture to help his father. Sadly, Cal's attempt to win his father's love will have tragic repercussions for the ill-fated Trask family.

Creating a sweeping, glossy epic shot in luxurious CinemaScope, Kazan fills each frame with all the poetry and pain of Steinbeck's biblical-inspired narrative: this is an unrivalled, emotionally charged period drama. The director elicits explosive emotions from his actors, particularly Dean, who is truly mesmerising in his ability to convey wounded vulnerability, pent-up feelings, and a desire to be heard. EAST OF EDEN is a must-see; on the big screen, it's an even more illuminating experience.

“Overwhelming.” – Time Out New York

“As exciting a drama as you're ever likely to see, and ultimately it's the unforgettable Dean that makes it so.”

– Don Wilmott, FilmCritic.com

GIANT

Director: George Stevens

Cast: James Dean, Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson

Runtime: 201 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 1956

Language: English

Distributor: Warner Brothers

Ratings: ON PG/ BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Winner of the 1956 Academy Award® for Best Director (and garnering nine other nominations), GIANT offers the extensive pleasures of epic filmmaking of a bygone era. James Dean (REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE, EAST OF EDEN) is Jett Rink, a misunderstood, penniless ranch hand who turns into a rich, nasty, middle-aged alcoholic and finds himself in competition with his old boss, Bick Benedict (Rock Hudson, WRITTEN ON THE WIND, PILLOW TALK).

Leslie Lynnton (Elizabeth Taylor, CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, BUTTERFIELD 8, WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?) is an intelligent and strong-willed young woman from Virginia who meets and quickly marries Bick Benedict, a Texan cattle rancher. Initially fascinated by his stories of Texas and his wealth (half a million acres), Leslie's honeymoon ends when the newlyweds arrive at the Benedict ranch. The heat, wind and dust are overwhelming to Leslie as she tries to adapt to her new life. Appalled by Texan rowdiness and pervasive racism, she soon discovers ideological differences between herself and her new husband.

One of Bick's ranch hands, Jett, falls madly in love with Leslie and mistakenly believes she would return his affections if he were rich. This idea propels him down the road to self-destruction; blinded by jealousy, Jett fails to understand that Leslie loves her husband, despite their differences. When Jett finally strikes it rich, his anger toward Bick destroys any chance of enjoying his success.

Director George Stevens (SHANE) expertly weaves together the successes and failures of these unforgettable characters over an epic twenty-five-year period, while cinematographer William C. Mellor (THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK) makes the most of the sweeping Texan vistas and the lavish parties and celebrations of the rich and powerful. Dean's performance won him an Academy Award nomination; it was also, famously, his last film before his untimely death. GIANT's larger-than-life characters and scenery make it a true classic that continues to mesmerize audiences to this day.

"[GIANT] dazzles with late Golden Era star performances ... undeniably a classic of its era."

- Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times

"For [Dean's] fans, it's a joy to watch him employ the Method to create a character that's both vulnerable and hard-edged." - Walter V. Addiego, San Francisco Examiner

ENTRE LA MER ET L'EAU DOUCE

Director: Michel Brault

Cast: Claude Gauthier, Geneviève Bujold, Paul Gauthier, Denise Bombardier

Bombardier

Runtime: 85 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 1967

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: Film Circuit

Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Perhaps best known as a feature and documentary cinematographer of unrivalled talent – he was the master behind such films as CHRONIQUE D'UN ÉTÉ, POUR LA SUITE DU MONDE, MON ONCLE ANTOINE and À TOUT PRENDRE – Michel Brault is also a director whose debut, ENTRE LA MER ET L'EAU DOUCE, is one of the unqualified masterpieces of Quebec cinema and was presented at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival®.

