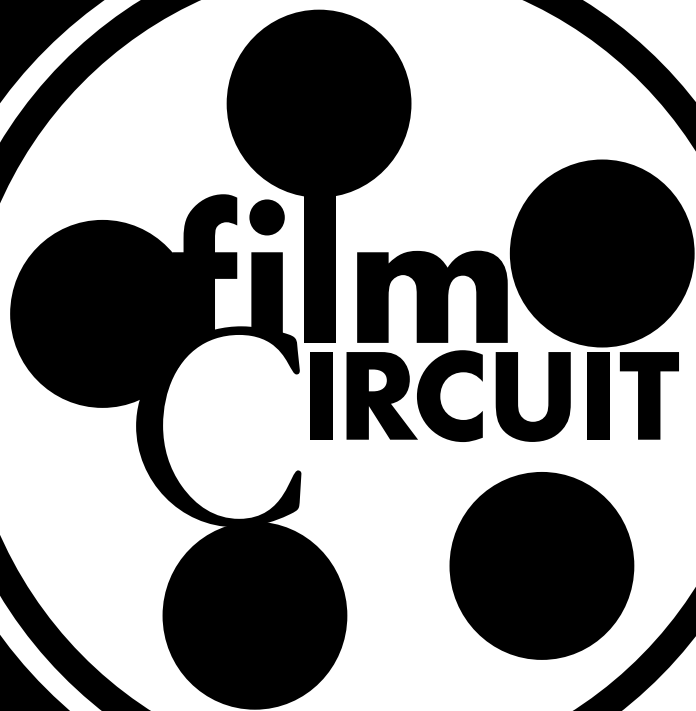
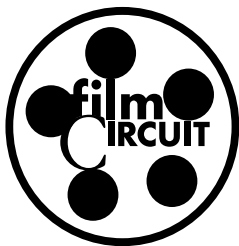


CURRENT
FILMS
SCHEDULE
WINTER 2007





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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 Canadian and independent films, and is designed to be used as a resource tool for programming and promotional purposes by Film Circuit Groups. Most importantly, it provides a guide that approximates 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 films expected to have a limited theatrical release pattern — i.e. films that are unlikely to gain substantial (if any) screen time outside 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-range 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. Contact your programmer for further information in this area.

WHAT DOES THE LISTED INFORMATION MEAN? 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.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS FOUND WITHIN THE RELEASE SCHEDULE:

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

AVAILABILITY Dates are approximate 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).

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 video release date is based on the best information at the time of this printing. Contact your programmer for up-to-date information on video releases.

RATING Films are rated separately by each province’s film review board. When available at the time of this release, the listed ratings 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 be listed as NR (not rated). If you require a rating for a film, call the appropriate provincial board listed above.

SYNOPSIS The synopsis is drafted from a variety of sources and generally offers Groups 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, and/or any awards won.
- Particularly notable performances are highlighted.
- Quotes from favourable reviews. If a quote is not attached to the synopsis, this does not mean that favourable reviews do not exist; it means a representative review was not available at the time of 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 the Release Schedule proves to be an entertaining and informative package that maps out a world of intriguing possibilities for Circuit Groups engaged in planning their next programme of films.

AWAY FROM HER

Director: Sarah Polley
Cast: Julie Christie, Gordon Pinsent, Olympia Dukakis, Michael Murphy, Wendy Crewson
Run Time: 110 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Capri Releasing
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

One of Canada's national treasures, Sarah Polley has been acting since she was six years old, making her start on television and moving into acclaimed films such as *THE SWEET HEREAFTER*, *THE HANGING GARDEN*, *3 NEEDLES* and *BEOWULF & GRENDEL*. A passionate advocate for Canadian cinema, she moved into the director's chair with the 2001 Genie Award-winning short film *I SHOUT LOVE*, and has dedicated the last two years to her tremendously moving debut feature, *AWAY FROM HER*. *AWAY FROM HER* was a Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, where it met with critical and popular acclaim.

Grant (Gordon Pinsent, *THE SHIPPING NEWS*, *SAINT RALPH*) and Fiona (Julie Christie, *DR. ZHIVAGO*, *FINDING NEVERLAND*) have been married for fifty years and have what many consider the perfect life together, full of laughter and love. But as Fiona begins to suffer memory loss, her inadvertent references to her past create difficult complications. The agonizing decision is made to move Fiona into a nursing home, and Grant is advised not to see her for a month so she can adjust – even though they've never spent this much time apart. When he finally visits her, she's forgotten him and has fallen in love with Aubrey (Michael Murphy, *MAGNOLIA*, *CHILDSTAR*), a man she has met in the home. Grant refuses to give up on the love of his life, but when Aubrey's wife (Olympia Dukakis *MOONSTRUCK*, *3 NEEDLES*) removes him from the home, Fiona is left in a massive depression that forces Grant to contemplate the greatest sacrifice of his life.

Adapted by Polley with tenderness and sensitivity from her favourite short story – Alice Munro's "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" – *AWAY FROM HER* boasts emotionally evocative cinematography from Luc Montpeller (*THE SADDEST MUSIC IN THE WORLD*) and a host of immensely heartfelt performances from a masterful cast. This film is not to be missed.

"[Polley] relishes the written word, especially as enlivened by the warm rumble of Pinsent's voice, which can make even the decay of neurons sound like sticky poetry. But she doesn't play up the story's literary origins with lots of voice-over – instead allowing this short and heartbreaking chapter in a long relationship to stand on its own." – John DeFore, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"Christie is poignantly appealing, easily suggesting a woman Grant might still be fascinated by after nearly a half-century. But it's Pinsent who really carries the bulk of screen time and the film itself, in a perfectly restrained turn."
 – Dennis Harvey, *Variety*

SNOW CAKE

Director: Marc Evans
Cast: Alan Rickman, Sigourney Weaver, Carrie-Anne Moss, Emily Hampshire
Run Time: 112 minutes
Country: Canada/United Kingdom
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Alliance Atlantis
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, *SNOW CAKE* is an intimate drama about the relationship between an autistic woman and a man recovering from a traumatic car accident.

Set in an unnamed Canadian town (it was filmed in Wawa, Ontario), *SNOW CAKE* unfolds gently as it introduces its quirky, flawed protagonists. Alex (Alan Rickman, *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*, *LOVE ACTUALLY*) is a quiet, sullen man practically collapsing under the weight of existence, who one day offers a ride to Vivienne (Emily Hampshire, *A PROBLEM WITH FEAR*, *TWIST*), an innocent and sociable hitchhiker.

Through no fault of his own, Alex has a freak accident that claims Vivienne's life but leaves Alex virtually unscathed. Overcome with guilt and remorse, he sets out to find Vivienne's mother, Linda (Sigourney Weaver, *THE ICE STORM*, *A MAP OF THE WORLD*), who turns out to be an autistic woman lacking in social skills who communicates by keenly observing the people around her. Staying with Linda for a few days, Alex also meets Linda's stunning neighbour Maggie (Carrie-Anne Moss, *MEMENTO*, *CHOCOLAT*, *FIDO*), an estranged soul who seems able to fit in anywhere.

As their lives begin to intertwine, issues from the past come to light, forcing all three to confront their respective demons and cope with the hands they have been dealt.

This is an elegant and unflinching film that explores the sadder side of humanity. Gracefully performed by a gifted cast, *SNOW CAKE* impressively conveys the emotional and physical claustrophobia that pervades a lonely – and possibly redemptive – landscape.

"Rickman... injects a very funny sense of world-weariness, emotional detachment and droll humour into proceedings...."
 – David Edwards, *Daily Mirror*

"... the film is a fine showcase for Weaver, who avoids every disability-tour-de-force trap en route to creating a whole (and at times wholly unappealing) human being."
 – Adam Nayman, *Eye Weekly*

THE JOURNALS OF KNUD RASMUSSEN

Director: Zacharias Kunuk, Norman Cohn
Cast: Leah Angutimarik, Peter-Henry Arnatsiaq, Kim Bodnia, Jakob Cedergren
Run Time: 115 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: Inuktituk, Danish with English subtitles
Distributor: Alliance Atlantis
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON I4A / BC PG / AB PG Nudity, Mature Themes / SK PG / MB PG / PQ G / Maritimes NR

Zacharias Kunuk's first feature film, *ATANARJUAT (THE FAST RUNNER)*, took audiences by storm and won many awards, including the prestigious *Caméra d'Or* at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival and the Best Canadian Feature Film award at the Toronto International Film Festival®. The lyricism and artistry of the truly innovative *ATANARJUAT* is matched in Kunuk's follow-up (co-directed with Norman Cohn), *THE JOURNALS OF KNUD RASMUSSEN*, the Opening Night Gala at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®.

Destined to be equally venerated for its cinematic aesthetic and cultural significance, the film veers away from mythical storytelling into more historical terrain, setting its story in 1922 Igloodik, where one of the last great Inuit shamans and his daughter struggle to find a balance between their shamanistic traditions and the Christianity that is infiltrating their land. Knud Johan Victor Rasmussen, born in Greenland in 1879, was the first person to cross the Northwest Passage by dogsled, and it is through this historical figure that the clash between civilizations is related.

Kunuk and Cohn's sensitive and inquisitive lens intimately captures a way of life on the cusp of change; gorgeous scenes depicting igloo building, storytelling and song and dance contain both an exquisite observational quality and a poetry that evokes the supernatural ethereality of traditional Inuit culture.

At once a tale of loss and survival, change and tradition, history and contrasting values, *THE JOURNALS OF KNUD RASMUSSEN* takes the oral storytelling form so integral to Inuit peoples and translates it into the powerful medium of film. Not to be missed.

“THE JOURNALS OF KNUD RASMUSSEN represents the very best in Canadian cinema – inventive, dramatically rich and culturally resonant storytelling. It totally fulfills the promise of THE FAST RUNNER while standing very much on its own as a cultural document of Inuit life and a beautiful story that will speak to all audiences who see the film.” – Noah Cowan, Co-Director, Toronto International Film Festival

“Rather than paint the white men as villains, the filmmakers are more interested in illustrating the reasons why the Inuit abandoned their songs and spirits. The ramifications are quietly devastating.” – Jason Andersen, Eye Weekly

SHUT UP & SING

Co-Directors: Barbara Kopple, Cecilia Peck
Cast: Natalie Maines, Martie Maguire, Emily Robison, Simon Renshaw
Run Time: 99 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Alliance Atlantis
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

An audience favourite at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, *SHUT UP AND SING* takes us behind the scenes during a dramatic period of time for the best-selling female group of all time. Co-directors Barbara Kopple (Academy Award® winner for best documentary feature for *HARLAN COUNTY and AMERICAN DREAM*) and Cecilia Peck deliver one of the most intimate portraits of artists ever put on screen.

The Dixie Chicks made headlines all over the world in March 2003 when, as bombs were falling on Iraq, lead singer Natalie Maines told a London audience, “We’re ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas.” Not since John Lennon quipped that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus has a backlash been so fierce. Right-wing groups responded with radio boycotts, CD burnings – even a death threat.

Behind the scenes, we see the band endure persecution and plot their comeback. With millions of dollars at stake in music sales and corporate sponsorships, band members Maines, Emily Robison and Martie Maguire uphold their artistry and politics against pressures to just “shut up and sing.” While facing these challenges head-on the women gracefully, and with much humour, maintain a balance between career and motherhood.

At a time when celebrities are carefully controlled to not rock the boat – and media access is even more controlled – the Dixie Chicks exhibit openness and the courage of their convictions. *SHUT UP AND SING* will send fans into ecstasy and turn you into a convert if you’ve never heard the music before. Like the title of their hit single, they’re not ready to make nice quite yet.

“A bracingly candid documentary portrait of the artists in a career-defining transition, the film simultaneously offers a unique perspective of a nation at a similar significant crossroads. It also happens to be a lot of fun.” – Michael Rechtshaffen, The Hollywood Reporter

THE QUEEN

Director: Stephen Frears
Cast: Helen Mirren, James Cromwell, Michael Sheen, Alex Jennings, Roger Allam, Sylvia Syms, Tim McMullen
Run Time: 97 minutes
Country: United Kingdom/France/Italy
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Alliance Atlantis
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON G / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Winner of awards for Best Screenplay and Best Actress, and the coveted FIPRESCI Prize at the 2006 Venice International Film Festival, *THE QUEEN* is one of the most buzzed about films for this year's Academy Awards®, due in no small part to the uncanny embodiment of Queen Elizabeth II by two-time Oscar nominee Helen Mirren (*CALENDAR GIRLS*, *GOSFORD PARK*). The immensely versatile and acclaimed director Stephen Frears (*DIRTY PRETTY THINGS*, *HIGH FIDELITY*, *DANGEROUS LIAISONS*) and screenwriter Peter Morgan (whose script for *THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND* is also generating big buzz) have crafted a wily and thoroughly engaging examination of one of the most intriguing and cagey political figures of our time.

Set during the week immediately following Princess Diana's sudden death in 1997, *THE QUEEN* is an intimate and revealing behind-the-scenes portrait that follows Queen Elizabeth II as she works with newly elected Prime Minister Tony Blair (Michael Sheen, *KINGDOM OF HEAVEN*) to determine a suitable official response to the tragedy, while also dealing with her family's private grief, not to mention her own personal feelings regarding Diana.

Since Diana was divorced and therefore not a member of the royal family when she died, the Queen refuses to allow a state funeral, despite the massive display of public grief over the loss of the "people's princess." In addition to charting the reaction from within the eccentric and dysfunctional royal family, the film follows the idealistic Blair's desperate attempts to appease an increasingly indignant populace, as well as his schooling in the art of political persuasion by the more experienced monarch.

Distinguished by a strong supporting cast, seamless integration of documentary and news footage and a clever visual strategy (Frears shot the scenes involving the royal family in crisp, pristine 35mm, and the scenes revolving around Blair and his cabinet in the grittier and less flattering Super 16mm), *THE QUEEN* is an engrossing look at the intricacies of a political firestorm and the character of one of the world's most scrutinized public figures. Buttressed by Mirren's impeccable, head-turning performance, *THE QUEEN* is sure to stand as one of the year's best films.

"... deliciously written and expertly played...." Derek Elley, *Variety*

"In a commanding performance that is as compelling as it is unexpected, [Mirren] has turned *THE QUEEN* into... a crackling dramatic story that's intelligent, thoughtful and moving." – Kenneth Turan, *Los Angeles Times*

AFTER THE WEDDING

Director: Susanne Bier
Cast: Mads Mikkelsen, Sidse Babett Knudsen, Rolf Lassgård, Stine Fischer Christensen
Run Time: 122 minutes
Country: Denmark
Year: 2006

Language: Danish with English subtitles
Distributor: Seville Pictures
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

A sweeping and gut-wrenching drama, *AFTER THE WEDDING* is beautifully realized by Susanne Bier, one of Denmark's foremost filmmakers, and written by another, Anders Thomas Jensen. Having premiered her last two films, *OPEN HEARTS* and *BROTHERS*, the Toronto International Film Festival® was privileged to present Bier's latest work, yet another masterful exploration of the muddy moral ground between good intentions and human failings.

Transplanted Dane Jacob Peterson (Mads Mikkelsen, *WILBUR WANTS TO KILL HIMSELF*, *OPEN HEARTS*) runs a struggling orphanage in one of India's poorest regions. Jacob considers all Westerners criminally spoiled, so it's with great reluctance that he returns to Denmark to meet with a wealthy entrepreneur who may be willing to save their orphanage. Meanwhile, in Copenhagen, savvy businessman Jørgen (Rolf Lassgård) lives a near-idyllic life with his wife Helena (Sidse Babett Knudsen) and their children. After cancelling the meeting Jacob has travelled so far to attend, Jørgen insists they discuss things at his daughter Anna's (Stine Fischer Christensen) wedding the next day. This sparks a chain of events that changes all their lives forever. As layers of deceit are exposed and histories drawn out, we ponder who actually has everyone's best interests in mind: the stubborn millionaire determined to put his family first, or the guilt-ridden altruist who has heaped so much importance on what he considers the general good.

Driven by extraordinary performances and Bier's skilled direction, *AFTER THE WEDDING* demands that viewers confront one of the crucial dilemmas of contemporary times. As the world grows smaller, the gap between rich and poor widens and our lives become more intertwined – regardless of where we live – the possibility of balancing personal and social responsibilities becomes more remote, while the need to do so becomes increasingly urgent. One of the most emotionally devastating films of the year, *AFTER THE WEDDING* is also one of the most important.

