



MIFF PREMIERE FUND FINDS KIN & BEN LEE

MELBOURNE: 07 November 2008 – **BEN LEE: CATCH MY DISEASE**, a new feature documentary from acclaimed filmmaker **Amiel Courtin-Wilson** and, **KIN**, a romantic comedy from debut feature director **Amanda Jane**, are the latest production co-financing awards from the **Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund**.

Seven years in the making, **Ben Lee** is a feature documentary about pop music, spirituality, fame, family and celebrity, Courtin-Wilson paints an intimate portrait of the 29 year-old Australian star, who recorded his first album at age 14, through a wealth of archival, performance and interview footage with Ben Lee, Winona Ryder, Claire Danes, Jason Schwartzman, Michelle Williams and others.

Ben Lee's star line-up rounds-out the **MIFF 2009 Premiere Fund** slate, as follows:

- **Balibo**, from director **Robert Connolly** (*The Bank*) and producer John Maynard (*The Boys*), starring **Anthony La Paglia**;
- **Blessed**, from director **Ana Kokkinos** (*Head On*) and producer **Al Clark** (*Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*), starring **Frances O'Connor, Miranda Otto, Deborra-Lee Furness** and **William McInnes**;
- **Bran Nue Dae**, from director **Rachel Perkins** (*Radiance, First Australians*) and producer **Robyn Kershaw** (*Looking for Alibrandi, Kath & Kim*), starring **Geoffrey Rush, Ernie Dingo, Missy Higgins, Deb Mailman, Nigali Lawford, Tom Budge, San Sultan** and **Jessica Mauboy**;
- **The Loved Ones**, from debut feature director **Sean Byrne** and producer **Mark Lazarus** (*Australian Rules*), starring **Xavier Samuel** and **Victoria Thaine**;
- **Indonesia Calling**, a feature documentary from director/producer **John Hughes**.

Ben Lee, which is produced by Richard Lowenstein, follows Courtin-Wilson's **MIFF 2008 Premiere Fund** co-financed feature documentary *Bastardy*, which was voted by **MIFF 2008** audiences as the 8th most popular film overall and the 5th most popular documentary. *Bastardy* was one of several well-received **MIFF Premiere Fund** co-financed feature documentaries premiering at **MIFF 2008**, which also included:

- *Rock n Roll Nerd*, which was voted 7th most popular film overall and 4th most popular documentary and goes into general release later this month;
- *Not Quite Hollywood*, which opened **MIFF 2008** ahead of its Australian theatrical release and selection for the Toronto, Sitges and London Film Festivals;
- *Whatever Happened to Brenda Hean?*, which is presently in Australian theatrical release and will have its overseas premiere in Paris on November 20 at 26th Festival International du Film d'Environnement;
- *Celebrity: Dominick Dunne*, which was voted 8th most popular documentary at **MIFF 2008**, then selected for the Hampton's International Film Festival and is presently in Australian theatrical release.

Meantime, **Kin** is the first **MIFF Premiere Fund** film confirmed for **MIFF 2010**. With co-financing from the former Australian Film Commission (AFC) IndiVision program strand, **Kin** is a warm-hearted and upbeat romantic comedy taking a surprising journey into a Melbourne family's deeply dirty laundry. **Kin** features an emerging team of Victorian filmmakers with Amanda Jane directing a script by Christine Bartlett and Nicole Minchin producing.

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MIFF PREMIERE FUND:

- The **MIFF Premiere Fund**, which commenced operations in September 2007 with A\$1.6 million over two years from the Victorian State Government, provides strategic minority financial supports to a range of local theatrical documentaries and narrative feature films that will have their premieres at **MIFF**.
- In July, at MIFF 2008, Victorian State Premier John Brumby and Innovation Minister Gavin Jennings announced the **MIFF Premiere Fund** would continue for another two years with a further A\$1.6 million.
- **MIFF Premiere Fund** production financing supports can include completion/enhancement loans, mini-gap equity investments and matching marketing/distribution advances. The Fund accepts applications from Victorian producers with market-ready projects in advanced stages of financing which demonstrate that they: have strength of connection to Victoria; can premiere at **MIFF**; have viable co-financing to enable them to go into production in time for a **MIFF** premiere; and will benefit in creative, industrial and/or distribution terms from MIFF's financial backing.
- In addition to being offered production co-financing, successful applicants to the **MIFF Premiere Fund** also receive priority consideration for registration to **MIFF 37°South: Bridging the Gap**, the film co-financing market that occurs in the opening weekend of **MIFF**. **MIFF Premiere Fund** co-financed titles seeking sales agents or local distribution also receive priority for **MIFF 37°South: Breakthrough Screenings**, the market's new screenings strand for invited buyers.
- More details at: http://www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au/miff_premiere_fund