



24th London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, 17-31 March 2010

Plus a UK-wide tour from May to September

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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

London, Thursday 11 February 2010

The BFI is delighted to present the **24th BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival**, which launches on 17 March with the World Premiere of a new British film *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister* (courtesy of *Oxford Film and Television*) as the Opening Night Gala Screening at the Odeon West End. Celebrating queer history is a key function of the Festival and **James Kent**'s outstanding new BBC Two drama reveals the hidden passions of 19th century landowner, industrialist, traveller and pioneering lesbian, Anne Lister, whose coded journals form the basis of this true story written for the screen by **Jane English**. The film stars **Maxine Peake** (*Criminal Justice*) in the title role, with a superb supporting cast including **Anna Madeley** (*Affinity*), **Susan Lynch** (*Elizabeth: The Golden Age*) and former *Coronation Street* favourite, **Tina O'Brien**.

The Closing Night Gala Screening on 31 March is *Children of God*, **Kareem J Mortimer**'s gorgeously photographed first feature is a classic tale of love between an uninspired young artist Johnny (**Johnny Ferro**) and Romeo (**Stephen Tyrone Williams**), the local boy who reignites his creativity. The drama, set on the rural island of Eleuthera, unfolds against a backdrop of violent homophobia and social unease in this striking examination of identity and gay politics in the Bahamas.

The programming team for the London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival is led by senior programmer **Brian Robinson** with **Jason Barker**, **Michael Blyth**, **Nazmia Jamal**, **Emma Smart** and **Kyle Stephan**. The Festival enjoys the support of a wide range of partners including new main sponsor Play.com, sponsors Renault, American Airlines and May Fair Hotel, media partners Diva, GT, Pink Paper, and The Independent, strand sponsors Accenture and the Interbank LGBT Forum, and distribution partner Impact. We are also grateful for the support of Soho House, Konditor & Cook, Midnite Express, Icelandic Glacial, Green & Black's, Skillset, UK Film Council, Embassy of Denmark, Danish Film Institute, Embassy of Sweden, The Quebec Government office, Institut français, Mouth That Roars and event sponsor Metropolitan Police Service.

The LLGFF Special Supporters are **Clare Balding**, **Lea DeLaria**, **Stephen Fry**, **David Furnish**, **Paul Gambaccini**, **Sir Elton John**, **Isaac Julien**, **Bryony Lavery**, **Sir Ian McKellen**, **Phyllis Nagy**, **Pratibha Parmar**, **Patricia Rozema** and **Sarah Waters**.

Now in its 24th year, the LLGFF is the UK's third-largest film festival, celebrating the best in queer cinema with films from 29 countries including a huge range features, documentaries, events, short films and archive material. The Festival continues explore and reflect the diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender culture from around the globe and in addition to the wealth of UK talent on show, there are outstanding contributions this year from Denmark, Sweden, Canada, Argentina, Israel, Brazil, New Zealand and the USA.

The first of the Centrepiece Screenings is *I Killed My Mother*. Written, produced, directed by and starring 20-year old *wunderkind* **Xavier Dolan**, this witty and articulate film cleverly exposes the vulnerabilities, frustrations and self-doubts of being a teenager.

For our other Centrepiece Screening we are delighted to present *Topp Twins: Untouchable Girls*, **Leanne Pooley**'s award-winning documentary about Jools and Lynda Topp, folk-singing lesbian twins and national celebrities in New Zealand.

Complementing our Opening Night film, we showcase other new work from UK directors, including the world premiere of **Gary Reich**, **Mike Nicholls** and **David Hoyle**'s black comedy, *Uncle David*, **Rikki Beadle-Blair**'s *Stonewall*-sponsored coming out project, *Fit* and *Beyond Labels* from *No Magic Bullet* director **Jaime Sylla**.