"...director Susanne Bier keeps the performances grounded and a disciplined script and direction make this an authentic and layered exploration of moral choices and evasions." – Liam Lacey, *The Globe and Mail*

"Once again [Bier's] cast proves adept at navigating both the surface and those tricky undercurrents of deceit. While Mikkelsen and Lassgård are required to do the bulk of the emotional heavy-lifting, young newcomer Stine Fischer Christensen, as Lassgård's sheltered daughter, and Sidse Babett Knudsen, as his emotionally reserved wife, turn in equally affecting, respectfully cliché-free performances." – Michael Rechtshaffen, *The Hollywood Reporter*

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: 2006

Language: French with English subtitles
Distributor: Equinoxe Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON 14A / BC 18A / AB NR / SK 18A / MB NR / PQ 13 ANS+ / Maritimes NR

UN DIMANCHE À KIGALI, presented at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, is the eagerly awaited film adaptation of Gil Courtemanche's best-selling novel, "Un dimanche à la piscine de Kigali." Directed by Robert Favreau (THE ORPHAN MUSES), the film 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 the AIDS crisis in Rwanda. He is immediately 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 his wife.

Resonating on many levels, Courtemanche's story addresses global politics, racial tension and powerful human emotions. 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.

The film's cinematographer, Pierre Mignot (C.R.A.Z.Y.), deftly captures the luscious 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 hauntingly memorable cinematic experience.

"Fatou N'Diaye is majestic in the part of Gentille, while Luc Picard brings a forlorn dignity to the very difficult role of Bernard..." – Stephen Cole, *The Globe and Mail*

"... the tension mounts (in UN DIMANCHE À KIGALI), culminating in a courageous ending. Powerful." – Michel Defoy, *voir.ca*

VOLVER

Director: Pedro Almodóvar
Cast: Penelope Cruz, Carmen Maura, Lola Dueñas, Antonio de la Torre, Yohana Cobo
Run Time: 120 minutes
Country: Spain
Year: 2006

Language: Spanish with English subtitles
Distributor: Mongrel Media
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

VOLVER, a Gala presentation of the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, is the latest film from acclaimed master filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar (BAD EDUCATION, TALK TO HER). An entertaining and whimsical film about the power of motherhood and friendship, VOLVER has won numerous awards, including Best Actress and Best Screenplay at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival.

Raimunda (Penelope Cruz, DON'T MOVE, ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER) lives in Madrid, where she works hard to support her teenaged daughter Paula (Yohana Cobo, ONLY HUMAN) and her couch-potato husband, Paco (Antonio de la Torre). When Raimunda discovers a shocked Paula after she has killed Paco in self-defense, Raimunda hides the corpse.

Shortly afterwards, Raimunda's sister Sole (Lola Dueñas, THE SEA INSIDE) reports seeing their dead mother, Irene (Carmen Maura, FREE ZONE, 800 BULLETS). Determined to address unresolved matters, Irene – who pretends to be a Russian immigrant and hides under the bed whenever anyone calls – has returned from the dead to confront her daughters... and to assist Sole in her hairdressing business.

Almodóvar's use of the supernatural takes his filmmaking in a wondrous new direction. Casting is brilliant across the board, but it is Cruz – one of Almodóvar's regular collaborators – who dominates the screen, delivering a powerfully engaging and believable performance. With VOLVER, Almodóvar deftly combines his quintessential cinematographic talents: hilarious comic realism, bucolic melodrama and the celebration of womanhood.

"It's very difficult to mesh fantasy with reality, but with great charm and a light touch, Almodóvar shows exactly how it should be done." – Ray Bennett, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"... his most reflective, subdued, sometimes intense and often comic homecoming, [VOLVER] celebrates the pueblo and people that shaped Almodóvar's imagination." – Jonathan Holland, *Variety*

BOBBY

Director: Emilio Estevez

Cast: Laurence Fishburne, Heather Graham, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Helen Hunt, Lindsay Lohan, William H. Macy, Demi Moore, Sharon Stone, Elijah Wood

Run Time: 98 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Alliance Atlantis

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

Actor-turned-director Emilio Estevez's new film, **BOBBY**, a Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, is a brilliantly conceived political epic featuring an extraordinary cast at the height of their powers. The film cross-weaves the stories of ordinary and extraordinary people who were present at Robert F. Kennedy's assassination. Set entirely in Los Angeles's legendary Ambassador Hotel, their tales revolve around love, lust, political optimism, racism, individual self-destruction and society's dreams of a better future.

BOBBY begins on the morning of June 4, 1968. Over the course of that fateful day, Kennedy would win crucial victories in two presidential primaries and would later arrive at the Ambassador for a victory rally. The hotel is alive with activity and emotion. The manager (William H. Macy, **THANK YOU FOR SMOKING**) proves to be an advocate for social justice; nonetheless, he is cheating on his wife (Sharon Stone, **BROKEN FLOWERS**). A fading nightclub star (Demi Moore, **A FEW GOOD MEN**) battles devastating alcoholism. A young woman (Lindsay Lohan, **A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION**) realizes she is in love with the friend (Elijah Wood, **EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED**) she is marrying in order to save him from the draft. Campaign personnel ride out the highs - literally - and lows of political canvassing. The black and Latino kitchen staff work through prejudice and exploitation. A retired hotel doorman (Sir Anthony Hopkins, **THE WORLD'S FASTEST INDIAN**) watches the comings and goings with a mix of deep pride and nostalgia.

As the plot moves inexorably towards its tragic end - the murder of a visionary politician whose election might have had incalculable effects on the course of modern American history - archival footage of the rally drifts into the scene and Kennedy's voice, that of a true statesman, fills the soundtrack. Celebrating a spirit of change and promise that was cut short by violence, **BOBBY** searches for the people and beliefs that might inspire a troubled and divided country and change the course of a nation once again.

“A passionate outcry for peace and justice in America that becomes deeply involving by the final climactic scene, overlaid with one of RFK's most stirring speeches.” – Deborah Young, *Variety*

CATCH A FIRE

Director: Phillip Noyce

Cast: Tim Robbins, Derek Luke, Bonnie Henna

Run Time: 98 minutes

Country: United Kingdom/South Africa/USA

Year: 2006

Language: English, Afrikaans, Zulu with English subtitles

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

A Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, Phillip Noyce's **CATCH A FIRE** is a rousing political thriller that pivots on the most intimate of betrayals that unfold in the ground war against apartheid.

Based on true events, the film tells the story of Patrick Chamusso (Derek Luke, **ANTWONE FISHER**), an easygoing coal worker-turned-African National Congress (ANC) militant. A foreman at a South African refinery, Patrick swallows apartheid's daily humiliations in order to provide for his family. All that changes when he is accused of bombing the refinery. He is arrested, held for days and mercilessly interrogated; his wife, Precious (Bonnie Henna), is viciously brutalized to coerce him to confess. By the time security police chief Nic Vos (Tim Robbins, **MYSTIC RIVER**, **SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION**) finally releases the couple, Precious has been broken: just the look in her eyes tells Patrick what the police have done to her. Patrick joins the ANC's military wing and begins plotting an act that will make him Vos's most dangerous adversary.

Luke turns in a terrific performance as a man finding his political principles even as his personal life starts to unravel. He and Robbins create a tangible intensity, and Noyce frames their conflict against the ever-present paranoia of South Africa in the eighties. **CATCH A FIRE** carries both the electric charge of Noyce's spy thrillers (**PATRIOT GAMES**, **CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER**) and the complex sense of motivation he brought to **RABBIT-PROOF FENCE** and **THE QUIET AMERICAN**. Screenwriter Shawn Slovo (**A WORLD APART**) returns here to a history in which her father, ANC leader Joe Slovo, played a part. Her story makes room for the telling deceptions used by both sides. In one case the black refinery workers launch into a joyous song that sounds innocuous but in fact celebrates the bombing. In another, white South African forces disguise themselves to infiltrate an ANC camp, launching an attack in blackface. All is fair in war, but in **CATCH A FIRE** the tests of love between Patrick and Precious carry the highest price.

“A gripping look at apartheid's violent death throes... **CATCH A FIRE [is] empowered and elevated by Luke's terrific performance.” – Jason Andersen, *Eye Weekly***

BABEL

Director: Alejandro González Iñárritu

Cast: Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett, Gael García Bernal, Kôji Yakusho, Rinko Kikuchi, Adriana Barraza

Run Time: 143 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic with English subtitles

Distributor: Paramount Vantage

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

A stunning conclusion to the trilogy begun with AMORES PERROS and 21 GRAMS, Alejandro González Iñárritu's BABEL is a grandly conceived and perfectly calibrated epic about modern society's inability to communicate – between cultures or even within relationships. A Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, BABEL also screened at the 2006 Cannes International Film Festival, where it won three awards: the coveted Best Director Award, Prize of the Ecumenical Jury and Technical Grand Prize.

American couple Susan (Cate Blanchett, THE AVIATOR, ELIZABETH) and Richard (Brad Pitt, FIGHT CLUB, SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET) travel to Morocco on vacation, where catastrophe stalks their already troubled relationship. As their tour bus passes through a mountain village, a shot rings out and a stranger's decision to hand his sons a rifle creates an international incident. Meanwhile, in California, the couple's two children are in the care of Amelia (Adriana Barraza, AMORES PERROS), their nanny. When she has to drive to Mexico with her nephew, Santiago (Gael García Bernal, BAD EDUCATION, THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES), for her son's wedding, Amelia illegally brings her young charges with her. And in Tokyo, a widowed father (Kôji Yakusho, MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA, SHALL WE DANCE?) struggles to reach his deaf-mute teenaged daughter, Chieko (Rinko Kikuchi), as she swings through emotional and sexual extremes.

The performances from established stars and non-professional newcomers are gracefully natural and boast a heartfelt intensity. Barraza, remembered for her role as the mother in AMORES PERROS, is one standout, bringing a confused pathos with which we cannot help but empathize. Blanchett conjures loveliness even in her character's most difficult moments, but it is Pitt's performance that is most haunting; he is fiercely stunning as the husband, father and American who fights to keep his world from crumbling. Blessed with inspired cinematography by Rodrigo Prieto and a stirring score by composer Gustavo Santaolalla, both of whose recent credits include BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN, BABEL's journey through its dark places nonetheless leads to a destination that is quite simply transcendent.

“There's no denying Iñárritu's extraordinary directorial skill and the supercharged efforts of the cast.”

– John Harkness, *NOW Magazine*

“...gripping and powerful...” – Jason Andersen, *Eye Weekly*

THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND

Director: Kevin Macdonald

Cast: Forest Whitaker, James McAvoy, Kerry Washington, Simon McBurney, Gillian Anderson

Run Time: 121 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Fox Searchlight

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

Based on Giles Foden's award-winning novel and a Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND is the harrowing story of the rise to power of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin (Forest Whitaker, MARY, AMERICAN GUN). The story is framed around the relationship Amin develops with Nicholas Garrigan (James McAvoy, BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS, PENELOPE), a Scottish doctor who meets the leader while working at a Ugandan clinic. With one rash, decisive act, he impresses the newly elected president and becomes Amin's most trusted advisor.

Amin ruled Uganda from 1971 to 1979, torturing his political opposition, expelling the country's Asian population and presiding over the slaughter of nearly half a million people. The question is *why*? Kevin Macdonald's searing drama is too astute to serve up pat answers, but it does have one remarkable witness.

Facing a life trod in the same dull footsteps as his physician father, Garrigan fled to Africa. Even as a more experienced doctor (Gillian Anderson, THE HOUSE OF MIRTH, TRISTRAM SHANDY: A COCK AND BULL STORY) warns him of trusting charismatic African leaders, he falls under the spell of Amin's intoxicating exercise of power. Once inside the president's circle, he is also impressed by his lavish lifestyle. By the time he glimpses the true depth of Amin's brutality, Garrigan is in well over his head. Macdonald's gripping drama reveals the logic behind the madness that was Amin's mandate. McAvoy is a mercurial young actor; playing a man with unimaginable horrors piling up around him, he is at his best in this breakout role: brash, guileless, passionate. And he's in good company. Seizing the outsized character of Amin with his entire being, Whitaker gives a towering, all-stops-out performance. We have seen his deceptive charm before; here it comes laced with the despot's staggering savagery.

“Director Kevin Macdonald has fashioned a film that is at times nearly as harrowing as his previous endeavour, TOUCHING THE VOID.... It offers a compelling look into how such a popular leader became known as one of Africa's most vicious dictators of the seventies.” – James Berardinelli, *Reel Views*

THE WHITE PLANET

Co-Directors: Thierry Piantanida, Thierry Ragobert, Jean Lemire
 Cast: N/A
 Run Time: 90 minutes
 Country: Canada/France
 Year: 2006

Language: English only or French only
 Distributor: Seville Pictures
 Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
 Video: N/A
 Ratings: ON G / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ G / Maritimes NR

From the first moments of *THE WHITE PLANET*, a Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, audiences young and old will be immersed in a fantastically unfamiliar world: the great frozen North, through four seasons. (Yes, all four seasons come to the Arctic.) Filmmakers Thierry Piantanida, Thierry Ragobert and Jean Lemire reveal this extraordinarily complex ecosystem that is so much more than vast plains of ice and snow.

Unlike the majority of nature documentaries, the film focuses not on a single species, but on the ebb and flow of all life in the Arctic. Polar bears, Arctic fox and herds of caribou move across the white land; nearby, great walls of ice split and shear off, collapsing into the sea.

It's a revelation how much life exists under the snow. More extraordinary surprises await the viewer as the cameras move below the ice to the chilly waters underneath, capturing pods of white beluga whales and the otherworldly, unicorn-like horns of the rarely seen narwhal. The Arctic is depicted, with unprecedented access, as rivalling the Galápagos in its diversity. The vast polar terrain holds secrets cloaked in the aurora borealis, shining brighter than anything man could conjure.

In this extraordinary portrait of the Arctic, Piantanida, Ragobert and Lemire have vaulted the nature documentary form to an entirely new level. The wonders they reveal make this a thrilling cinematic experience. The filmmakers send a message regarding the peril of global warming, gently reminding us that we are responsible for the fate of this remarkable, unseen world. The ultimate achievement of this visually stunning work is that we are left feeling grateful for the news.

“[The film has] utterly astonishing photography (and sound recording), as polar bears roam, giant octopuses trawl the depths and caribou migrate across the tundra.” – *The Globe and Mail*

“Miraculously fluid, always classy camerawork accompanies the flow of seasons. Although the narrator’s first-person voice adds to the experience, nothing is overtly instructional or over-explained. The mystery remains intact.”

– Lisa Nesselson, *Variety*

INFAMOUS

Director: Douglas McGrath
 Cast: Toby Jones, Sandra Bullock, Daniel Craig, Peter Bogdanovich, Jeff Daniels, Hope Davis, Gwyneth Paltrow, Isabella Rossellini, Juliet Stevenson, Sigourney Weaver
 Run Time: 118 minutes
 Country: USA
 Year: 2006

Language: English
 Distributor: Warner Independent Pictures
 Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
 Video: N/A
 Ratings: ON 14A / BC 14A / AB 14A / SK 14A / MB 14A / QC 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

A Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, *INFAMOUS* might inspire a feeling of déjà vu: an accomplished and acclaimed but under-recognized character actor in a feisty, star-making performance; a star-studded cast delivering brilliant performances; an intense, engrossing story that explores the complexities of the human condition with wisdom, compassion and conviction; and an uncompromising artistic vision executed with integrity, passion and a commitment to uncovering inner truths instead of easy answers.

But despite sharing qualities and subject matter with last year's *CAPOTE*, *INFAMOUS* is very much its own work. Based on George Plimpton's relentlessly thorough book "Truman Capote: In Which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career," *INFAMOUS* follows famed author Truman Capote (Toby Jones, *MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS*, *LADIES IN LAVENDER*) as he investigates the murder of a family in rural Kansas. Assisted in very different ways by lifelong friend and novelist Harper Lee (Sandra Bullock, *CRASH*) and local sheriff Alvin Dewey (Jeff Daniels, *GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK*), Capote gradually establishes a unique and complicated relationship with Perry Smith (Daniel Craig, *MUNICH*), a troubled man with a deeply conflicted past.

