



24th BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival

17 – 31 March 2010

Plus a UK-wide tour from April to October

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE London, Wednesday 17 March 2010

Opening Night Gala of *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister*

The **24th BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival** kicks off tonight 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*), **Christine Bottomley** (*Hush*), **Gemma Jones** (*Bridget Jones' Diary*), **Michael Culkin** (*The Hours*), and former *Coronation Street* favourite, **Tina O'Brien** and we're delighted that the cast will join James Kent, the producers and key crew on stage to introduce the film. As a special treat we're also hoping that historical consultant **Helena Whitbread** will talk about rediscovering the secrets of Anne Lister's extraordinary life.

Following the screening, invited guests can join us at **Jewel** for an after-show party where *Unskinny Bop* DJs Tamsin and Ruth will entertain the crowd until the early hours.

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, MAC Cosmetics, 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 of features, documentaries, events, short films and archive material. The Festival continues to 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 Festival ends on 31 March when the Closing Night Gala Screening of *Children of God*, **Kareem J Mortimer**'s gorgeously photographed first feature is a classic tale of love between a creatively uninspired young artist Johnny (**Johnny Ferro**) and Romeo (**Stephen Tyrone Williams**), the local boy who reignites his passion for art. 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.

During our two week run we will screen more than 200 films from 29 countries to an anticipated audience of 30,000 people. It is a truly remarkable fortnight and we're glad you are joining us.

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