Of the 75 feature length films and documentaries screening at the LLGFF, an impressive number have won awards at other international festivals including: *Brotherhood*, **Nicolo Donatto**'s gripping tale of gays in the neo-Nazi movement; **Susan Muska** and **Gréta Olafsdóttir**'s touching documentary about the life-long love affair of two New York lesbians, *Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement*; **Roberto Castón**'s portrayal of gay rural life in the Basque country, *Ander: The Fish Child*, **Lucía Puenzo**'s follow-up to the multi award-winning *XXY*; *Mississippi Damned*, **Tina Maybry**'s ensemble drama about dreams and disappointments in rural Mississippi; *To Die Like A Man*, an atmospheric melodrama from arthouse provocateur **João Pedro Rodrigues** (*O Fantasma*, *Odette*) about an aging Portuguese transgender cabaret star; Teddy-winner *Raging Sun, Raging Sky*, a hypnotically epic work about ancient myths and the power of sexual desire by Mexican director, **Julián Hernández**'s; *Riot Acts: Flaunting Gender Deviance in Music Performance* an explosive introduction to the North American transgender music scene by **Madsen Minax**; and Teddy Audience Award-winner *City of Borders*, is **Yun Suh**'s warm and thoughtful documentary about the gay and lesbian community in Jerusalem.

LGBT Africa explores the difficult situation LGBT people face in parts of Africa, where homosexuality is outlawed and in many instances carries the death penalty. Programmer **Nazmia Jamal** will present a selection of shorts followed by a discussion with **Adebisi Ademola** (Naz Project), **Rev Rowland Jide Macaulay** (Church of Rainbow, Nigeria) and **Skye Chirape** (LGBT activist from Zimbabwe) about LGBT rights in Africa.

We dip into the archives of UK-based non-profit women's film organisation Cinenova for *Short Films About Us: Lesbian Work at Cinenova* offering a rare opportunity to see short films from the likes of **Barbara Hammer**, **Cheryl Farthing**, **Rita Smith** and many others.

There is special screening of *The Rebel* and **Ashik Kerib** to celebrate the truly distinctive voice of one of cinema's most daring artists, **Sergei Paradjanov**, who produced some of cinema's most radical and extraordinary images throughout a career littered with repression and censorship.

Of Heaven and Earth: the Films of Tom Chomont explores the lyrical work of the avant-garde master, New York provocateur, leather fetishist and HIV survivor and includes nine 16mm films restored by the *Outfest Legacy Project*.

It's Hammer Time! Legendary lesbian artist, filmmaker and activist **Barbara Hammer** returns to the Festival to perform *Hammer! Making Movies out of Life and Sex*, an event combining readings, archival images, costumes and rare film clips to playfully mine four decades of queer life and art.

Yvonne Rainer's charmingly odd, sharply observed and witty *Murder and Murder* is a thought-provoking, semi-autobiographical experimental work about an artist who comes out as a lesbian in her later years and starts a relationship with a successful younger woman.

We continue our collaborations with **Tate Modern** and the **V&A** to present *Invocations and Evocations: Queer and Surreal*, a special series of screenings and discussions at the Tate exploring the tangled threads of the Surrealist project and those of queer experimental cinema, exemplified by **Kenneth Anger**, **Maya Deren**, **Derek Jarman** and many others. The *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* event at the V&A will screen **Paul Cox**'s *The Diaries of Vaslav Nijinsky* with **Derek Jacobi** and **Greta Schiller**'s *Paris was a Woman*.

Enter a mysterious world of pre-teen melodrama, courtesy of Canadian visionary **Jamie Travis**. Macabre, witty and unexpected, the *Saddest Children* trilogy continues to prove Travis as one of the most exciting and visually distinctive filmmakers around.

Victim: The Creation and Reception of a Landmark in Gay History is an illustrated account of one of cinema's landmark films presented by Senior programmer, **Brian Robinson**, and Festival programmer **Emma Smart** uses a wealth of clips and concert footage to ask why *We Love Dusty Springfield*.

With a retrospective of some of her most successful and critically acclaimed films including *Working Girls*, *Dance, Girl, Dance*, *Craig's Wife* and *The Wild Party*, we celebrate **Dorothy Arzner**, a prolific director in Hollywood during the 1920s and 30s whose work is rarely seen today and never in a lesbian context.

Returning for a second year, *The Campaign for Homosexual Equality* present **CHE Film Prize**, which offers a £2.000 prize to the film which best reflects the values and objectives of CHE in its fight for social justice.

All this plus hundreds of short films, club nights, events and networking opportunities over the course of two fun-packed weeks make the 24th BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival an indispensable highlight in the queer cultural calendar.

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