Director Douglas McGrath explores rich, complicated terrain glossed over by other biographies of Capote. Refusing to shy away from the homophobia that dogged the writer throughout his life or the intense chemistry that drew Capote and Smith together, the film bravely explores the profound connection between the two men and the monumental effect it had on Capote's personal and professional life for years afterward. A highly intelligent and refined film, *INFAMOUS* explores how a deep, hidden heartbreak ultimately crippled one of the most brilliant literary minds of our time. As Bullock's Harper Lee notes at one crucial point, "At the centre of any bright flame, there's always a little touch of blue."

“... [along with *CAPOTE*], *INFAMOUS* gives you the unique opportunity to see how two sets of filmmakers can take exactly the same story, make extremely tough though different choices in emphasis and tone and achieve brilliant movies.”

– Kirk Honeycutt, *The Hollywood Reporter*

CITIZEN DUANE

Director: Michael Mabbott
Cast: Douglas Smith, Donal Logue, Vivica A. Fox, Alberta Watson, Devon Bostick, Jane McGregor, Nicholas Carella
Run Time: 90 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: ThinkFilm
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

CITIZEN DUANE, which made its debut at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, is the eagerly anticipated second feature from Michael Mabbott, whose first film, THE LIFE AND HARD TIMES OF GUY TERRIFICO, won the award for Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Festival in 2005 and was also named one of Canada's Top Ten. CITIZEN DUANE is a brilliantly funny film that tells the story of Duane Balfour (Douglas Smith), who takes on an inherited battle from his family's tumultuous past using methods that prove to be astoundingly wrong-headed.

When he is defeated in his run for student council president by the youngest member of the Milton family, Duane launches Operation Infinite Justice and focuses his battle on Chad Milton (Nicholas Carella), the obnoxious grandson of the local oligarch. Duane's antipathy for Chad brings him nothing but trouble and his teacher, Miss Houston (Vivica A. Fox, KILL BILL), challenges him to set his sights higher. Seeing an opportunity to break the cycle of Milton rule and nepotism, Duane decides to run for Mayor. His greatest supporter is his Uncle Bingo (Donal Logue) – a guy who once bet on a horse named Glue Factory. As the consequences of Duane's strategy begin to affect those around him, Bingo reminds him that sometimes it's better to just keep your head down; in this family, there are no easy answers, and heroism is a double-edged sword.

Surpassing his acclaimed debut, Mabbott conveys the unique tone of CITIZEN DUANE with skill, confidence and subversive glee. The screenplay, by Jonathan Sobol and Robert DeLeskie, marks these first-time feature writers as talents to watch. As Duane, Smith is a wonderful discovery. He vacillates between boy and man, with a mature political intensity that is truly inspiring. Logue makes a most welcome return to Canadian film with an understated comic performance as the kind and befuddled Bingo. A gratifying film for anyone who took comfort in the knowledge that their high-school tormentors would age badly, CITIZEN DUANE ultimately reaches for greater human truths in the story of a quixotic young man who may or may not be crazy for wanting to fight the system.

“[CITIZEN DUANE boasts]... fine performances, notably from Alberta Watson, who plays Duane's exasperated mother.”
 – Joel McConvey, filmCAN.org

“Director Michael Mabbott imbues CITIZEN DUANE with an appropriately lighthearted touch... and the film consequently moves at a brisk clip.” – David Nusair, reelfilm.com

THE PAINTED VEIL

Director: John Curran
Cast: Edward Norton, Naomi Watts, Liev Schreiber, Sally Hawkins, Toby Jones, Diana Rigg
Run Time: 100 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English, Mandarin with English subtitles
Distributor: Warner Independent Pictures
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Director John Curran's acclaimed WE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE displayed a propensity for adapting complex moral stories to the big screen while respecting the source material, the integrity of the characters and the demands of good cinema. His latest film, THE PAINTED VEIL, further confirms his skill for adapting great literature and for drawing nuanced performances from a stellar cast.

Based on the novel of the same name by W. Somerset Maugham, THE PAINTED VEIL is the story of Walter (Edward Norton, FIGHT CLUB, THE ITALIAN JOB), a bacteriologist, and his wife, Kitty (Naomi Watts, I HEART HUCKABEES, KING KONG). When Walter is absorbed in his research, Kitty feels abandoned and has an affair with a local playboy (Liev Schreiber, THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED). When he discovers her infidelity, Walter takes Kitty to a remote Chinese village, where they undertake to fight a cholera outbreak. Witnessing her husband's dedication to his work and finding fulfillment in her own efforts to stem the disease, Kitty experiences a spiritual awakening and finds new love for her husband.

Watts has big shoes to fill here – an earlier version of the film, made in 1934, starred none other than Greta Garbo. But Watts delivers in spades, giving a brilliant, moving performance as a woman on a spiritual journey who rediscovers the meaning of love and respect. Norton displays the focused intensity we have come to expect, while Schreiber is compelling and charming as the cunning playboy.

THE PAINTED VEIL is a moving cinematic experience that will not soon be forgotten.

RADIANT CITY

Director: Gary Burns, Jim Brown
Cast: With Mark Kingwell and James Howard Kunstler
Run Time: 86 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: TBD
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

In RADIANT CITY, the much talked about new documentary by Gary Burns and journalist Jim Brown that had its premiere at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, there's something more desperate about suburbs than their housewives. Whether you call it sprawl or growth, the suburbs have been the dominant form of community planning in North America for fifty years. Burns and Brown peer into the windows – and lives – of those who call suburbia home.

The Moss family is one such household. The parents commute to the city for work, while their kids shuffle from school, to gymnastics, to playing among the half-built homes of their new community. Their micromanaged lives are mapped out on the kitchen whiteboard. The Mosses seem split on their suburban experience: Mom loves the safety and big house; Dad is busy starring in local theatre productions; son and daughter feel isolated from their neighbours. The siblings share their own thoughts as they take us on an ironic tour of the neighbourhood.

Suburban communities are examined and criticized by experts like University of Toronto's Mark Kingwell and author James Howard Kunstler. The legacy of the suburbs is traced from the rise of the automobile to the arrival of the "new urbanists," who look to pre-war models for designing future communities.

Yet RADIANT CITY is more than a critical dissertation on the suburbs. Burns lends the movie his witty, satirical edge, crafting a film that's informative, insightful and hilarious. This film is his most direct confrontation yet with the suburban lifestyle and aesthetic; his familiarity with the landscape allows him to capture both its seductive allure and disenchanting realities. Like the identical streetscapes of a housing division, RADIANT CITY hides secrets behind its glossy exterior that, once revealed, change not only how we view the 'burbs, but also the movie we've just seen.

"RADIANT CITY is successful as both a documentary on the suburbs and an intimate look at the ups and downs of an admittedly quirky nuclear family." – David Nusair, *Reel Film Reviews*

INDIGÈNES

Director: Rachid Bouchareb
Cast: Jamel Debbouze, Samy Nacéri, Sami Bouajila, Roschdy Zem
Run Time: 125 minutes
Country: France
Year: 2006

Language: French, Arabic with English subtitles
Distributor: Alliance Atlantis
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Late Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Garnering multiple awards at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival – including an unprecedented award for its male ensemble cast – and screening to great acclaim at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, INDIGÈNES (previously titled DAYS OF GLORY) is a powerful and haunting film about the discrimination and prejudices encountered by North Africans who fought for France in the Second World War.

It is 1943 and France is occupied by the Germans. Desperate for more recruits, France looks to Algeria and Morocco for volunteers to defend the "homeland" – a place none of these youngsters has ever seen. Poorly trained, the recruits encounter a bloody battle that baptizes them in the brutalities of war and the importance of duty. As the war continues they are routinely denied both leave and promotions, and are treated as second-class soldiers. The film chronicles their courage as they travel from the burning sands of Morocco to the freezing winters of northern Italy and finally to a small French village, where their true heroism comes to the fore.

Rachid Bouchareb deftly draws on classical storytelling techniques to reveal the widely-ignored contributions and sacrifices of North African soldiers. The subtly nuanced performances of the cast, including Jamel Debbouze (AMÉLIE) and Roschdy Zem (LIVE AND BECOME), have elicited wide praise. Epic in nature but intimate and humanistic in scope, the film brings a sense of personal intimacy to the fate of these estranged soldiers. Despite its often tragic subject matter, INDIGÈNES hearkens back to the golden age of filmmaking and reminds us why we love to go to the movies.

"With strong visuals and even stronger emotions, Rachid Bouchareb's [INDIGÈNES] makes a powerful war film about a particularly unique subject." – Kirk Honeycutt, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"... an old-fashioned real movie, with a beginning, middle and end, characters, a story and a powerful message." – Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*

THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY

Director: Ken Loach
Cast: Cillian Murphy, Pádraic Delaney, Liam Cunningham, Gerard Kearney
Run Time: 127 minutes
Country: France/Ireland/United Kingdom
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Christal Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

With such acclaimed films as *MY NAME IS JOE*, *RAINING STONES*, *LAND AND FREEDOM*, *BREAD AND ROSES* and his segment in the omnibus film *11'09"01 - SEPTEMBER 11*, Ken Loach has created an impressive body of work in the best of the British social realist tradition. His latest and most ambitious film, the historical period piece *THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY*, won the prestigious Palme d'Or at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival and screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® to wide acclaim.

Set in Ireland in 1919, the film chronicles a key chapter in the "Troubles" between Ireland and Britain. Irish workers have banded together to form a guerrilla resistance to the British "Black and Tan" squads sent to thwart Irish independence. At the heart of the story are two brothers, Damien (Cillian Murphy, *BREAKFAST ON PLUTO*) and Teddy (Pádraic Delaney). Damien has just started his career as a doctor, but feels compelled to join his brother in what will become a violent fight for rights and freedom.

As the war wages on, the Irish bring the British to their threshold and a treaty to end the bloodshed is signed. But deep-seated animosities do not easily disappear and bitter disputes arise. Civil war breaks out, causing rifts not only between enemies, but among those who were once on the same side.

A drama of epic proportions dealing with family, loyalty and history, *THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY* is an engrossing experience that evokes the intimate relationship between brothers, sublimely portrayed by Murphy and Delaney. Ken Loach's vision is masterly, his propensity for appealing stories with social relevance proven once again.

"With his poet's cheekbones and blue eyes, Murphy makes a fine romantic hero, and Delaney is a match as his duty-bound brother. Liam Cunningham, too, stands out as a thoughtful train driver-turned-rebel. Contributions from cinematographer Barry Ackroyd, production designer Fergus Clegg and composer George Fenton are all first-rate."

– Ray Bennett, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"This powerful, moving and superbly acted drama is a worthy Palme d'Or winner and one of Ken Loach's best films to date."

– Matthew Turner, viewlondon.co.uk

LITTLE CHILDREN

Director: Todd Field
Cast: Kate Winslet, Jennifer Connelly, Patrick Wilson, Noah Emmerich, Jackie Earle Haley
Run Time: 130 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Alliance Atlantis
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON 14A / BC 18A / AB NR / SK 18A / MB 14A / PQ 13ANS+ / Maritimes NR

Todd Field's widely acclaimed *IN THE BEDROOM* electrified audiences at the 2001 Toronto International Film Festival®, and now the immensely talented writer-director is back with *LITTLE CHILDREN*, adapted from the novel by Tom Perrotta and a Special Presentation at the 2006 Festival. The film is a scathing and frequently hilarious dissection of the mores and rituals of a group of hot-to-trot fledgling parents, brought vividly to life by some of the best young actors working today: Kate Winslet, Jennifer Connelly and fast-rising star Patrick Wilson. Sarah (a phenomenal Winslet, *ALL THE KING'S MEN*, *ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND*) was made for better things: married to a jackass in the corporate branding business, the grad-school dropout is a stay-at-home mom to her adorable but demanding little daughter, Lucy (Sadie Goldstein). At the local playground she is subjected to the inane gossip of a trio of fellow mums, but their routine is broken by the sudden return of Brad (Wilson, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, *HARD CANDY*), a hunky househusband they've dubbed the Prom King.

Despite being married to gorgeous Kathy (Connelly, *A BEAUTIFUL MIND*, *HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG*) and father to cherubic Aaron (Ty Simpkins), Brad is going through his own malaise. Struggling to pass the bar exam, he is distracted by the lure of a touch-football night league. In an effort to scandalize the meddling mother hens, one day Sarah approaches Brad in the playground.

Spiked with a wry voice-over that gets under each character's skin, *LITTLE CHILDREN* revolutionizes familiar narrative terrain. This audacious film is keenly sensitive to how ambitious young adults' lives and desires change when they have kids (not to mention how parenting can become a competitive sport), and to the characteristics of a paranoid America living under "homeland security." Many scenes are at once resonant and utterly surprising – just try not to be stunned by a key sequence at the town pool. From its bravura opening sequence to its sublime ending, *LITTLE CHILDREN* is smart, riveting filmmaking.

"Displaying many of the same qualities that distinguished Todd Field's debut feature, *IN THE BEDROOM*, *LITTLE CHILDREN* is a deftly made, emotionally acute... examination of cracks in middle-class American family life." – Todd McCarthy, *Variety*

"[Director Todd] Field performs a high-wire act that balances hard truth and hard-won tenderness. Most movies fade from the memory. This one sticks." – Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Director: Christopher Guest

Cast: Bob Balaban, Catherine O'Hara, Eugene Levy, Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, Harry Shearer, Ricky Gervais, Jane Lynch, Parker Posey, Fred Willard

Run Time: 86 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Warner Independent Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

After the brilliant comedic success of such signature mockumentaries as *BEST IN SHOW*, *WAITING FOR GUFFMAN* and the enduring cult hit *THIS IS SPINAL TAP*, director Christopher Guest returns with another hilarious film, this time turning his sights on the Hollywood machine itself. *FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION* made its impressive debut as a Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®.

Though not in the mockumentary style, *FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION* does rely on the inspired improvisational skills of Guest and his big-name cast in its tale of three actors (Catherine O'Hara, *BEST IN SHOW*, *OVER THE HEDGE*, "Six Feet Under;" Parker Posey, *BEST IN SHOW*, *SUPERMAN RETURNS*; and Harry Shearer, "The Simpsons," *CHICKEN LITTLE*) starring in a dreadful indie movie set in the American South in the forties. This film within the film – an exceptionally insipid melodrama called "Home for Purim" – forces the actors to lament the sad state of their careers; that is, until the film attracts attention and their performances begin to generate awards buzz.

Fans of Guest's work will be thrilled to know he has assembled a cast that reunites many of his regular collaborators, including Posey, O'Hara, Shearer, Jane Lynch (*THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN*), Bob Balaban (*GOSFORD PARK*, *GHOST WORLD*), Jennifer Coolidge (*BEST IN SHOW*, *LEGALLY BLONDE*), Michael McKean (*THIS IS SPINAL TAP*) and Fred Willard (*DATE MOVIE*, *THE WEDDING PLANNER*). The film also features the dry, sardonic wit of Ricky Gervais ("The Office") and co-stars Eugene Levy (*BEST IN SHOW*, *AMERICAN PIE*), who also co-wrote the script.

"The outrageously hilarious FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION was well worth the wait. Again delivered with comic precision by Guest's crack repertory company, his patented brand of parody – call it gentle skewering – takes affectionate but deadly aim at its awards buzz mania target and the results aren't just funny, they're face-hurting funny."

– Michael Rechtshaffen, *The Hollywood Reporter*

KARDIA

Director: Su Rynard

Cast: Mimi Kuzyk, Peter Stebbings, Kristin Booth, Ariel Waller

Run Time: 85 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Independent - Alcina Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

Winner of the Alfred P. Sloan Film Prize in Science and Technology at the 2005 Hamptons International Film Festival (past winners have included *KINSEY* and *ENIGMA*), *KARDIA* weaves a fable of love, science, memory and metaphor.

Attempting to unlock the secrets of her past, Hope (Mimi Kuzyk, *THE HUMAN STAIN*) – a pathologist who underwent an experimental heart operation as an infant – discovers that her childhood memories do not accurately reflect reality, and that somehow her life is linked with that of another person. Excessive trauma in her early years has somehow tainted her memory. Is this a natural defense of the mind, or were there complications during the pioneering medical procedure? Hope obsessively delves into the past, only to discover the shocking truth about her childhood, her family and her very existence.

