



66TH MIFF CELEBRATES TEN YEARS OF PREMIERE FUND BRINGING AUSTRALIAN VOICES TO THE SCREEN

SIX PROJECTS TO HAVE THEIR WORLD PREMIERE AT MIFF 2017

Celebrating its tenth anniversary, the **MIFF Premiere Fund** brings six world premieres to the 66th Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF), including opening night survival thriller *Jungle* and joyous indigenous feature documentary *The Song Keepers*.

The Premiere Fund, which offers minority co-financing to new Australian quality theatrical (narrative and documentary) feature films that then premiere at MIFF, has invested in 56 projects including the MIFF 2017 slate.

Six films will have their red-carpet world premiere screening at this year's MIFF, as follows:

- *The Butterfly Tree* stars Melissa George (*The Good Wife*), Ewen Leslie (*The Daughter*), Ed Oxenbould (*Paper Planes*) and Sophie Lowe (*The Slap*) in a visually sumptuous coming-of-age tale of love and loss, tinged with magical realism, from feature debut director Priscilla Cameron and producer Bridget Callow-Wright
- Central Australia's answer to *The Buena Vista Social Club*, Naina Sen's *The Song Keepers*, from producers Rachel Clements and Trisha Morton-Thomas, tells an incredible story about a hidden musical legacy of ancient Aboriginal languages and German baroque songs that are being preserved by the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir.
- From director Eddie Martin (*Lionel, All This Mayhem*) and producer Sarah Shaw (*Snowtown*) comes *Have You Seen the Listers?* which provides a moving personal account of the artistic and commercial rise of Australia's most renowned street artist coupled with a deep personal cost.
- In *Westwind: Djalu's Legacy*, director Ben Strunin portrays Yolngu elder Djalu Gurruwiwi's quest to pass his people's ancient songlines and culture to the next generation – with a little help from global pop star Gotye. Producers: Kate Pappas, Ben Pederick, Virginia Whitwell and Nick Batzias (*That Sugar Film*)
- *Rabbit* is a chilling fairytale feature debut from director Luke Shanahan and producer David Ngo (*One Eyed Girl*), in which identical twins are linked by more than just DNA, starring Alex Russell (*Cut Snake*) and Adelaide Clemens (*The Great Gatsby*)
- And Alex Russell also features alongside Daniel Radcliffe in *Wolf Creek* director Greg McLean's MIFF opening night selection *Jungle* in a gloriously tense survival thriller based on the bestselling real-life story of adventurer Yossi Ghinsberg.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Premiere Fund, MIFF looks back at the Fund's early years with screenings of three classics:

- *Balibo* (2009) the riveting political thriller starring Oscar Isaac and Anthony LaPaglia from Robert Connolly (*Paper Planes*)
- *Bastardy* (2008), a poetic and impressionistic portrait of the life of indigenous arts personality Jack Charles from director Amiel Courtin-Wilson (*The Silent Eye*, MIFF 2017)
- *Blessed* (2009), a powerful and evocative story from director Ana Kokkinos (*Head On*) of families, love and loss with a star-studded ensemble cast including Frances O'Connor, Miranda Otto, Deborah-Lee Furness, William McInnes, Sophie Lowe, Harrison Gilbertson and Reef Ireland

A brand-new promotional trailer celebrating the Fund's decade of supporting new Australian films will debut at MIFF's program launch and then screen before Premiere Fund films during the festival. Meantime, www.miff.com.au will feature a new dedicated Premiere Fund page outlining all of the Premiere Fund's 56 investments along with a link to a new iTunes page where many of the Premiere Fund films can be purchased. During the festival, there will also be a mini-exhibition of stills from this year's Premiere Fund films.

The Premiere Fund, which recently was renewed for four years, has a proud history of assisting stories that need telling from a diverse range of talent and voices.

Over its ten years:

- Nearly 32% of Premiere Fund movies have had female directors (versus Screen Australia-reported industry average of 16%);
- Nearly 59% have had female producers (versus industry average of 32%);
- 41% included youth themes (including ***Paper Planes***);
- 27% had elements portraying Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALDs), with 5% having CALD creative principals (director and/or producer(s));
- 16% included indigenous themes and/or characters (including ***Bran Nue Dae***), with nearly 7% having indigenous creative principals;
- 13% included LGBTI characters and/or issues, with 18% involving LGBTI creative principals
- Some 50% of Premiere Fund movies are helmed by first time directors

Other key milestones include:

- Children's film ***Paper Planes*** grossed almost \$10 million at the Australia/NZ box office and won the inaugural CineFest \$100,000 film prize in 2014
- Premiere Fund titles have won more than **55 awards** and more than 280 key festival selections including **Berlin** (*Make Hummus Not War, The Turning, Galore, Paper Planes, Bran Nue Dae, Monsieur Mayonnaise, Emo The Musical*); **Cannes** (*These Final Hours*); **Rotterdam** (*Electric Boogaloo, Not Quite Hollywood*); **Toronto** (*Cut Snake, Electric Boogaloo, Paper Planes, Downriver, Balibo, Blessed, Bran Nue Dae, Not Quite Hollywood, Blame, Machete Maidens Unleashed, Mother of Rock, Loved Ones*)
- Indigenous-themed feature documentary ***Putuparri & The Rainmakers*** won the 2015 CineFest \$100,000 Film Prize, with Cinefest Jury Chair David Wenham remarking: "A story and characters so compelling and emotionally engaging that it reinforced the power of cinema to entertain, touch us deeply and stay with us forever."

"We are so proud of the films that have come through the Fund over the last 10 years and we take our hat off to the talented filmmakers that we have the privilege of working with," said MIFF Premiere Fund Executive Producer Mark Woods. "The talent we have been able to support has been incredible - 19% of Premiere Fund films are directed by alumni of MIFF emerging director workshop **Accelerator Lab** and 48% advanced their funding at MIFF's film financing event **37th South Market** – so we really do feel like we come on a long journey with these projects."

NOTES:

- **The 2017 Melbourne International Film Festival runs 3 – 20 August**
The full program will be launched 11 July 2017
- **For information on the MIFF Premiere Fund 10th anniversary, visit www.miff.com.au/premierfund10thanniversary**
- **For information on the Premiere Fund for film practitioners, visit: www.miffpremierfund.com**