ENTRE LA MER ET L'EAU DOUCE plays out against the backdrop of late-sixties Quebec, during the province's tumultuous shift from rural to urban society. Claude (Claude Gauthier, LES ORDRES) is a young man who leaves his small town on the North Shore for the big city – Montreal – a magnet for Quebec youth. He meets Geneviève, a young waitress superbly played by a very young Geneviève Bujold (LA TURBULENCE DES FLUIDES, LAST NIGHT), and the two fall in love. Claude enters a singing contest that launches his music career; as he becomes more famous, he must work out how Geneviève will fit into his new life.

The film has an effortless, naturalistic feel to it; Brault has always been superb with his actors and has an unerring eye for the moment – and for the city. With charming performances from Gauthier, one of Quebec's major singing stars of the sixties, and the then up-and-coming and now legendary Canadian actress Geneviève Bujold, this landmark film deserves our renewed attention.

Michel Brault is practically synonymous with the best of French Canadian cinema, and this 1967 classic both captures an era and proudly marks the emergence of a cinematic master of international acclaim.

THE CONFORMIST

Director: Bernardo Bertolucci

Cast: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, Gastone Moschin

Runtime: 115 minutes

Country: Italy/France/West Germany

Year: 1970

Language: Italian with English subtitles

Distributor: Paramount Pictures

Ratings: ON R / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Master filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci's (BESIEGED) 1970 political drama THE CONFORMIST has been heralded as perhaps the best unknown film he's ever made. Exploring the connection between repressed sexuality and politics in Italy in the thirties, this exquisitely shot motion picture garnered numerous awards around the world, along with Academy Award® and Golden Globe nominations.

After experiencing a traumatic sexual experience in his childhood, Professor Marcello Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant, TROIS COULEURS: ROUGE) tries to become more 'normal' by marrying Giulia (Stefania Sandrelli, THE LAST KISS). Unsurprisingly, a show-piece marriage isn't enough to address his sexual issues so, at the behest of a blind friend he joins the Italian fascists, where he is snapped up by the secret police and sent on a mission to kill his own mentor in Paris.

En route to carry out the evil deed, Marcello becomes entranced by Anna, the mentor's beautiful and bi-sexual wife, who in turn is actually more interested in Giulia. Haunted by his past and increasingly confusing present, Marcello struggles with his mission, relationships and sexuality. Ironically, he simply seeks to lead a normal life but seems incapable of taking any actions that will help him move closer to his ideal.

Beautifully shot – by the unrivalled maestro of cinematography, Vittorio Storaro (REDS, APOCALYPSE NOW) – with sweeping camera movements and unusual angles, THE CONFORMIST is also lush with rich colours that evoke the torrid climate of 1938 Italy. A stunning, complex and intriguing film, THE CONFORMIST may be Bertolucci's most perfect film.

"Bertolucci's masterpiece – made when he was all of 29 – will be the most revelatory experience a fortunate pilgrim will have in a theatre this year..." – Michael Atkinson, Village Voice

"...almost nothing has been lost over the years. The brilliant mix of ideas, the audacity and originality of approach, the sensualist delight in the ravishing play of light and shadow -- all these remain, as bracing and inspirational as ever."

– Hal Hinson, The Washington Post

THE BIG RED ONE

Director: Samuel Fuller

Cast: Lee Marvin, Mark Hamill, Robert Carradine, Bobby Di Cicco

Runtime: 150 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 1980

Language: English

Distributor: Warner Brothers

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB 14A / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

In late 1941, just after Pearl Harbor, Samuel Fuller, like thousands of other young men, enlisted in the United States Army. At twenty-nine, Fuller was already a hardened reporter, a budding pulp novelist and an aspiring filmmaker, and while his reasons for joining up were as patriotic as the next guy's, he also had something of an ulterior motive. His goal was to witness and record material for what would become a lifetime of work.

He would go on to direct several classics of hard-boiled film noir, including PICKUP ON SOUTH STREET and UNDERWORLD U.S.A. and, in 1980, he sought to channel his many harrowing experiences of the Second World War into the dogface epic THE BIG RED ONE. This year, with the assistance of film historian and critic Richard Schickel, Warner Brothers has re-released a beautifully struck new print of the film, complete with an additional forty minutes of footage that has never been seen.