Production designer Aidan Leroux (*I, CLAUDIA*, *THE DARK HOURS*) has beautifully recreated the fifties, while cinematographer Kim Derko (*THE LAW OF ENCLOSURES*) has captured the soft hues of an idyllic summer and the stark monochromes of a threatening winter. Director Su Rynard has skillfully woven her own complex experiences into a uniquely engaging debut feature that draws the viewer into its deeply emotional narrative.

ORCHESTRA SEATS

Director: Danièle Thompson
Cast: Cécile de France, Valérie Lemercier, Albert Dupontel, Laura Morante, Claude Brasseur, Christopher Thompson
Run Time: 105 minutes
Country: France
Year: 2006

Language: French with English subtitles
Distributor: Seville Pictures
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

France's official submission for the 2006 Academy Award® for Best Foreign Language Film, ORCHESTRA SEATS is Danièle Thompson's (JET LAG) heartwarming and entertaining story of a young woman who moves to Paris to seek fame and fortune. While working as a waitress to make ends meet, her life becomes intertwined with those of the local café's clientele.

Fresh from the provinces, Jessica (Cécile de France, RUSSIAN DOLLS) arrives in Paris and quickly talks her way into a job at the old-fashioned Bar de Théâtre on the bourgeois Avenue Montaigne. Due to the café's close proximity to a famous concert hall, a venerable theatre and an auction house, Jessica's work introduces her to the café's clientele, an eclectic mix of stagehands and world-class entertainers. Classical pianist Jean-François Lefort (Albert Dupontel, A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT) is exhausted and stifled by a heavy performance schedule, and yearns to escape the formal concert circuit entirely. Meanwhile, business mogul Jacques Grumberg (Claude Brasseur) is about to auction off the art collection he's spent his life acquiring. Grumberg has a rocky relationship with his son, Frédéric (Christopher Thompson, who co-wrote the script with his mother, director Danièle Thompson). Hugely popular soap star Catherine (Valérie Lemercier), who longs for glory on the big screen, senses a shot at stardom when she learns that famous American director Brian Sobinski (brilliantly played by renowned director/producer Sydney Pollack) is in town casting his new film about Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. As Catherine, Jacques and Jean-François nurse their neuroses at the café they are waited on by Jessica, who is entranced by their glamorous lives and dreams of her own success.

Thompson admirably juggles multiple narratives and directs her actors with savvy. The ensemble cast shines throughout, though De France is a particular joy to watch as Jessica; she reacts to the luxury and privilege of the cultural elite with a refreshing, down-to-earth perspective. The humanity and humour of Thompson's script addresses the transience and ephemeral nature of life with a lightness of touch audiences will find irresistible.

"A well-oiled script is nicely served by a multigenerational cast in ORCHESTRA SEATS, a bittersweet and consistently entertaining mainstream comedy that tackles the big themes of Life and Art with unpretentious brio." – Lisa Nesselson, Variety

"Danièle Thompson directs with such smooth assurance that the movie glows with infectious cheerfulness." – Kirk Honeycutt, The Hollywood Reporter

FIDO

Director: Andrew Currie
Cast: Carrie-Anne Moss, Billy Connolly, Dylan Baker, K'Sun Ray
Run Time: 96 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: TVA Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Screened to packed houses at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, Andrew Currie's FIDO is a delightful entry to the rejuvenated genre of zombie movies. Bitingly funny, FIDO is a poignant, satirical comedy about a young man and his loyal confidant.

Zombies are often creepy and menacing, capable of ruling the world unless they're destroyed by man. But in the world of FIDO, our favourite monster takes on a whole new occupation; that of man's best friend. FIDO floats the hilarious premise that zombies, capable of so much more than dogs, have become the perfect solution for many of life's domestic management issues.

Timmy Robinson (K'Sun Ray) has become inseparable from Fido (Billy Connolly, WHITE OLEANDER, THE LAST SAMURAI), his six-foot-tall zombie. Fido means well, but he is a zombie, after all. So when he can't help but devour the next-door neighbour, Timmy's parents (Carrie-Anne Moss, CHOCOLAT, SNOW CAKE, and Dylan Baker, KINSEY) are beside themselves: Fido must go. This is devastating news to Timmy, who will go to the ends of the earth to ensure Fido remains a part of the family.

Distinguished by a clever script, expert pacing and delightful performances, FIDO takes a fresh and unique spin on a well-established genre – in fact, two or three genres. People of all ages can enjoy Timmy and Fido's relationship, which is simultaneously sweet and offbeat. Set in a glossy suburbia masterfully realized by Jan Kiesser's (BOWWOLF & GRENDDEL) lush cinematography, the film's gorgeous, supersaturated palette alone makes for a special cinematic treat.

"Skewering fifties ideals, LASSIE-type films and B-movie horror, Currie and co-writer Robert Chomiak have written something that's both deliriously funny and thought-provoking. A must-see." – Lori Fireman, NOW Magazine

THE LIVES OF OTHERS

Director: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
Cast: Ulrich Mühe, Martina Gedeck, Sebastian Koch, Ulrich Tukur, Thomas Thieme
Run Time: 137 minutes
Country: Germany
Year: 2006

Language: German with English subtitles
Distributor: Mongrel Media
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

THE LIVES OF OTHERS swept the 2006 German Film Awards, winning seven prizes, including Best Feature Film, Best Direction, Best Actor and Best Cinematography. A Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, the feature debut from newcomer Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck is a beautifully written and exceptionally staged recreation of the nightmare years of the German Democratic Republic. A far cry from the wistful look back at the former East Germany that defined the popular GOOD BYE, LENIN!, Henckel von Donnersmarck determinedly focuses upon the venality of a regime that wrapped itself in the rhetoric of a worker's paradise while building a living hell and waging a cold war on its citizens.

It is 1984. Glasnost is a million miles away and a government minister with a wandering eye, used to exploiting his position to eliminate rivals in politics or love, takes a fancy to Christa-Maria Sieland (Martina Gedeck, MOSTLY MARTHA), a beautiful, popular and very attractive actress. She is living with one of the country's most popular - and loyal - playwrights, Georg Dreyman (Sebastian Koch), who has connections in the government and is feted as a cultural superstar. However, the couple's apparently safe little world turns upside down when the grim and expressionless Stasi agent Captain Gerd Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe) - who believes no one is ever truly innocent of anything - is sent to spy on them.

THE LIVES OF OTHERS presents a blistering indictment of the former East Germany's Kafkaesque regime, while retaining a human portrait of its protagonists. Mühe is truly brilliant as Wiesler, the man with the headphones, a faithful cog in the machine who nonetheless proves to be more complex than we expect. Here, nothing is as simple as it seems. With a knowing nod to Coppola's brilliant THE CONVERSATION, Henckel von Donnersmarck has made one of the most powerful films to emerge from Germany in a decade.

"... by challenging our need for good and bad stereotypes... [THE LIVES OF OTHERS] is ultimately captivating and, with the twists in the end, highly rewarding." – Eric Hansen, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"A remarkably confident debut from Germany's Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, THE LIVES OF OTHERS is a deft, gripping Communist-era drama." – Fionnuala Halligan, *Screen International*

THE ITALIAN

Director: Andrei Kravchuk
Cast: Kolya Spiridonov, Maria Kuznetsova, Yuri Itskov, Darya Lesnikova, Nikolai Reutov
Run Time: 99 minutes
Country: Russia
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Mongrel Media
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Late Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Imbued with overtones reminiscent of Charles Dickens, THE ITALIAN - presented at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® - is a humane and sympathetic study of a young boy in the grim world of a Russian orphanage. Scheming adults are the only role models for children who, when they're not planning their escapes, are simply trying to find their way through a world with no hope for the future. It is not difficult to detect the documentarian behind director Andrei Kravchuk's winning feature debut, in which he seamlessly depicts the harsh reality of this environment while remaining open to the dramatic possibilities offered by the story of six-year-old Vanya.

The orphanage is run by the wily "Madam" (Maria Kuznetsova), who is only interested in making money by selling the children to wealthy Westerners. Each adoption is treated as a financial transaction. The vulnerable but tough-skinned Vanya is given the nick-name "the Italian" when he is chosen for adoption by an Italian couple. It seems Vanya will be one of the lucky ones; at least he will escape. The other children his age find themselves at the mercy of older kids involved in everything from theft to pimping. However, Vanya's life changes when he meets the birth mother of another boy who had left for the West in the hands of foreigners. This encounter has a huge impact, and convinces Vanya that he needs to find his own birth mother.

Confronting one obstacle after another, Vanya is tireless in his attempt to find his mother. During his voyage, he encounters kindness and sympathy, treachery and duplicity, but remains unwaveringly focused on his goal.

THE ITALIAN is blessed with the stunning lead performance of Kolya Spiridonov, who is full of spunk, yet also deeply sensitive. Like the works of Dickens, the film is neither black nor white, depressing nor uplifting, but rather a wonderful combination of differing emotions. Vanya's roller-coaster ride through post-Glasnost Russia is an edifying and inspirational tale.

"What began as a vivid tour of enclosed institutional rot segues, smartly and seamlessly, into a compelling open-road odyssey." – Adam Nayman, *Eye Weekly*

CONGORAMA

Director: Philippe Falardeau
Cast: Olivier Gourmet, Paul Ahmarani, Claudia Tagbo, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Gabriel Arcand
Run Time: 105 minutes
Country: Canada/Belgium/France
Year: 2006

Language: French with English subtitles
Distributor: Cristal Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ G / Maritimes NR

The closing film at the 2006 Cannes Director's Fortnight and a Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, Philippe Falardeau's CONGORAMA interweaves fathers and sons, secrets and discoveries, World Expos – and even an emu.

Down-on-his-luck Belgian inventor Michel (Olivier Gourmet, THE SON, ROSETTA) is married to Alice (Claudia Tagbo), a Congolese refugee. At forty-two, he learns from his successful but now paralyzed father (Jean-Pierre Cassel, THE WOODEN CAMERA) that he was adopted and was actually born on a farm somewhere in Quebec.

After learning his family's name is Legrand, Michel heads to Quebec in search of his biological parents, claiming he's going on business. But all he finds in the great Canadian outdoors is bad fries, bad beer and a town full of Legroses. After a few more chance encounters he meets Louis (Paul Ahmarani, LA VIE AVEC MON PÈRE, LA MOITIÉ GAUCHE DU FRIGO), only to be involved in an accident that leaves Louis in a coma and Michel in possession of information that could give him the status he has always craved.

Falardeau is admired for his social comedy; his earlier film, LA MOITIÉ GAUCHE DU FRIGO, was named Best Canadian first feature film at the Festival in 2000 and won Falardeau the Claude Jutra Award for Best First Feature Direction. The playfully intelligent CONGORAMA boasts the unique talents of the always-inventive cinematographer André Turpin (MAELSTRÖM, UN CRABE DANS LA TÊTE) and award-winning Belgian actor Olivier Gourmet. Although Gourmet is well known for his dramatic work, here he is a deadpan comedic revelation. His performance is anchored in reality but boasts an astonishing lightness that takes over the screen.

Much like Michel and Louis, who were both born during their respective countries' World Expos, Falardeau explores the world lying just outside everyday experience. Crafted with great skill and humour, CONGORAMA is a joyous adventure and an impressive puzzle that explores the past and the present, with an eye on the future in its search for identity. It confirms Falardeau's status as one of our sharpest young filmmakers.

“[CONGORAMA] features an extremely compelling performance from Olivier Gourmet, who effortlessly steps into the shoes of a likeable schlub and often comes off as a French-Canadian Paul Giamatti.” – David Nusair, reelfilm.com

DEATH OF A PRESIDENT

Director: Gabriel Range
Cast: Hend Ayoub, Brian Boland, Becky-Ann Baker, Michael Reilly Burke, M. Neko Parham
Run Time: 93 minutes
Country: United Kingdom
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Maple Pictures
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

The most talked-about film at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, DEATH OF A PRESIDENT is the fictionalized account of the assassination of George W. Bush. A couple of years after his imagined death in 2007, an investigative documentary is made. It features all the people involved that fateful day: the protestors outside a Chicago hotel; the suspects in the shooting and their families; the Secret Service men who failed to protect their charge; the press; and an array of experts, desperately seeking meaning in this horrible act of violence. We learn, agonizingly, what happened to America after the death of its leader.

Cautionary tales are too often flights of fancy; as they push the envelope of credibility, the lessons gleaned from dark speculation become somehow tarnished. Not here. Every moment is completely believable, every comment is somehow appropriate – to the point of chilling, horrifying certainty.

Director Gabriel Range (THE DAY BRITAIN STOPPED), collaborating with some of the finest special-effects wizards in the world, inserts his characters seamlessly into existing footage. As one might expect, Range is ultimately interested in addressing today's political issues through the lens of the future. Xenophobia, the hidden costs of war and the nature of civil liberties in a hyper-media age all come under the microscope. The film is never a personal attack on Bush; Range simply seeks to explore the potential consequences that might follow from the president's policies and actions.

It is the very technique of DEATH OF A PRESIDENT, finally, that poses the most haunting questions of all. Not only do we feel the authenticity of mass media imagery slipping away, but Range suggests that his manipulation is merely a more radical example of what we encounter every day.

“Layering the sense of dread with measured expertise, Range does a formidable job visualizing the circumstances surrounding the crime.” – Todd McCarthy, Variety

MONKEY WARFARE

Director: Reg Harkema
Cast: Don McKellar, Tracy Wright, Nadia Litz
Run Time: 75 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

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

MONKEY WARFARE, Reg Harkema's (A GIRL IS A GIRL) latest treat for the brain and the senses, screened to wide acclaim at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, where it was awarded an Honourable Mention from the jury for the Toronto-City Award for Best Canadian Feature Film. MONKEY WARFARE is set almost entirely in and around a ramshackle house in Toronto's West End, where middle-aged bohemians Dan (Don McKellar, LAST NIGHT, CHILDSTAR) and Linda (Tracy Wright, CHILDSTAR, ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW) eke out an existence scavenging in garbage dumps and rummaging through yard sales for undervalued objects. They spend their evenings getting baked and staring silently into space.

As the film opens, tragedy strikes: their dealer has been busted. Enter the enigmatic young Susan (Nadia Litz, RHINOCEROS EYES, LOVE THAT BOY), a winsome, mysterious hipster who rescues Dan from the perils of sobriety by offering him organically grown B.C. bud. Susan's arrival re-invigorates Dan, who clumsily tries to seduce her with counterculture memorabilia. As the couple grows accustomed to their new-found guest, the relationships among the three change. Dan and Linda function – sometimes simultaneously – as parents, confidants and mentors, while Susan acts as both temptress and conscience. And she's not the only one with secrets.

Equal parts political comedy, elegy and domestic drama, MONKEY WARFARE exudes considerable scruffy charm, much of it due to the performers' evident glee. Outfitted with a ludicrous Fu Manchu moustache, McKellar delivers an inspired comic performance, most notably when his encounters with Susan lead to his sexual re-awakening. Wright plays Linda as a ruefully wised-up woman, at once tired and proud of the way she and Dan have managed to exist on the margins for so long, while Litz exudes a keenly observed mix of youthful arrogance and innocence.

Harkema directs with a pop-art brio, loading the film with visual references to seventies exploitation movies. The film is driven by a sly comic take on bohemia, counterculture politics and disillusionment. So crank up your old MC5 records and ask yourself whether complacency is the logical end of opposing the mainstream, or just a minor lull along the way.

“Laconic off-kilter humour is well worked out on all levels of the production.” – Dennis Harvey, *Variety*

“MONKEY WARFARE comes equipped with Godard-tested tactics (jump-cuts, onscreen text, agitprop slogans) and a mighty cool soundtrack (Comets on Fire, Pink Mountaintops, Weird War). The result is energetic and quintessentially Torontonians.” – Jason Anderson, *Eye Weekly*

STRANGER THAN FICTION

Director: Marc Forster
Cast: Will Ferrell, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman, Queen Latifah, Emma Thompson
Run Time: 113 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Sony Pictures
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON PG / BC G / AB PG / SK G / MB PG / QC G / Maritimes NR

Screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, STRANGER THAN FICTION tells the story of Harold Crick (Will Ferrell, THE PRODUCERS, MELINDA AND MELINDA), a methodical IRS auditor who knows where he will be and what he will be doing down to the last second of every minute of every hour. Then one fine day – a day like any other – Harold's insular world gets shaken to its foundations.

