



MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
2 AUGUST - 19 AUGUST 2012

**MEDIA RELEASE**



## **MIRIAM MARGOLYES LENDS HER VOICE TO MIFF PREMIERE FUND FILM KICKING-OFF MELBOURNE CELEBRATES DICKENS**

**MELBOURNE** – *Harry Potter* star **Miriam Margolyes** has joined the cast of MIFF Premiere Fund- supported *The First Fagin*, which world premieres on August 16<sup>th</sup> at the Melbourne International Film Festival.

Margolyes is a lifelong admirer of the works of Charles Dickens – and performs the one-woman show *Dickens' Women* - so it is fitting that she agreed to narrate this feature-length docu-drama which delves into the life of Ikey Solomon, credited as the real life inspiration for the Fagin character in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. Directed by **Alan Rosenthal** and **Helen Gaynor** and produced by **Veronica Fury**, *The First Fagin* forms part of MIFF's contribution to *Melbourne Celebrates Dickens* season commemorating the 200th anniversary of Dickens' birth.

Former British Film Institute and London Film Festival Director **Adrian Wootton** is also key to the celebration. Presented exclusively in Melbourne by the **MIFF 37°South Market & Accelerator** and **The Wheeler Centre**, **Adrian Wootton's Illustrated Film Talks** celebrate Charles Dickens – the most screen-adapted novelist in history, with around 400 films and TV series made so far from his books. Wootton is Co-Director of *Dickens 2012*, the Charles Dickens Museum and Film London-co-ordinated worldwide project to celebrate the enduring legacy of Dickens, and co-curated the British Film Institute's *Dickens on Screen* season.

This year's **Illustrated Film Talks** program comprises:

- **The Life of Dickens ( Friday 17 August: 11am to 12.30):** This talk examines the life and times of Dickens, his literary legacy and innovations, his key fascination with - and lasting influence on - crime fiction, and his inspiration for countless screen adaptations. The talk is preceded at 9.30am by a repeat screening of *The First Fagin*. This Friday program, presented in association with MIFF's **NextGen**, is targeted at students and school groups; however bookings from the general public are welcome at [www.miff.com.au](http://www.miff.com.au)
- **Dickens on Film (Saturday 18 August: 4.30pm to 7pm):** Liberally sprinkled with slides and film clips, this talk examines the legacy of Dickens' screen adaptations from 1898 to the present and describes how Dickens was a great innovator of narrative, character, subject and imagery - and influenced the creation of the cinematic medium itself. Tickets for this session **include (at the end of the talk at 6pm)** a special **free** screening of the new 60-minute documentary *Dickens on Film* (Director: Anthony Wall; Producer: Adrian Wootton; Consultant: Michael Eaton) which examines why Dickens' novels have inspired hundreds of screen adaptations. It contends that there is something essentially filmic in Dickens' unique prose style and that Dickens wrote the way a camera saw before film had been invented.
- **Dickens, Crime Fiction & Film (Sunday 19 August: 4.30pm to 7pm):** With a plethora of photo slides and film clips, this talk draws on Wootton's research into Dickens' fascination with, and writing about, true crime, social injustice and penal reform, and his influence on the crime and detective genre. Tickets for this session **include (at the end of the talk at 6pm)** a special **free** screening of the new 63-minute film *Dickens in London* (Director Chris Newby; Writer Michael Eaton) in which five of Dickens' journalistic essays were adapted into radio plays from which film artist Chris Newby created this arresting and distinctive work that incorporates animation, puppetry and contemporary footage.

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Lectures occur at the **Village Roadshow Theatrette at the State Library** and lecture tickets (at \$19 for each talk or \$14 concession) can be booked at [www.miff.com.au](http://www.miff.com.au) or [www.wheelercentre.com](http://www.wheelercentre.com) (MIFF passes are not valid). Film tickets for the tie-in movie *The First Fagin* are available at [www.miff.com.au](http://www.miff.com.au)

The **Illustrated Film Talks** kick-off a wider *Melbourne Celebrates Dickens* season running from 17-26 August, as part of the global *Dickens 2012* initiative, that combines events from the **Melbourne International Film Festival**, **MIFF 37°South Market & Accelerator** and **The Wheeler Centre**, as well as **Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)** and the **Melbourne Writers Festival**.

**About Dickens 2012**

*Dickens 2012*, co-ordinated by the Charles Dickens Museum and Film London in association with the Dickens Fellowship, is an international celebration of the cultural and educational significance of the life and work of Charles Dickens to mark the bicentenary of his birth. Dickens-related activity will take place all over the world under the **Dickens 2012** ([www.dickens2012.org](http://www.dickens2012.org)) banner to celebrate one of the world's most inspiring authors and provide a legacy for future generations. **Dickens 2012** has an expanding list of supporters, which includes names such as Simon Callow CBE, Sir Derek Jacobi, Sir Cameron Mackintosh, Miriam Margolyes OBE and Peter Ackroyd CBE, and is backed by the Mayor of London as a cultural highlight in 2012.

**DICKENS 2012**

[www.dickens2012.org](http://www.dickens2012.org)



**MIFF 37°South Market** is the exclusive Australia/NZ partner of Film London's Production Finance Market (PFM).

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The **MIFF Premiere Fund** is an initiative of the State Government of Victoria to provide co-financing to new local films that will world premiere at MIFF.



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