The film opens in the ravaged and charred fields of France during the First World War. A young American soldier (Lee Marvin, THE DIRTY DOZEN) stumbles through the fog, stabbing and killing a mumbling German soldier. Only later does he learn that the armistice has been signed, and he in fact has killed the man after the War was officially over, an experience that has a lasting impact upon this career soldier. The film cuts ahead as the storied First Infantry Division (the "Big Red One") is about to land off the shores of North Africa, where that same soldier leads a rag-tag group of "wet-noses" that includes Griff (Mark Hamill, STAR WARS), Vinci (Bobby Di Cicco, SPLASH) and Zab (Robert Carradine, REVENGE OF THE NERDS), the film's narrator and Fuller's cinematic alter ego.

The film follows this squad as they engage in some of the war's fundamental battles of the War, from Algeria to Sicily and on to the beaches of Normandy, and blends bombast and atrociousness with genuinely touching moments (on one occasion, the soldiers help deliver a baby in the burnt-out shell of a German tank) to truly powerful effect.

All the while, the platoon's greatest priority is survival, and they succeed. It becomes clear why Steven Spielberg cited THE BIG RED ONE for its overwhelming influence on his recent films including SAVING PRIVATE RYAN and BAND OF BROTHERS. THE BIG RED ONE is sure to have a lasting effect on audiences in its new, complete form.

THE ROWDYMAN

Director: Peter Carter

Cast: Gordon Pinsent, Frank Converse, Will Geer, Linda Goranson, Estelle Wall, Austin Davis

Runtime: 95 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 1972

Language: English

Distributor: Film Circuit

Ratings: ON AA / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

The Canadian Open Vault selection at the 2004 Toronto International Film Festival®, Peter Carter’s wonderfully energetic and appealing THE ROWDYMAN was one of the most important English-Canadian films of the seventies, made when the feature film business was just getting underway in a meaningful fashion.

Gordon Pinsent wrote and stars in the film, which celebrates an archetype in Canadian cinema of that era: the rambunctious male loser whose life choices leave much to be desired (think GOIN’ DOWN THE ROAD, PAPERBACK HERO or THE LUCK OF GINGER COFFEY). With great writing and acting, the film reaches beyond its modesty to strike a chord that still resonates today. Undoubtedly, much of this is due to Pinsent’s winning performance as the irrepressible Will Cole, an unrepentant rake and boozier living in small-town Newfoundland.

Will is a charming – though totally irresponsible – rogue, his philosophy a simple “seduce it if it moves and drink it if it pours.” But there is another side to this thirtysomething who has never settled down: he has a special relationship with Stan (Will Geer), a man who lives in an old folks’ home in St. John’s and who was also a rascal in his day. The rest of Will’s emotional life is focused on Ruth (Linda Goranson), the girl he should have married, and Andrew (Frank Converse), his best friend and companion in merrymaking. Gradually, time seems to catch up with Will, especially when Andrew gets married, a turning point in the film. Airy and breezy up to this point, Will is soon forced to take a long, hard look at his life and what he has – or has not – made of it.

Pinsent delivers a larger-than-life performance; his searing and knowing portrait of our rowdyman bubbles off the screen yet is subtly shaded at the same time. Carter’s direction effectively captures Pinsent’s barnstorming performance, but also adds colour to the film in its sensitivity to the rugged landscape of the Rock. Made in 1972, this film gave cause for hope to an indigenous cinema based on people and landscapes recognizable to Canadians as their own.