His watch – governor of everything he does – breaks. Then he starts hearing a voice in his head. Speaking with a British accent, this female voice seems to be narrating every moment and action of Harold's life, and no one but Harold can hear it. When the voice mentions Harold's imminent death, he knows it's time to seek professional help.

Dr. Jules Hilbert (Dustin Hoffman, I HEART HUCKABEES, FINDING NEVERLAND) is a literary theorist who suggests Harold should wrest control of his “story” back from the voice – and perhaps re-write it as a comedy. This novel notion prompts Harold to re-evaluate his professional relationship with Ana Pascal (Maggie Gyllenhaal, SECRETARY), a free-spirited baker who does not support all aspects of U.S. tax law – or Harold, at first.

Meanwhile, Kay Eiffel (Emma Thompson, SENSE AND SENSIBILITY, “Angels in America”), a well-known novelist with a troublesome case of writer's block, needs an ending for her book about a character named Harold Crick. She has no idea that Harold is a real person, or that he is aware she has decided to kill him off. To save himself, the desperate Harold must breach the reclusive author's main line of defense: her hard-charging assistant, Penny (Queen Latifah, CHICAGO).

Ferrell proves his talent as a dramatic actor, bringing an engrossing complexity to Harold. He and the luminous Gyllenhaal play within their obvious chemistry, and Hoffman's peppery professor and Thompson's cranky, tortured artist are equally charming. Screenwriter Zach Helm has crafted a story that, in the masterful hands of director Marc Forster (FINDING NEVERLAND, MONSTER'S BALL), evolves into a smart, darkly funny and powerful film.

“It remains inventive and funny to the end, features fine performances from Will Ferrell and especially Emma Thompson, and offers enough to enjoy and dispute to make it a good [box-office] attraction with long-distance potential for smart-skewing audiences.” – Todd McCarthy, *Variety*

MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES

Director: Jennifer Baichwal
 With: Edward Burtynsky
 Run Time: 90 minutes
 Country: Canada
 Year: 2006

Language: English
 Distributor: Mongrel Media
 Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
 Video: N/A
 Ratings: ON G / BC G / AB NR / SK G / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

The powerful and compelling MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES, a Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® – where it won the Toronto-City Award for Best Canadian Feature Film – is ostensibly a portrait of Edward Burtynsky, the celebrated Canadian photographer who specializes in large-scale studies of industrial vistas. But it's far more than a straightforward portrait of an artist. Indeed, the film is as much about the aesthetic, social and spiritual dimensions of industrialization and globalization as it is about Burtynsky and his work.

Burtynsky's interest in humanity's impact on nature led to frequent visits to China, where most of the world's raw materials – and much of its waste – wind up. The film follows his trips to China and a related trip to Bangladesh, where young men immerse themselves in toxic sludge to tear apart giant ships. Burtynsky's photographs tend to emphasize the aesthetic dimension of overhauled landscapes, stressing the lurid and curious beauty of these metamorphoses. The film focuses on the human cogs in the machine, contrasting Burtynsky's epic photographs with the tedium the workers endure and the sometimes toxic and alienating impact on the people these efforts are supposed to benefit.

Beautifully shot (by acclaimed filmmaker Peter Mettler) and edited, and conceived with a startlingly exhaustive awareness of the repercussions of our mania to control and repackage our environment, MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES is a truly unsettling look at contemporary existence. It's also rather uniquely Canadian, recalling Northrop Frye's famous assessment of Canadian literature: the film records the conquest of the natural landscape by a sensibility that does not love it. On a global scale, this mindset is profoundly disturbing.

“One of the things Baichwal does in the film is give us a look at what China's industrial revolution means, and its scale is staggering. The monumental opening dolly shot through a modern factory space has an almost Godard-like grandeur.” – John Harkness, *NOW Magazine*

“... a highly unusual viewing experience that stimulates the senses and the conscience simultaneously. Burtynsky may be reluctant to pin his images down by attaching morals to them, but viewers will be unable to ignore the troubling questions they present.” – John Defore, *The Hollywood Reporter*

THE U.S. VS. JOHN LENNON

Co-Directors: David Leaf, John Scheinfeld
 With: Yoko Ono Lennon, Gore Vidal, Angela Davis, George McGovern, Ron Kovic
 Run Time: 96 minutes
 Country: USA
 Year: 2006

Language: English
 Distributor: Maple Pictures
 Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
 Video: N/A
 Ratings: ON PG / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

John Lennon had a simple idea: “Give Peace a Chance.” In THE U.S. VS. JOHN LENNON, which screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, directors David Leaf and John Scheinfeld trace the singer's evolution as an activist and the powerful forces that rose up against him. Interviewing both friends and opponents and drawing upon a treasure trove of archival footage – plus an extensive new interview with Yoko Ono Lennon – the filmmakers present a man who speaks directly to our own time. “It seems silly to be in America and not mention Vietnam as if nothing was happening,” Lennon once said during a Beatles interview. Those anti-war sentiments grew when he married Yoko Ono in 1969. The couple held “Bed-In” events in Amsterdam and Montreal to promote peace. Over Christmas, 1969, they took out billboards in New York, Paris, Toronto and other cities that read, “War is Over! If You Want It.” “You've got to sell and sell,” Lennon explained, “until the housewife thinks, ‘Oh, there's peace or war. That's the two products.’” Not everyone was pleased. “My dear boy, you're living in a never-never land,” a *New York Times* reporter told him. Nixon loyalist G. Gordon Liddy believed Lennon “was being manipulated” by the likes of hippie activist Jerry Rubin and Black Panther Bobby Seale. The conservative U.S. Senator Strom Thurmond wrote a letter to the White House claiming: “[I]f Lennon's visa is terminated, it would be a strategy counter-measure.” Thurmond's initiative led to a Kafkaesque five-year ordeal during which Lennon and Ono lived under constant threat of deportation from the United States. Ono and other confidants of Lennon take us inside his experience of the case. Former FBI agents make clear that Lennon was treated as a serious threat. Observers such as Angela Davis, Ron Kovic and Gore Vidal testify to Lennon's influence on others.

“The thing the sixties did was show us the *possibility* and the responsibility that we all had,” Lennon said. “It wasn't the answer. It just gave us a glimpse.” This film reawakens his wit, thoughtfulness and optimism for a new generation.

“THE U.S. VS. JOHN LENNON is not aiming to display the evolution of Lennon as a songwriter, but as an artist who turned personal experience into words with universal appeal.” – Phil Gallo, *Variety*

“The filmmakers filter a fascinating and still-pertinent sliver of American history through the experience of a very human icon.” – Kieran Grant, *Eye Weekly*

SUR LA TRACE D'IGOR RIZZI

Director: Noël Mitrani

Cast: Laurent Lucas, Pierre-Luc Brillant, Emmanuel Bilodeau, Isabelle Blais

Run Time: 91 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2006

Language: French with English subtitles

Distributor: Atopia

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007

Video: N/A

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

The very moving SUR LA TRACE D'IGOR RIZZI had its premiere at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, where it was awarded the prestigious Citytv Award for Best Canadian First Feature.

Twelve years after his star has faded, Jean-Marc Thomas (veteran French actor Laurent Lucas, LE PORNOGRAPHE) is a destitute, former pro soccer player who, when he's not engaged in his new career of petty crime, spends most of his time walking the snowy streets of Montreal with his ball in tow. Heartbroken over the death of his lost love and haunted by the regret of never having told her his true feelings, Jean-Marc has moved from his native France to her hometown in an effort to recapture some of her presence.

Living an unglamorous life in an empty house, Jean-Marc, who no longer looks like a star athlete, has entered the criminal underworld in order to pay the bills. His life spirals downward to the point where he accepts a job as a hit man – even though he's never used a gun.

SUR LA TRACE D'IGOR RIZZI steers clear of the predictable, continually surprising us with absurd situations and characters, such as an unusually helpful homeless man who can often be found in the back seat of Jean-Marc's jalopy. Jean-Marc and his inept partner, Michel (Pierre-Luc Brillant, C.R.A.Z.Y.), are so adept at bungling their burglary jobs that they get scared away from one score by a pack of crying children. One day, when answering the door to his house, Jean-Marc finds an injured woman lying at his doorstep. Noticing a man watching suspiciously from the other side of the street, he goes so far as to chase after him, not thinking of the potential consequences that these actions might unleash.

Noël Mitrani's assured, deadpan comic debut features a tentative mood and alienated but sympathetic characters. The film's spare, lean style, minimal dialogue and underplayed performances signal a major talent worth watching.

“It is a rare treat when a new director's debut embraces the medium with such originality; a truly cinematic meeting of style and substance [in which] dubious characters [are] in an unforgiving landscape consumed by a perversely romantic pursuit, wrapped in unique wit and a compassionate eye.” – Jury statement, Citytv Award for Best Canadian First Feature, Toronto International Film Festival

“The slow-motion gags and moments of casual absurdity are anchored by a quiet sense of grace and genuine depth of feeling.” – Jason Anderson, Eye Weekly

PAN'S LABYRINTH

Director: Guillermo del Toro

Cast: Sergi López, Maribel Verdú, Doug Jones, Ivana Baquero, Ariadna Gil

Run Time: 112 minutes

Country: Spain

Year: 2006

Language: Spanish with English subtitles

Distributor: Odeon Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

A Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, Guillermo del Toro's (THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE) PAN'S LABYRINTH examines the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. Once again crossing historical drama with genre and bringing the horrors of Spain's fascist regime to life, del Toro's latest feature is another gripping thriller that combines elements of the fantastic with his trademark gore.

It's 1944 and young Ofélia (Ivana Baquero) is forced to move into her stepfather's home, now that her mother, Carmen (Ariadna Gil, ALARTRISTE, BELLE ÉPOQUE), is about to give birth. She hates her new life and her new father, the tyrannical Captain Vidal (Sergi López, DIRTY PRETTY THINGS). He is intent on snuffing out the brave *maquis*, rebel forces who, despite all odds, refuse to allow their spirit to be crushed by the fascists. Ofélia finds an ally in Mercedes (Maribel Verdú, Y TU MAMA TAMBIÉN), Vidal's servant, who is secretly helping the rebels. Ofélia discovers a labyrinth and meets its grotesquely fawnlike keeper, Pan (Doug Jones), who gives her three dangerous tasks to complete.

With great ingenuity, an incredible sense of timing and an ability to connect the real and the imaginary with his themes and characters, del Toro is able to weave together reality and fantasy, giving the story a fluidity that maintains its suspense throughout. One of the most amazing features of this fairy tale for adults is the imagination del Toro and his crew exhibit. Characters like the Pale Man, whose eyes are in the palms of his hands, will chill you to the bone. PAN'S LABYRINTH is a testament to the power of the imagination, a force Franco's fascists did everything in their power to eradicate.

“This entrancing magical-realist drama concocts a sinister spin on ‘Alice in Wonderland’ against the war-torn backdrop of forties Spain, shifting between two worlds with striking craft and discipline.” – Justin Chang, Variety

“... like the best filmmakers in the business, del Toro accomplishes his most effective non-fantasy sequences with little more than judicious cuts and sound. And how accomplished it is. This is simply the zenith of modern filmmaking by an artist at the very peak of his abilities.” – Timeout.com

THE CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Director: Zhang Yimou
Cast: Chow Yun-Fat, Gong Li, Jay Chow, Liu Ye, Chen Jin, Li Man, Qin Junjie, Ni Dahong
Run Time: 114 minutes
Country: Hong Kong/China
Year: 2006

Language: Mandarin with English subtitles
Distributor: Mongrel Media
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Following in the footsteps of such Asian epics as Akira Kurosawa's RAN, Ang Lee's CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON and his own HERO and HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS, Zhang Yimou's latest entry in the *wuxia* martial-arts adventure genre is a ravishing, romantic and ruthless tale featuring political intrigue, a cast of thousands, stunning set pieces, breathtaking action sequences and two of Chinese cinema's biggest stars: Gong Li (MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA, FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE) and Chow Yun-Fat (CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON, THE POST-MODERN LIFE OF MY AUNT).

China's official submission for the 2006 Academy Award® for Best Foreign Language Film, THE CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER is set in China during the Tang dynasty and centres on the romance between Prince Ping (Chow) and an imperial bodyguard named Phoenix (Gong). Numerous forces, including Ping's stepmother, who is also in love with him, conspire to keep the lovers apart. The two eventually marry and become king and queen, but all is not well in their kingdom. As the royal family's deep, hidden secrets gradually come to light, a volatile battle for power ensues, pitting the king against the queen and their three sons and unleashing all manner of deceit, passion and betrayal.

Lavishly shot and designed by Academy Award®-nominated cinematographer Zhao Xiading (HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS) and award-winning production designer Huo Tingxiao (HERO), THE CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER is a feast for the eyes and the heart that recalls the great epics of David Lean (LAWRENCE OF ARABIA, DOCTOR ZHIVAGO). Zhang once again proves himself a master of lush, sweeping stories, while Chow's and Gong's performances will only add to their stature as two of the cinema's most luminous stars.

EVERYTHING'S GONE GREEN

Director: Paul Fox
Cast: Paulo Costanzo, Steph Song, J.R. Bourne, Gordon Michael Woolvett, Tom Butler, Katharine Isabelle
Run Time: 95 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: ThinkFilm
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON 14A / BC PG / AB 14A / SK PG / MB 14A / PQ G / Maritimes NR

Since he defined the voice of a generation with the publication of his wildly popular "Generation X," Douglas Coupland has consistently reflected his particular take on contemporary popular culture in his artistic practice and in works of fiction and non-fiction. Based on Coupland's two-part "Souvenir of Canada" series, Robin Neinstein's 2005 film SOUVENIR OF CANADA first brought the Coupland sensibility to the big screen, to popular acclaim. Now, with EVERYTHING'S GONE GREEN, which screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, Coupland provides his first project ever written for the screen.

Ryan (Paulo Costanzo, A PROBLEM WITH FEAR, ROAD TRIP) is a loveable, twenty-nothing slacker who spends his time trying hard not to try too hard – not an easy feat when one is surrounded by overachievers. Ryan's hippie friend (Gordon Michael Woolvett) has succumbed to a less-than-legal brand of capitalism, while his older brother has always employed capitalist tactics that, although technically legal, leave a great deal to be desired in the realm of ethics. Meanwhile, Ryan's father (Tom Butler, THE SCORE), whose faith in the system disappeared along with his job, finds profitable promise outside the establishment. Even the woman Ryan desires is supported by a car thief. In the midst of all this, Ryan finds himself involved in a money-laundering scheme while working for a lottery magazine. It isn't long before he finds himself struggling with the comfort of his ill-gotten gains that were meant to provide a source of great happiness.

Director Paul Fox (THE DARK HOURS) brings Coupland's screenplay to life in a film that raises new questions about the times we are living in – and, as might be expected from a work by Coupland, the commentary is sly and clever. Is it possible to drift through this new century? Is the middle class facing extinction? When is enough enough? And is there any hope that not everyone wants to be a millionaire?

"EVERYTHING'S GONE GREEN is about when you get older and you feel certain doors closing very quickly on you. It deals with that feeling of now or never." – Douglas Coupland

"Director Paul Fox does a nice job of infusing Coupland's script with appropriate bursts of style, while the film's various performances are engaging and charismatic." – David Nusair, reelfilm.com

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

Director: Stephen Simon
Cast: Henry Czerny, Vilma Silva, Bruce Page, Abdul Salaam El Razzac, Zillah Glory, Ingrid Boulting
Run Time: 109 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Capri Releasing
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD, a remarkable second feature by director Stephen Simon that had its premiere at the 2006 Cannes Film Market, gives cinematic life to a book that has reached – and touched – millions of people around the world.

In the early nineties, author Neale Donald Walsch had reached an especially low period in his life. He was fifty years old, unemployed, immobilized by a broken neck and on the verge of becoming homeless. Fed up and unable to bear any more suffering, he wrote an angry letter to God asking various questions about why his life wasn't working. After writing down all of his questions, he heard a voice that said: "Do you really want an answer to all these questions?"

