



26th BFI LONDON
LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL
23 March – 1 April 2012

**OSCAR®-WINNING OLYMPIA DUKAKIS AND
BRENDA FRICKER STAR IN
BFI LONDON LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL
OPENING NIGHT FILM: CLOUDBURST**
*Friday 23 March 2012, 6.30pm and 8.45pm
at BFI Southbank*



February 9 2012 The 26th BFI London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (23 March – 1 April 2012) today announces the Opening Night film is Thom Fitzgerald's **Cloudburst**. Starring Oscar®-winning actors Olympia Dukakis (**Moonstruck, Steel Magnolias, Tales of the City**) and Brenda Fricker (**My Left Foot, Home Alone II, Albert Nobbs**) as a pair of septuagenarian lesbian lovers, the film is an unpredictable, heart-warming and romantic road movie.

Cloudburst is also a ground-breaking and forceful remedy to the virtual invisibility of older lesbians on the big screen - and it's *very* funny. The film shows older women in love and deals with some of the harsh realities of ageing with wit, humour and a great deal of affection.

Dukakis plays the forcefully butch and occasionally foul-mouthed Stella, whose language really does make grown men blush and the actress has described the film as "*terrific, funny, moving and outrageous.*" Fricker is Dottie her lover of 31 years, whose ill-health has forced her granddaughter to trick

her into entering a care home. When Dottie is sprung by Stella they decide to make for Canada where lesbian marriage is legal, but the police are on their tail. These two elderly dykes on the run get into a series of scrapes on their way to the altar and spend a blissful day by the sea with a young hitch-hiker who has emotional issues of his own.

Director Thom Fitzgerald is no stranger to the LLGFF. He will have opened the festival three times, a record achieved by no other filmmaker in the LLGFF's 26-year history: *The Hanging Garden* opened the festival in 1998 and *The Event* was the opener in 2004.

Thom Fitzgerald said, "I'm thrilled and tickled that the BFI has chosen *Cloudburst* to open its 26th London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. To me, the BFI is more than a national treasure; it's a cultural icon of worldwide significance. It represents the best in film exhibition and preservation. I deeply appreciate its programmes."

Emma Smart, Programmer LLGFF said, "This is a brave and beautiful Opening Night film that's laugh out loud funny. The on screen chemistry between Dukakis and Fricker is crackling and their relationship hugely touching and believable. It's great to see older women portrayed on screen with such wit and depth."

Cloudburst (dir. Thom Fitzgerald, Canada 2010) is a Doug Pettigrew and Thom Fitzgerald production. Executive producers: Sidney Kimmel, Trudy Pettigrew, William Jarblum, Vicki Macarty, Shandi Mitchell, Dana Warren.

OLYMPIA DUKAKIS (Stella)

Olympia Dukakis is an actress, director, producer, teacher and author. She received an Academy Award in the Best Supporting Actress category, the New York Film Critics Award, the Los Angeles Film Critics Award for her work in the 1987 film **Moonstruck**. Other feature films include **Mr. Holland's Opus** with Richard Dreyfus; Woody Allen's **Mighty Aphrodite**; **I Love Trouble** with Nick Nolte and Julia Roberts; **The Cemetery Club**, **Steel Magnolias**, and the **Look Who's Talking** films. Her memoir *Ask Me Again Tomorrow* was an international bestseller. This is her third film directed by Thom Fitzgerald: previously she starred in **The Event** and **3 Needles**.

BRENDA FRICKER (Dot)

Brenda Fricker won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in 1990, for her performance in **My Left Foot: The Story of Christy Brown**, directed by Jim Sheridan. She was also nominated for a Golden Globe for that role. She went on to leading roles including **How About You**, **Closing the Ring**, **Tara Road**, **Inside I'm Dancing**, **Conspiracy of Silence**, **Trauma**, **Omagh**, **A Man of No Importance**, **The Intended**, **War Bride**, **Resurrection Man**, **Swann**, **A Time to Kill**, **Angels in the Outfield**, **Home Alone II**, **UTZ**, **The Field** and most recently with Glenn Close in **Albert Nobbs** in which she plays the role of Polly.

THOM FITZGERALD (Director/writer)

Thom Fitzgerald is an award-winning director. His most recent film prior to *Cloudburst* was **3 Needles** starring Chloe Sevigny, Stockard Channing, Lucy Liu; **The Event** starring Olympia Dukakis and Parker Posey; and as Executive Producer on **Growing Op** and **Nonsense Revolution**.

His feature films include **The Hanging Garden** (1997), **Beefcake** (1998), **Wolf Girl** (2001), **Wild Dogs** (2002), **The Event** (2003) and **3 Needles** (2005). He has won more than two dozen international awards including a Genie and the FIPRESCI European International Critics' Prize.

Olympia Dukakis, Brenda Fricker, their young male co-star Ryan Doucette and Thom Fitzgerald are available for selected interviews by prior arrangement with the BFI press office.

The full programme of the LLGFF will be announced at a press and public launch event at 6.30pm, Thursday 23 February 2012 at BFI Southbank and will be available on-line at the same time at www.bfi.org.uk/llgff

Attendance by RSVP: lucy.aronica@bfi.org.uk

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Notes to editors

About the BFI The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world

LLGFF Sponsors

In 2012 the Festival is delighted to welcome back a number of its most valued and longstanding partners. Accenture return for a second year as Main Sponsor of the festival, Renault are back as the LLGFF's valued car partner, American Airlines similarly will be the Festival's official airline and the May Fair Hotel, for a third successive year, will be accommodating some of the festival's special guests. We would also like to thank our special screening sponsors the LGBT Interbank Forum for their continued support of the LLGFF along with Soho House, Konditor & Cook, Icelandic Glacial, Arts Council England, Skillset and other funding contributors. Finally, thanks goes to our returning Media partners The Independent, G3 and attitude, new partner Time Out, and our Distribution Partner Impact.

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