“Remains a Canadian classic.” -Bruce Kirkland, JAM! Movies

“A messy, muscular masterpiece.” -A.O Scott, The New York Times

MEATBALLS

Director: Ivan Reitman

Cast: Bill Murray, Harvey Atkin, Kate Lynch, Chris Makepeace

Runtime: 99 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 1979

Language: English

Distributor: Paramount Pictures

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB PG / QC NR / Maritimes 14

“Are you ready for a good time?” – Tag Line, 1979

A cult classic and one of the top-grossing Canadian films of all time, MEATBALLS was panned by the press and loved by audiences in 1979 who were ready for a good time.

Paramount has struck a gorgeous new print of the film that gave you “The Summer Camp that Makes You Untrustworthy, Disloyal, Unhelpful, Unfriendly, Discourteous, Unkind, Disobedient, and Very Hilarious.” The king of irreverence, Bill Murray (LOST IN TRANSLATION) is Trigger Harrison, a hip events counsellor at Camp Northstar, summer camp for geeky kids and losers. (“You must be the short depressed kid we ordered.”)

MEATBALLS was one of the last films Ivan Reitman directed in Canada before, like Norman Jewison (MOONSTRUCK), he made the move to Hollywood, where he would direct hits like GHOSTBUSTERS, STRIPES, KINDERGARTEN COP, TWINS and DAVE.

Maybe it’s time to take a look back at one of the most commercially successful and memorable films our country has ever produced. Where else can you see a young Bill Murray say lines like: “Attention: Here’s an update on tonight’s dinner. It was veal. I repeat, veal. The winner of tonight’s mystery meat contest is Jeffrey Corbin, who guessed, ‘some kind of beef.’”

“I wish my summer counselors had been as cool, fun or exciting as Tripper Harrison.” – Brain McKay, efilmcritic.com

LA DOLCE VITA

Director: Federico Fellini

Cast: Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg, Anouk Aimee

Runtime: 174 minutes

Country: Italy

Year: 1960

Language: Italian with English Subtitles

Distributor: Paramount Pictures

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB PG / SK NR / MB 14A / QC NR / Maritimes NR

In Federico Fellini's seminal film LA DOLCE VITA, a three-hour masterpiece that depicts one man's descent into "the sweet life" of debauchery, Marcello Mastroianni (READY TO WEAR) stars as eccentric journalist Marcello Rubini. On assignment to chronicle the lives of the rich and famous Italian aristocracy in a gossip column for a Roman newspaper, Marcello floats from one fabulous party to the next, meeting all varieties of beautiful, extravagant people.

While he would never protest this seemingly ideal job, it makes him feel lonely and empty, and he stays up drinking and dancing night after night only to wake up each morning unbalanced and unfocused. The film follows Marcello's ups and downs in an episodic pattern in which each evening is a new story, a new adventure, a new dare, a new woman with whom to fall helplessly in love – but only for that night. Each morning the slate is wiped clean, and Fellini resets Marcello's score to zero. When the legendary star, Sylvia (Anita Ekberg, INTERVISTA) arrives, Marcello's debauchery can only increase, as the pair delves into the Rome of 1960.

As thought provoking as it is playful, as tragic as it is hilarious, LA DOLCE VITA is exceptional; an endlessly watchable, beautiful, ridiculous film from a man whose passion for life, love, anger and laughter shines through every vivid, celebratory image.

Seeing LA DOLCE VITA on the big screen is an already stunning experience, but it is the newly re-struck print from Paramount Pictures that takes centre stage and makes this particular cinematic experience truly unique. Life has never been so sweet.

"It comes from a period in which the filmmaker was perched between neorealism and all-out fantasia. As such, it represents the best of two worlds, even as Marcello can't find contentment in either one." – Chris Vognar, Dallas Morning News

"Truly unforgettable." – Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times

NOBODY WAVED GOOD-BYE

Director: Don Owen

Cast: Peter Kastner, Julie Biggs, Claude Rae, Charmion King, John Vernon

Runtime: 80 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 1964

Language: English

Distributor: National Film Board of Canada

Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Don Owen's 1964 masterpiece, NOBODY WAVED GOOD-BYE – which screened as part of the Canadian retrospective on the filmmaker at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® – remains the seminal English Canadian feature of the early sixties and the first to successfully combine documentary techniques with fiction. According to legend, much of the film was shot without the knowledge of NFB higher-ups.