Walsch suddenly felt answers to even his most complex queries flooding his mind and spent the next several months writing them down. The ensuing "dialogue" became the first in a series of books entitled "Conversations with God," which spent two-and-a-half years on the New York Times best-seller list and sold seven million copies.

Walsch's extraordinary story, and the philosophies discussed in his books, are brought to the big screen by veteran producer-turned-director Stephen Simon (WHAT DREAMS MAY COME).

The resulting film is a deeply moving, inspirational and life-altering tale of human perseverance, divine dichotomies, the unity of humankind and the harmony of life. Starring acclaimed Canadian actor Henry Czerny (THE BOYS OF ST. VINCENT, FIDO, THE ICE STORM, FIDO) in a bravura, tour-de-force performance, CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD is one of the most profound and memorable cinematic experiences of the year.

THE PAGE TURNER

Director: Denis Dercourt
Cast: Catherine Frot, Déborah François, Pascal Greggory, Julie Richalet
Run Time: 85 minutes
Country: France
Year: 2006

Language: French with English subtitles
Distributor: Seville Pictures
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

THE PAGE TURNER, which screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, is an elegant, hauntingly mysterious drama that features an absolutely stunning performance by Déborah François, who made such an impression as the put-upon young mother in the Dardenne brothers' 2005 Palme d'Or-winning THE CHILD. Denis Dercourt's THE PAGE TURNER is THE CHILD's polar opposite – a cool, precise and beautifully controlled meditation on a young woman's desire to confront a defining moment from her past.

The film opens on young, impressionable Mélanie (Julie Richalet) as she nervously appears in front of an examination board for her entrance to a music conservatory. Despite her efforts, her concentration is interrupted by the thoughtless behaviour of the jury's chair, famous concert pianist Ariane Fouchécourt (Catherine Frot). Mélanie stumbles badly and her audition quickly becomes a disaster. Her dream destroyed, Mélanie mournfully puts the piano behind her.

We then jump ahead in time: Mélanie (now played by François) is now a prim and proper young woman. She gets a job in a prestigious law firm as a file clerk and quickly impresses the senior partner, M. Fouchécourt (Pascal Greggory), with her studiousness and hard work. When he finds himself looking for someone to care for his young son, he persuades her to move in with his family at their rambling mansion in the countryside. There, Mélanie is introduced to Fouchécourt's wife, Ariane, a pianist who has lost confidence and reached a point of crisis that has many people questioning whether she should continue to play in public. Somehow, Mélanie's quiet presence calms Ariane's nerves. Since she can read music, Mélanie becomes Ariane's page turner, sitting beside her during rehearsals and turning the pages of the sheet music.

Dercourt (himself a professional musician and conservatory professor) uses this as his departure point for an acerbic and penetrating study of mutual dependence, carefully and delicately exposing the intricacies that lie behind the women's relationship. THE PAGE TURNER is a beautifully controlled and disciplined film; Dercourt never releases his assured grip on this fascinating study of two women's hidden motivations.

"... a tight little emotional thriller about a music lover who becomes a musician-hater. Denis Dercourt's sixth feature is spare but classy, with an impressively controlled performance by Deborah François." – Lisa Nesselson, Variety

"Subtle and precise, Dercourt's fifth feature boasts beguiling echoes of past vengeance tales by Chabrol and Clouzot." – Jason Anderson, Eye Weekly

CHEECH

Director: Patrice Sauvé
Cast: Patrice Robitaille, François Létourneau, Anick Lemay, Maxim Gaudette, Fanny Mallette, Maxime Dénoimée
Run Time: 104 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: French with English subtitles
Distributor: Odeon Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: January 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ I3ANS+ Langage vulgaire / Maritimes NR

Adored by theatre critics and audiences alike, François Létourneau's CHEECH had several highly successful runs on the Quebec stage before director Patrice Sauvé decided to adapt it for the big screen. Premiering at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, CHEECH recounts the burglary of an escort agency and the unexpected repercussions that ensue for a bizarre cast of characters.

When agency owner Ron (Patrice Robitaille, THE ROCKET, HORLOGE BIOLOGIQUE) realizes his black book has been stolen, his most popular escort, Jenny (Anick Lemay, LE SURVENANT, MAMAN LAST CALL), tries to console him. Meanwhile, the depressed Olivier (Létourneau, QUÉBEC-MONTRÉAL) follows the advice of his neighbour Alexis (Maxim Gaudette) and calls for an escort. Ron sends Stéphanie (Fanny Mallette, GAZ BAR BLUES, 20H17 RUE DARLING), who, in addition to being the girl of Ron's right-hand man, Maxime (Maxime Dénoimée, IDOLE INSTANTANÉE), is on the brink of suicide. The characters frantically pursue their own agendas as their destinies collide in one crazy, chaotic day.

Eschewing linear storytelling, Létourneau's cleverly written play was destined for the big screen. Sauvé's tight rein on the plot makes for an engaging noir narrative, easily encompassing the parallel storylines that converge in surprising ways. With a modern look of dark hues, quick editing and unique camera angles, CHEECH boasts a tough and stylish edge. The play's seasoned cast, led by Robitaille and Dénoimée, reprise their roles, while Sauvé turns the seedy underworld of the sex trade into the setting for an ingenious detective tale. Occasionally grim but always funny, CHEECH is noir for the postmodern world.

“Audiences will be captivated by this six-person ensemble, and truly feel for their plight. Clever and witty dialogue will provoke numerous outbursts of laughter.” – Richard Gervais, calendrierculturel.com

DRIVING LESSONS

Director: Jeremy Brock
Cast: Julie Walters, Rupert Grint, Laura Linney, Michelle Duncan, Tamsin Egerton, Nicholas Farrell, Jacques Kerr
Run Time: 98 minutes
Country: United Kingdom
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Mongrel Media
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

The crowd-pleasing directorial debut from acclaimed screenwriter Jeremy Brock (writer of MRS. BROWN and CHARLOTTE GRAY and co-writer of THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND), DRIVING LESSONS is a sweetly comic coming-of-age story that was an audience favourite at the Edinburgh Film Festival and won acting awards for its two leads at the Moscow International Film Festival.

Based largely on Brock's acquaintance, as a teenager, with legendary British actor Dame Peggy Ashcroft, the film follows shy, awkward seventeen-year-old Ben (Rupert Grint, HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE) as he struggles to escape from the domineering bosom of his uptight, Christian charity-worker mother, Laura (Laura Linney, KINSEY, MYSTIC RIVER). No longer content delivering food to elderly shut-ins, helping to accommodate his mother's latest live-in charity case or turning a blind eye to her obvious affair with a New Age curate, Ben takes a job as a personal assistant to self-proclaimed "Dame" Evie Walton (Julie Walters, WAH-WAH, HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE, CALENDAR GIRLS), a boozy, foul-mouthed and wildly eccentric over-the-hill actor who urges Ben to find his own voice and embrace his independence. After Evie tricks Ben into driving her from London to Edinburgh, where the lovely Bryony (Michelle Duncan) helps bring him further out of his shell, a maternal battle of wills ensues between Laura and Evie that forces Ben to assert himself at last – if he can muster the courage.

Reminiscent of such popular, character-driven British comedies as BILLY ELLIOT and ABOUT A BOY, DRIVING LESSONS charms audiences with its pitch-perfect performances and heartwarming script. Grint builds on the sweetly befuddled persona he honed to perfection in the HARRY POTTER movies, while Linney, an outstanding American actor convincingly playing British, conveys a depth of sympathetic humanity beneath her character's overbearing exterior. But the movie in many ways belongs to the veteran Walters, whose hilariously flamboyant performance fills the screen.

“One of the finest British films of the year....” – Joe Utichi, filmfocus.co.uk

SLEEPING DOGS

Director: Terrance Odette
Cast: Brian Stillar, Tony Adah, Jennifer Daniels, Alan Sapp
Run Time: 80 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Capri Releasing
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Winter 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Like his idol, Iranian master Abbas Kiarostami, Terrance Odette has a well-developed taste for ramshackle quests, seamless narratives, and a profound sympathy for the marginalized and powerless. Also like Kiarostami, Odette owes a debt to the Italian neo-realists, particularly in terms of their skill at transforming melodrama into convincing and emotionally affecting humanism. His latest feature, *SLEEPING DOGS* - which screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® - is a subtly powerful and hypnotic tribute to the power of human relationships.

Odette focuses on two characters. Jarrod (a tremendously affecting Brian Stillar) is an obscenity-spouting, middle-aged alcoholic who is hospitalized after diabetes blinds him. Desperate for a drink and determined to see his ailing dog one last time, he stumbles out of his ward and heads towards Kitchener-Waterloo's sleepy downtown. In hot pursuit is Thomas (Tony Adah), a hospital orderly plagued by tragedies of his own. As they wander the streets, get abandoned on the highway, and cause scenes in roadside restaurants and on suburban streets, these two men come to a tenuous understanding.

An examination of our inability and refusal to relate to or even acknowledge one another, *SLEEPING DOGS* is notable for its casual lyricism, which perfectly suits its characters. The story flows organically, with little consideration for the plot mechanisms of conventional cinema. The tiniest acts of understanding are magnified, while seemingly minor transgressions become devastating, largely because of the characters' refusal or inability to connect.

The film is driven by an extraordinary performance by Stillar as Jarrod, who makes this bitter and ornery man an even greater object of empathy by refusing to sentimentalize him. Odette's exquisitely sensitive direction, meanwhile, seems all the more powerful for keeping everything on such a small, intimate scale. (The film also boasts an amazing soundtrack of vintage country-and-western songs.) *SLEEPING DOGS* is an unpretentious, fully realized and devastatingly familiar slice of life.

"I want to allow the audience to discover what is happening in any given moment. Any storyteller is attempting to have you experience everyday life from a new angle. Good filmmakers look for the overlooked moments to have the audience see the world in a new way." – Director Terrance Odette

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: Spring 2007
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 Cannes Film Festival, 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 on 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 and 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 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*

WHO LOVES THE SUN

Director: Matt Bissonnette

Cast: Lukas Haas, Molly Parker, Adam Scott, R.H. Thompson, Wendy Crewson

Run Time: 94 minutes

Country: Canada

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Christal Films

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

With its unforgettable cast and emotional story, WHO LOVES THE SUN marks the impressive return to the directorial chair for Matt Bissonnette, whose first feature, LOOKING FOR LEONARD, played at festivals internationally and won a Vancouver Film Critics Circle Award in 2002.

WHO LOVES THE SUN is first and foremost a love triangle between three best friends. The object of two men's affection, Maggie Claire (Molly Parker, THE WAR BRIDE, HOLLYWOODLAND, "Deadwood") is the centre around which the story unfolds. Set in a cabin on a lake, the film charts the turbulent relationship of Daniel Bloom (Adam Scott, THE MATADOR, ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL) and Will Morrison (Lukas Haas, WITNESS, LAST DAYS, BRICK). The two of them were best friends growing up; almost family, they went to the same schools, enjoyed the same music and did virtually everything together. Naturally, they liked the same girls too, but this didn't prove problematic until later in life, when they met the mesmerizing Maggie.

But then, one day, Will disappeared without telling anyone, leaving a wake of emotional unrest behind him. Cut to years later: Daniel is a hot shot in the city, somewhat alienating his down-to-earth parents (veteran TV actor R.H. Thompson and Wendy Crewson, NIAGARA MOTEL, AWAY FROM HER, BRICK). First Will - now a writer - and then Daniel arrive at the Blooms' cabin, and it soon becomes apparent that his life is more in shambles than he likes to let on. Soon Maggie turns up and, as the film elegantly unfolds, the secrets behind their respective relationships begin to become clear as each of the protagonists try to come to terms with the past in order to move on.

Bissonnette's direction is infused with a warm, sympathetic sensibility as he deftly handles the intricate terrain of the human heart. His cast is brilliant; they perfectly emanate the subtleties of characters wavering between their significant youthful adventures and the onset of responsible adulthood. Rounding out the film's affective power is the lush Ontario lakeside, whose sunrises and sunsets are atmospheric complements to the dramas unfolding in their midst.

"WHO LOVES THE SUN is a film about the people we love and how much we hate them. We hate them because they get in our way; because they stop us from being ourselves; because they keep us from being happy. Conversely, we love them because they show us the way; because they mold us into ourselves; and, because they make us happy."

– Director Matt Bissonnette

RED ROAD

Director: Andrea Arnold

Cast: Kate Dickie, Tony Curran, Martin Compston, Natalie Press

Run Time: 113 minutes

Country: United Kingdom/Denmark

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Seville Pictures

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Late Winter 2007

Video: N/A

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

RED ROAD, which screened to acclaim at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® and won a Jury Prize at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, is named after a run-down high-rise apartment block where a mysterious ex-convict named Clyde (Tony Curran, GLADIATOR, BEOWULF & GRENDEL) resides, trying to stay on the straight and narrow. Andrea Arnold's debut feature is a gripping drama about the young surveillance-camera operator who stalks him, seemingly bent on punishing Clyde for his crimes after spotting him on one of her monitors.

An observer more than an actor in the squalid cabaret of city life, Jackie (Kate Dickie, WHO DO YOU LOVE, ACCIDENTS) monitors the goings-on of urban Glasgow via the ubiquitous closed-circuit television cameras that dot the city. One day Jackie spies Clyde, a man she recognizes. He is no doubt responsible for the trauma so clearly etched on her face, and she is shocked to see him free from prison. After carefully observing Clyde for a while, she decides to approach him in person and soon befriends his young roommates. But Jackie's motives and intentions remain unclear, leaving us guessing as to what terrible history she and Clyde share and what Jackie will do from her position as Big Brother. The film builds to an explosive finale.

Director Arnold has an almost preternatural command of atmosphere and tension. Relative newcomer Dickie more than holds her own, showing a great maturity in her phenomenal performance as Jackie. RED ROAD also has a fascinating provenance: it is the first film to be produced as part of a UK/Danish project entitled Advance Party, initiated by notorious filmmaker Lars von Trier. The project will consist of three films set in Scotland with characters developed by writer-directors Anders Thomas Jensen and Lone Scherfig, but written and directed by three different filmmakers. All the films will feature the same nine actors playing the same characters in each. With Arnold's RED ROAD, the series is off to an impressive start.

"Sensual, dark in every sense... RED ROAD [represents] an impressive feature debut for Brit writer-helmer Andrea Arnold, an Oscar-winner for her knockout short WASP." – Leslie Felperin, Variety

FAST FOOD NATION

Director: Richard Linklater

Cast: Greg Kinnear, Patricia Arquette, Bobby Cannavale, Paul Dano, Luis Guzman, Ethan Hawke, Ashley Johnson, Kris Kristofferson, Avril Lavigne, Esai Morales, Catalina Sandino Moreno, Lou Taylor Pucci, Ann Claudia Talancon, Wilmer Valderrama, Bruce Willis

Run Time: 114 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: Fox Searchlight

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current

Video: N/A

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

A critical sensation at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, *FAST FOOD NATION* is veteran American independent film director Richard Linklater's (A SCANNER DARKLY, BEFORE SUNSET, SCHOOL OF ROCK) ambitious big-screen adaptation of investigative journalist Eric Schlosser's relentlessly thorough, best-selling exposé of the hidden intricacies of America's fast-food industry. Featuring an exceptional ensemble cast, *FAST FOOD NATION* presents a dramatized version of the non-fiction book that examines the human, environmental and economic costs of fast-food from the killing floor to the marketing boardroom, from the exploited teenaged and immigrant workers to the chemical engineers who manufacture that seemingly authentic broiled burger aroma.

When the board of directors of Mickey's restaurants discovers large traces of human excrement in the meat used for their hamburgers, marketing executive Don Henderson (Greg Kinnear, AS GOOD AS IT GETS, LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE) is sent to investigate the situation at the company's massive meat-production facilities in Cody, Colorado. There he meets veteran rancher Rudy (Kris Kristofferson, THE LIFE AND HARD TIMES OF GUY TERRIFICO), who schools Don on the industry's increasingly inferior health-and-safety standards, as well as the aggressively cynical cattle supplier Harry (Bruce Willis, PULP FICTION, SIN CITY).

The wide-eyed young Sylvia (Catalina Sandino Moreno, MARIA FULL OF GRACE), an illegal Mexican immigrant, arrives in Cody and is put to work in the meat-packing plant, doing the most disagreeable jobs imaginable - which apparently include being harassed by her supervisor, Mike (Bobby Cannavale, THE STATION AGENT). Meanwhile, a Mickey's cashier named Ashley (Ashley Johnson), who is fed up with both her low-paying, menial existence and the corporation's track record of exploitation and environmental devastation, decides to take matters into her own hands - until she is convinced otherwise by her more worldly uncle Pete (Ethan Hawk, BEFORE SUNSET).

Boasting a clever, witty script and containing graphic footage that may well convert some viewers to vegetarianism, *FAST FOOD NATION* is both an engaging, intriguing drama and a scathing indictment of corporate America's fast-food culture.

"The most essential political film from an American director since Michael Moore's FARENHEIT 9/11...."

– Manohla Dargas, *The New York Times*

OFFSIDE

Director: Jafar Panahi

Cast: Sima Mobarak Shahi, Safar Samandar, Shayesteh Irani, M. Kheyrabadi, Ida Sadeghi, Golnaz Farmani

Run Time: 88 minutes

Country: Iran

Year: 2006

Language: Farsi with English subtitles

Distributor: Mongrel Media

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Late Spring 2007

Video: N/A

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

Football - or soccer - was on everyone's mind this past summer because of the spectacular tournament of tournaments, the World Cup. For some, this global extravaganza of athleticism is more than a sporting event; it is a cultural phenomenon. Questions of politics and nationalities are ever-present. Iranian director Jafar Panahi, never afraid to poke into difficult subject matter, has centred his engaging new film around an explosive contemporary issue: in his country, it is illegal for women to attend soccer games at the stadiums. *OFFSIDE*, presented at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, is not just about women being banned from matches; it is about their rights in a Muslim society.

Set against the backdrop of an actual match Iran played to qualify for the World Cup, *OFFSIDE* focuses on a group of soccer-crazy young women. Like their male counterparts, they just want to indulge in the frenzied communal moment of supporting their country and celebrating the skills on display. To fulfill their desires, they must pass themselves off as men, hoping their disguises will get them past the guards who ring the stadiums.

Panahi milks this wonderful concept to the fullest. Boarding buses full of raucous male fans, the women try to disappear into the crowd - not an easy thing to do. The actors and director do a fine job communicating the unease on their faces and in their body language. When they approach the turnstiles and security guards, they must wait to see whether their ploy has succeeded, all the while caught up in the sheer energy as the crowd cheers for the imminent start of the game. What transpires is filled with emotion, from the crowd's frenzy to each woman's quiet worries.

Panahi avoids lapsing into a black-and-white portrayal of his subject. While our sympathies lie with the young women, Panahi ensures that we remain sensitive to those on the other side of the issue: working-class soldiers and guards who must enforce policies regardless of their personal feelings. As the women inch closer to the stadium - and a glimpse of the magic grass carpet of the playing field - Iranian society and its contradictions are laid bare.

"Panahi's immediate, semi-documentary style and the girls' endearing stropiness give OFFSIDE enormous appeal.... It's also a spirited rebuke of the political and social restrictions faced by women in Iran." – Jason Anderson, Eye Weekly

YOUNG TRIFFIE'S BEEN MADE AWAY WITH

Director: Mary Walsh
Cast: Fred Ewanuick, Mary Walsh, Rémy Girard, Colin Mochrie, Andrea Martin
Run Time: 90 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: TVA Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

YOUNG TRIFFIE'S BEEN MADE AWAY WITH is the highly anticipated directorial debut from one of Canada's finest comedic actors and writers. Mary Walsh (GERALDINE'S FORTUNE, "This Hour Has 22 Minutes") teams up with fellow "22 Minutes" writer Christian Murray ("Rick Mercer's Talking to Americans") to bring to the big screen the satirical hit play of the same name.

In Newfoundland in the forties, Ranger Alan Hepditch (Fred Ewanuick, "Corner Gas"), a hapless and naive police officer, is sent to the isolated outpost of Swyer's Harbour to investigate the bizarre crime of sheep mutilation. He finds himself out of his depth when he discovers a young girl's body and realizes a heinous murder has been committed.

Characterized by Walsh's trademark sardonic wit, YOUNG TRIFFIE'S BEEN MADE AWAY WITH tackles the parochial attitudes that pervade small and insular communities, where the outsider is always to blame. Aunt Millie (Walsh), the postmistress and self-appointed guardian of the community, draws up a list of possible suspects that includes just about every outsider in town. The desperate fight for insider status begins. Even respected émigrés from the mainland like Dr. Melrose (Rémy Girard, THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS, THE ROCKET) and his wife Grace (Andrea Martin, MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING, THE PRODUCERS) are not above suspicion.

Adhering to the insider/outsider paradigm that characterizes so much of Canadian cinema, the film's bicultural cast and crew was made up of Newfoundlanders and Québécois and, according to Walsh, "It was brilliant. No one could understand what the Newfoundlanders were saying, and no one could understand what the Quebecers were saying."

As an insider born and bred in Newfoundland, Walsh observes her fellow islanders with an affectionate and keen eye. Featuring a stellar cast of Canada's most outstanding comedic talent, YOUNG TRIFFIE'S BEEN MADE AWAY WITH is a whodunit romp with a Maritime flair.

TIDELAND

Director: Terry Gilliam
Cast: Jeff Bridges, Jodelle Ferland, Janet McTeer, Brendan Fletcher
Run Time: 122 minutes
Country: Canada/United Kingdom
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Capri Releasing
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: February 27, 2007
Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB PG / QC 13 ANS+ / Maritimes NR

The latest film by the widely celebrated filmmaker Terry Gilliam (BRAZIL, 12 MONKEYS, FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS), the award-winning TIDELAND - which screened at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival® - 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 (winsome newcomer Jodelle Ferland), who is raised in 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 makes two strange new friends - her mysterious neighbour Dell and the epileptic, mentally-challenged Dickens (Brendan Fletcher, THE LAW OF ENCLOSURES), who fancies himself 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), TIDELAND is an enchanting film that takes you deep into the psyche of a special little girl.

"Story about an imaginative orphan living alone under open skies is anchored by an ace [performance] from tyke... Jodelle Ferland, and features the helmer's signature spooky production design...." - Leslie Felperin, *Variety*

"Gilliam has... produced a shocking, funny, and haunting study of loneliness and loss." - David Mattin, *bbc.co.uk*

A STONE'S THROW

Director: Camelia Frieberg
Cast: Kris Holden-Ried, Kathryn MacLellan, Lisa Ray, Hugh Thompson, Aaron Webber, Sarah Lantz
Run Time: 98 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: ThinkFilm
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB PG / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® and winner of the Best Atlantic Feature at the 2006 Atlantic Film Festival, A STONE'S THROW is an assured directorial debut from Camelia Frieberg. Set in small-town Nova Scotia, A STONE'S THROW looks at the fortunes of the Walker family and their struggles to reconcile the past.

Fortysomething Olivia (Kathryn MacLellan, WILBY WONDERFUL, WHOLE NEW THING), leads a comfortable existence with her young son Thomas (Aaron Webber, WHOLE NEW THING) and daughter Sarah (Sarah Lantz). Though recently divorced, she and her husband have worked things out amicably. The family's fortunes have been buoyed by his job at the new paint factory, which has also reinvigorated the town's economy.

The family's largely complacent existence is upended by the sudden, unannounced arrival of Olivia's brother Jack (Kris Holden-Ried, NIAGARA MOTEL, TOUCH OF PINK), a muckraking photojournalist who has spent much of his adult life exposing industrial and environmental crimes. Jack's arrival opens old wounds related to their industrialist father's involvement in a particularly toxic form of mining. But Jack brings even more unsettling news - information that will profoundly affect the lives of his sister and her children, especially Thomas, who has always revered his globetrotting uncle. Eventually Jack must face up to the disastrous effect his presence is having on those closest to him, particularly on his burgeoning relationship with Olivia's best friend, Lia (Lisa Ray, WATER).

Smart, timely and courageous, A STONE'S THROW is driven by fine performances by some of Canada's best young actors, while Frieberg, one of Canada's most respected producers, distinguishes herself further with this sensitive and trenchant film.

"... well acted and competently directed ..." – reelfilm.com

HOW SHE MOVE

Director: Ian Iqbal Rashid
Cast: Rutina Wesley, Dwain Murphy, Brennan Gademans, Tracey "Tré" Armstrong, Shawn Desman, Mya, Kardinall Offishall
Run Time: 90 minutes
Country: Canada
Year: 2007

Language: English
Distributor: Mongrel Media
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Spring 2007
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

Director Ian Iqbal Rashid's charming debut feature, TOUCH OF PINK, was a surprise indie hit. It premiered at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, won several awards at festivals around the world and received critical acclaim wherever it played. For his much-anticipated follow-up, Rashid has reunited with his producing team (the makers of such popular favourites as NEW WATERFORD GIRL, MARION BRIDGE, and I, CLAUDIA) and turned his keen eye on the richly colourful hip-hop environment of Toronto's gritty inner city.

An honours student at a preppy private school, sixteen-year-old Raya Green (Rutina Wesley) has everything going her way when the sudden death of her drug-addict sister changes everything. With her family's financial resources exhausted by the tragedy, Raya is forced to return to the rough, urban community she has so desperately been trying to escape. Struggling to find a way to make ends meet and restore her sense of hope, she discovers an unlikely new passion: the electrifying world of step dancing, a phenomenal blend of jazz dance, hip-hop, cheerleading, tap dancing and stomp moves. Fighting for street cred and a spot on the all-male Jane Street Junta step crew, Raya discovers that the lessons learned in step apply equally well to life, and that success comes only to those courageous enough to tackle it on their own terms.

An energetic crowd-pleaser that brings a fresh, spirited and uplifting approach to proven genre elements, HOW SHE MOVE boasts winning performances from an outstanding young cast that includes such hip-hop stars as the Grammy-winning Mya and the Juno-winning Kardinall Offishall. Building on his debut success, Rashid has crafted a sexy, sincere and ultimately very sweet tale of one young woman's battle to overcome the odds.

THE CIVILIZATION OF MAXWELL BRIGHT

Director: David Beaird
Cast: Patrick Warburton, Marie Matiko, Eric Roberts, Jennifer Tilly, Simon Callow
Run Time: 96 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Independent
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Current
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

THE CIVILIZATION OF MAXWELL BRIGHT is David Beaird's (SCORCHERS, MY CHAUFFEUR) searing commentary on contemporary misogyny in an aggressive, capitalist world.

A cruel chauvinist, the title character (Patrick Warburton, "Seinfeld", THE TICK), purchases a Chinese fantasy woman named Mai-Ling (Marie Matiko, DATE MOVIE, THE SUM OF ALL FEARS) to be his live-in slave. Hoping for an obedient, mail-order bride, Bright is surprised when Mai-Ling turns out to have a Zen quality that allows her to handle anything he throws at her with poise and grace, while subtly undermining his entire way of life. Unknown to Bright, Mai-Ling is a practising Buddhist monk who has agreed to be sold only to provide much-needed funds for her poor and ailing family. It is Mai's attempt to awaken Max's "inner Buddha" that informs the narrative of THE CIVILIZATION OF MAXWELL BRIGHT, and when Bright falls ill, his "civilization" becomes that much more important to Mai-Ling.

The talented ensemble cast embodies many of the stereotypical degrees of chauvinism and sexism that existed, but dwindled, in the popular mindset through the twentieth century, so the characters themselves each take on a political aspect. Patrick Warburton's performance is phenomenal (albeit sometimes disturbing) as the most disgusting of male chauvinist pigs. But he's trying to change, and at times we actually feel sorry for him. Warburton received several awards for this role, including Best Male Performance at the 2006 Beverly Hills Film Festival and the Outstanding Achievement Award at the 2005 New York Vision Fest.

The film's aesthetic is eclectic - seeming completely assured in the Hollywood tradition at one moment, almost vérité in style the next. Still, longtime director David Beaird's restraint and assuredness is evident throughout and his film has garnered many awards including the Audience Choice Award as Best Feature Film at the 2006 Beverly Hills Film Festival and the Grand Jury Award at the 2005 Florida Film Festival. THE CIVILIZATION OF MAXWELL BRIGHT is a unique, filmic roller coaster ride of emotions, stereotypes and expectations.

WINTER 2007 • COMING SOON

AMAZING GRACE

Director: Michael Apted
Cast: Ioan Gruffudd, Romola Garai, Ciarin Hinds, Rufus Sewell, Albert Finney
Run Time: 111 minutes
Country: United Kingdom
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: TBD
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON 14A / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Festival favourite Michael Apted brings his unique cinematic finesse to AMAZING GRACE, the Closing Night Gala at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® and a captivating historical drama that appeals to both heart and mind. Ioan Gruffudd (FANTASTIC FOUR) embodies William Wilberforce, the impassioned British parliamentarian who led abolitionists in their crusade to end the slave trade, while the matchless Albert Finney (BIG FISH, A GOOD YEAR) is riveting as a former slave trader-turned-penitent man of the cloth.

We first meet Wilberforce, a disillusioned shell of a man, in 1797. Not so many years before, his name had inspired reformers fighting for the future of the nation. Now, however, he is haunted by the guilt of his great failure: he had fallen just short of legislating freedom for those being shackled in the colonies of the New World.

From here, the film moves backwards, introducing us to the younger Wilberforce, a firebrand politician. Attractive and charming, he becomes a prodigious idol of reformers: many a proper young woman swears off sugar when he exposes the evils of plantations. His friend - and, later, the country's Prime Minister - William Pitt (Benedict Cumberbatch) is an ideal foil. Pitt keeps avenues open by hewing to the straight and narrow, while Wilberforce storms through the doors, hollering for reform. They harbour great hopes, but change is slow to arrive: the spoils of the slave trade funnel into the pockets of the nation's most powerful politicians and the old guard persistently sabotages Wilberforce's campaign.

But Wilberforce would not be defeated, and Apted and his tremendous cast have crafted a brilliant account of his perseverance. Culminating with Wilberforce's final, all-important showdown with his political foes, AMAZING GRACE is a stunning tribute to the victory of those seeking the common good over the machinations of those hiding in the dark corners of power. It is truly, deeply inspiring.

“[Apted’s] career-long mix of feature and documentary work holds him in good stead once more.... In the three scenes in which he appears, Albert Finney is mesmerizing as the remorseful former slave trader....” – Eddie Cockrell, Variety

GOLDEN DOOR

Director: Emanuele Crialese
Cast: Charlotte Gainsbourg, Vincenzo Amato, Aurora Quattrocchi, Vincent Schiavelli, Francesco Casisa, Filippo Pucillo
Run Time: 112 minutes
Country: Italy/France
Year: 2006

Language: Italian, English with English subtitles
Distributor: Crystal Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

There is no greater story than that of the wave of immigrants who left the Old World to come to the New around the turn of the last century. The narrative of immigration embodies ideas of hope for a better future, of taking large risks with no guarantee of success, of shedding the skin of the past and creating a new person. This tale has been the inspiration for many works of art – think of Francis Ford Coppola's GODFATHER trilogy, or Elia Kazan's magnificent AMERICA, AMERICA. Emanuele Crialese's sweeping new film, a Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival® and multiple award winner at the 2006 Venice Film Festival, is a fine addition to this genre. Beautifully shot and conceived, GOLDEN DOOR also boasts a radiant, nuanced performance from the wonderful Charlotte Gainsbourg (21 GRAMS, THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP) and Crialese's singular storytelling finesse.

Set in 1913, the film begins in rugged, rural Sicily, where weather-beaten peasants have eked out a living working the same land for generations. One day, the monotony of their lives is interrupted by the arrival of a stranger from America, who passes along stories of wealth and good fortune, potatoes as big as train carriages, carrots as long as canoes and trees dripping with gold coins. His job is to accompany the families of men who have already emigrated and are now working happily across the ocean in America.

The Mancusos, a Sicilian peasant family, decide to chase the dream of a new beginning. GOLDEN DOOR tells their story as they pack up family and possessions and, despite the objections of their grandmother, turn their backs on their country. The trip will not be an easy one. Physical hardships are certain, but the voyage will also require a new way of thinking – and this is what Crialese is so interested in depicting.

The Mancusos, all of whom must tentatively confront their hopes and fears, are beautifully portrayed. They become a microcosm of all those stoic travellers who left their homelands in search of a better life on this continent. Their journey – by cart to the port, by ship across the ocean, culminating in arrival at New York's Ellis Island – becomes a captivating story of steely endurance and unanswered questions that does not end once their boat reaches land.