Originally intended to be a short docudrama about middle-class juvenile delinquents, the film follows Peter Mark (Peter Kastner), a high-school senior from Etobicoke who is at odds with his parents, their plans for him and bourgeois values in general. He is equal parts rebel, child and nuisance, prone to questioning the values of his society and utterly incapable of engaging in basic pleasantries without haranguing people about his beliefs (or theirs). An amateur folkie and a failed artist, he is unable to express himself in any meaningful way.

Final exams approach but Peter prefers to play hooky with his girlfriend, Julie (Julie Biggs). When he goes on a joyride in the showroom car brought home by his salesman father, his parents report the vehicle stolen and Peter is arrested. Hotheaded and indignant, he leaves home but soon finds that life on his own isn't all he imagined.

Shot by celebrated cinematographer John Spotton, NOBODY WAVED GOOD-BYE's improvised scenes and performances are so lifelike that many initially mistook the film for a documentary (indeed, it won Britain's BAFTA award for best documentary in 1965). Owen perfectly captures the oppressive atmosphere of sixties Toronto and explores the pervasive Canadian notion that real life happens somewhere else. To typify this, one has only to look at the story of the film's release: After receiving mixed reviews in Canada, it garnered lavish praise in New York City and was then re-released here to much greater acclaim. A typical Canadian success story – made in New York.

"This ... semi-improvised look at troubled youth was a landmark in Canadian filmmaking, and in 1984 it was named one of the ten best Canadian films of all time in a poll of the nation's film writers. – Bosley Crowther, New York Times

3 Needles	9	History of Violence, A	25	Rowdyman, The	41
Akeelah and the Bee	24	House of Sand	36	Salt	33
Art School Confidential	19	James Dean: Forever Young	28	Simple Curve, A	8
Ballet Russes	29	Lady Vengeance	17	Six Figures	13
Beowolf and Grendel	30	Last Trapper, The	2	Something New	31
Big Red One, The	40	Life and Hard Times of Guy		Squid and the Whale, The	26
Bon Cop Bad Cop	37	Terrifico, The	29	Sunflower	36
Boys of Baraka, The	3	Live and Become	7	These Girls	10
Breakfast on Pluto	28	Lucid	15	Three Burials of Melquiades	
Brokeback Mountain	27	Meatballs	41	Estrada, The	6
C.R.A.Z.Y.	11	Merry Christmas	1	Three Times	13
Capote	30	Metal: A Headbanger's Journey	23	Tideland	25
Child, The	11	Mrs. Henderson Presents	26	Townes Van Zandt: Be Here	
Cinema, Aspirin and Vultures	9	Neil Young: Heart of Gold	5	to Love Me	18
Conformist, The	40	Neuvaine, La	21	Transamerica	17
Dave Chapelle's Block Party	22	New World, The	20	Tristram Shandy: A Cock and	
Devil and Daniel Johnston, The	7	Niagara Motel	5	Bull Story	6
Dolce Vita, La	42	Nobody Waved Good-bye	42	Tsotsi	4
Don't Come Knocking	19	Notorious Bettie Page, The	22	Un Dimanche à Kigali	34
East of Eden	38	Omagh	14	Wah-Wah	3
Entre la mer et l'eau douce	39	On a Clear Day	24	Water	14
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Familia	27	Passenger, The	20	Rabbit Hole	8
Fateless	10	Prairie Home Companion, A	35	Where the Truth Lies	16
Free Zone	21	Proposition, The	32	White Countess, The	23
Giant	39	Protocols of Zion	18	White Planet	35
Heading South	33	Rebel Without a Cause	38	Whole New Thing	12
Her Majesty	31	Rhinoceros Eyes	32	Why We Fight	15
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