“An imaginative, intelligent and attractive [Italian film] precisely when the country needs it most, Emanuele Crialese's GOLDEN DOOR [represents] a solid piece of cinema that neither panders nor preaches.” – Jay Weissberg, Variety

MON MEILLEUR AMI

Director: Patrice Leconte
Cast: Daniel Auteuil, Dany Boon, Julie Gayet
Run Time: 94 minutes
Country: France
Year: 2006

Language: French with English subtitles
Distributor: Crystal 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

A Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, MON MEILLEUR AMI is a uniquely entertaining buddy film with a twist – the buddy is missing! When an arrogant middle-aged antiques dealer makes the startling discovery that none of his so-called friends actually likes him, he accepts his business partner's bet: if he can produce his *meilleur ami*, she will let him keep the massive Greek vase he acquired on the company tab. If not, it's hers.

Having accepted the wager, François (French mega-star Daniel Auteuil, CACHÉ, LE PLACARD) naively tears through his address book, trying to shoehorn an increasingly unlikely series of contacts into the all-important role. Moving through Paris, he keeps encountering a trivia-spouting, magnanimous cabbie named Bruno (the adorable Dany Boon, JOYEUX NOEL, LA DOUBLURE). Bruno's chatty, lowbrow ways grate against François's designer temperament, but he covets the other man's finesse with people. He convinces Bruno to teach him how to make friends and sets about learning the “three S's” – being sociable, smiling and sincere – though they don't come easy. Is the answer to François's problem sitting beside him in the taxi?

Director Patrice Leconte's features such as RIDICULE and L'HOMME DU TRAIN have established his particular wit and sensitivity to human folly. For a film about a mid-life crisis and a borderline personality dysfunction, MON MEILLEUR AMI is immense fun. In one particularly hilarious sequence that feels like something out of a make-up-break-up romantic comedy, a dejected and lonely François walks the streets only to be tormented by the sight of other pairs of best friends, laughing, strolling or drinking together in idyllic unison. As the plot moves towards its denouement, François takes a backseat and Bruno gets his chance at proving his vast knowledge in a big way. To reveal more would ruin one of the film's many charming surprises, but suffice it to say Leconte wraps up every possible plot strand in a winning and heart-warming happy ending.

“The effect of casting Auteuil as François allows the viewer to accept his character flaws as he strains to find a friend. Boon suggests a bright man with a life unfulfilled, who emerges as one of the most touching Everyman characters in recent French cinema.” – Robert Koehler, Variety

THE NAMESAKE

Director: Mira Nair
Cast: Kal Penn, Tabu, Irrfan Khan, Jacinda Barrett, Zuleikha Robinson, Jhumpa Lahiri
Run Time: 122 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English, Bengali, Hindi with English subtitles
Distributor: Fox Searchlight
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

In the lives put to page by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri, personal independence comes with a price. Few filmmakers understand that dilemma better than Mira Nair. Her adaptation of Lahiri's novel *THE NAMESAKE*, a Special Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, powerfully captures the clasp of family bonds among Indians in America, resulting in an intensely moving film.

Ashoke Ganguli (Irrfan Khan) and his wife, Ashima (Tabu), escape the chaos of Calcutta in the seventies for a new life in the United States. Once there, Ashima finds it especially difficult to get used to the chilly pleasantries that pass for social interaction. But it is their son (Kal Penn), born in America, who struggles the most. Thanks to a classic cross-cultural misunderstanding, he acquires the name Gogol, which at the very least demands an explanation when out on a date. As a young man Gogol chafes against everything that makes him different – including his family's expectations. A romance with blonde, outgoing Max (Jacinda Barrett, *THE HUMAN STAIN*, *THE LAST KISS*) proves liberating, even as the prospect looms of settling down with the proverbial good Indian girl.

In *MISSISSIPPI MASALA* and *MONSOON WEDDING*, Nair put India's global families on the screen in all their dimensions. Here, drawing from the vast reservoir of Lahiri's story, she brings the Gangulis' particular conflicts into sharp relief: the pain of Ashima's solitude inside her perfect American home; the frustrations between parents and child; and memories of India that Gogol can never fully understand, until he makes the journey there himself.

As Gogol, Penn makes a startling dramatic departure from his work in comedies like *HAROLD & KUMAR GO TO WHITE CASTLE*. This is a mature, soulful performance, meshing beautifully with those of Khan and Tabu as his parents. Lahiri herself turns up in a delightful cameo as a family Auntie, and Zuleikha Robinson adds considerable heat as Moushumi, a surprising variation on that "good Indian girl."

Anyone who has felt the pull of the old country is sure to be moved by *THE NAMESAKE*. Nair acknowledges the universal arc of adapting to a new home, but it is in the unique choices this family makes that the film comes gloriously alive.

"In the capable hands of director Mira Nair, Jhumpa Lahiri's wildly popular novel about two generations of a Bengali family receives a loving, deeply felt screen translation that should appease fans of the book while making many new converts. [The film] is bolstered by Nair's lush visual style and superb performances from ace Bollywood thespians Irrfan Khan, Tabu and HAROLD & KUMAR star Kal Penn (in his first dramatic lead)." – Scott Foundas, *Variety*

BELLA

Director: Alejandro Monteverde
Cast: Eduardo Verástegui, Tammy Blanchard, Manny Perez, Ali Landry
Run Time: 91 minutes
Country: USA
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: TBD
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

At the beginning of *BELLA*, which won the coveted Audience Award at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, handsome, dapper Jose (Eduardo Verástegui) is on top of the world. He is a young soccer star on the rise. A few years later, however, he's turned into a taciturn, shaggy-haired chef at the upscale Mexican restaurant owned by his prickly brother Manny (Manny Perez). But what led Jose from point A to point B is only one small strand of the story. More important is the one fine New York day he spends with a complete stranger.

When the striking waitress Nina (newcomer Tammy Blanchard) arrives late once again for her shift at the restaurant, Manny fires her on the spot and she runs out, distraught. Jose – who knows her only a little – gives chase in order to comfort her, offering the frazzled young woman a much-needed shoulder to cry on. Nina proceeds to blurt out all her troubles to the sensitive and attentive hunk – a hint: she was late because she's, um, *late* – so he decides to play hooky from the bustling kitchen to go for a walk around the city with her.

The charming pair fall into an easy confidentiality over the course of their eventful day, but every so often one of them jolts up-right with the awareness that they barely know each other. This is particularly apparent when they decide on a whim to go to the beach near Jose's parents' house in the suburbs. Within the colour and comfort of Jose's family home, Nina keenly feels she is missing the intimacy, support and peace that such a close family provides, and she makes a decision that is key to the enigmatic Jose's redemption. There are many twists and turns in *BELLA*, and the film charts the duo's blossoming relationship with a dynamic and casual rhythm. It is a credit to the freshness and vitality of writer and director Alejandro Monteverde's vision, and his engaging cast – especially the charismatic Verástegui as Jose – that we are grateful to go along for the ride.

"... an engaging and accomplished piece of work with... superb performances... Blanchard, in particular, does a spectacular job of stepping into the shoes of a sassy, emotionally damaged figure... [and]... delivers a searing, unexpectedly powerful performance that certainly eliminates any doubt as to her abilities." – David Nusair, *reelfilm.com*

2:37

Director: Murali K. Thalluri
Cast: Teresa Palmer, Joel Mackenzie, Frank Sweet, Clementine Mellor, Charles Baird
Run Time: 91 minutes
Country: Australia
Year: 2006

Language: English
Distributor: Christal Films
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / QC NR / Maritimes NR

2:37, a timely, relevant and aesthetically accomplished story seemingly snatched from the headlines, was screened as part of the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®'s inaugural Vanguard Programme, which showcases the best of contemporary cinematic innovation.

At 2:37 p.m., a suicide occurs in an Adelaide high school. With a teacher banging on the bathroom door and blood flowing out into the hall, students gather to find out who might be inside. Looking back, we weave through the violence, sexual predation, narcotic abuse and ennui that might have led any of the film's various characters into that bathroom. These individuals' paths frequently intersect, as the film shuffles elegantly through time to ensure that their encounters occur at precisely calibrated moments.

This accomplished debut film from Murali K. Thalluri has been compared to Gus Van Sant's masterpiece ELEPHANT, but the two films are very different both in intent and in their relationships to narrative cinema. Van Sant used the cumulative experiences of several high-school students during a remounted Columbine massacre to discuss a fundamental, tragic empty space in American youth culture and to investigate the banal nature of evil. Evil, however, does not figure in Thalluri's film. Rather, he utilizes this similarly diffuse structure, also in a high-school setting, to stage a unique thriller and to explore themes of contemporary vulnerability and pain.

2:37 boldly announces a host of impressive new actors from Australia – a specialty these days of cinema from Down Under – who bring a chilling authenticity to their roles. The film also features the work of Australia's impressive new cinematographic star, Nick Matthews, whose cold, languid interiors add a haunting otherworldliness to the film. It's rare for a director to try to make sense of the teenaged experience using innovative narrative technique. It is a credit to Thalluri – especially given his young age – that his success is evident in every frame.

“Well acted, extremely intense in parts, and edited together remarkably, the film explores the social isolation and pressure of high school... realistically.” – Ben Carrozza, *Dose Magazine*

“A personal tragedy in the director's life and experience of suicide from both sides makes this a cathartic project, and yet so much passion and enthusiasm has gone into the effort of getting his vision realised into film that there is no sense of sentimental overindulgence and no loss of artistic perspective.” – Avril C., *infilm.com*

WHITE PALMS

Director: Szabolcs Hajdu
Cast: Orion Radies, Silas Radies, Zoltán Miklós Hajdu, Kyle Shewfelt, Gheorghe Dinica
Run Time: 101 minutes
Country: Hungary
Year: 2006

Language: English, Hungarian with English subtitles
Distributor: TBD
Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon
Video: N/A
Ratings: ON NR / BC NR / AB NR / SK NR / MB NR / PQ NR / Maritimes NR

Young Hungarian director Szabolcs Hajdu's award-winning third feature, which screened at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, is based on his own brother's experiences. A talented gymnast traumatized by an abusive coach, Miklós Dongo (Zoltán Miklós Hajdu) strives to regain his passion for the sport as an immigrant to Canada. WHITE PALMS traces its hero's struggle against the ghosts of a childhood marked by fear and ruthless discipline.

Miklós is a promising young gymnast who has weathered tough training from an early age. Indeed, his treatment as a child at the hands of his vicious coach, Puma (Gheorghe Dinica), was physically and psychologically abusive. Relentlessly pushed by his ambitious parents, he becomes so disillusioned with gymnastics that he runs away and joins the circus as a trapeze artist.

On immigrating to Canada, Miklós finds a job in Calgary coaching young gymnasts and eventually takes on tempestuous prodigy Kyle (real-life Olympian Kyle Shewfelt), who gives him nothing but grief. But the challenge of honing the bratty upstart's remarkable abilities allows him to confront his torturous youth and start his own training anew. Their fraught friendship comes to a head when the two face off at the world championship back in Miklós's Eastern European homeland.

This truly remarkable film – featuring a unique Canadian presence – is Hungary's official submission to the 2006 Academy Awards®. Zoltán Miklós Hajdu's performance as the handsome Miklós has a natural appeal, while brothers Orion and Silas Radies, who play the athlete in childhood, shine through an exhausting physical regimen. WHITE PALMS effortlessly moves back and forth between eras, creating a powerful and authentic portrait of an athlete's battle against his demons, all set against the backdrop of the stern, self-denying regimentation of Hungary's Communist period.

“An uncommonly resonant sports drama in which a talented yet troubled gymnast comes to terms with a turbulent past, WHITE PALMS proves a distinctive and absorbing third feature by Szabolcs Hajdu....” – Eddie Cockrell, *Variety*

BONNEVILLE

Director: Christopher N. Rowley

Cast: Jessica Lange, Joan Allen, Kathy Bates, Tom Skerritt, Christine Baranski

Run Time: 104 minutes

Country: USA

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: TBD

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon

Video: N/A

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

A Gala Presentation at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival®, Christopher N. Rowley's heartwarming first feature boasts outstanding performances from three of Hollywood's most accomplished actresses – Joan Allen, Kathy Bates and Jessica Lange – as they take an enlightening cross-country road trip in a vintage Pontiac Bonneville.

The recently widowed Arvilla (Jessica Lange, *BROKEN FLOWERS*, *BIG FISH*) wants to scatter her husband Joe's ashes as he had requested, but is being thwarted by Francine (Christine Baranski), Joe's ornery daughter from a previous marriage, who insists her father be laid to rest in Santa Barbara, alongside her virtuous mother. Since Arvilla cannot produce Joe's last will, Francine threatens to sell Arvilla's home unless her request is fulfilled.

Making the best of a dreadful situation, Arvilla sets off for California with Joe's remains, as well as her best friends, sassy Margene (Kathy Bates, *THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY*, *ABOUT SCHMIDT*) and uptight Carol (Joan Allen, *YES*, *PLEASANTVILLE*). They hop in Joe's antique but spunky Bonneville convertible and make their way across the Western plains, stopping off at every place that Arvilla and Joe held dear. They encounter adventures large and small – and even the electrical charge of romance. With each other's support, Carol learns to lighten up, Margene finally gets serious, and Arvilla – after some lovely, intimate conversations with Joe's ashes – finds joy in her memories of the time she spent with him.

BONNEVILLE has a warm sense of humour punctuated by clever zingers that keep the script on its toes. (Bates's Margene has an especially quick tongue.) The characters are brought vividly to life by the stellar work of this incredible trio of women, not to mention a marvellous and tender cameo from Tom Skerritt as a sexy trucker. With these illustrious stars in the driver's seat, BONNEVILLE is the ride of a lifetime.

“Bates is particularly likable as a man-hungry smart aleck who gets shy when the ball's in her court. But the tightly wound Allen keeps the wanderlust fantasia planted in the pragmatic world without being a nag, and Lange is convincing in her bereavement.” – John Defore, *The Hollywood Reporter*

MRS. PALFREY AT THE CLAREMONT

Director: Dan Ireland

Cast: Joan Plowright, Rupert Friend, Zoe Tapper, Lorcan O'Toole

Run Time: 108 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Year: 2006

Language: English

Distributor: TBD

Distributor Estimates Availability As: Coming Soon

Video: N/A

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

MRS. PALFREY AT THE CLAREMONT, based on the celebrated novel by Elizabeth Taylor, is a delightful story about the surprising friendship between the elderly Mrs. Palfrey (Joan Plowright, *TEA WITH MUSSOLINI*) and a struggling young writer, Ludo (Rupert Friend, *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*).

Recently widowed, Mrs. Palfrey leaves Scotland in an effort to start a new chapter in her life. Hoping to reconnect with Desmond (Lorcan O'Toole), her twenty-six-year-old grandson, she moves into the Claremont, a residential hotel in London. Expecting grand ballrooms and elegant guests, she is confronted with a tiny room of mismatched furniture and a quirky group of residents. Determined to make the best of it, she settles in and regales the other guests with stories about her grandson. When Desmond fails to return her calls or visit her, fate brings her together with a young man who becomes the grandson she never knew she had.

One day after visiting the library, she falls. Ludo rushes to her aid and takes her to his basement flat to attend to her wounds. Here the two find they have more in common with one another than with people their own age. When Mrs. Palfrey invites Ludo to dinner at the hotel the residents believe they will finally meet her grandson. Embarrassed to admit that she hasn't heard from her “loving” grandson, she asks Ludo to pretend to be Desmond. While they embark on this charade they develop a beautifully supportive friendship; Mrs. Palfrey finds the confidence to embrace her independence and Ludo finds his literary inspiration.

A distinguished grande dame of the stage, Plowright has, until now, only been able to work her magic on screen in supporting roles. The vulnerable Mrs. Palfrey finally allows her the opportunity to shine with incredible talent and grace. MRS. PALFREY AT THE CLAREMONT will delight audiences with its joyous humour and its poignant look at the beauty of human relationships.

“The tale of an unlikely friendship between an elderly widow and a young writer, MRS. PALFREY AT THE CLAREMONT is an endearing, deceptively simple story.” – Lael Loewenstein, *Variety*

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