



**32nd EDITION OF BFI FLARE: LONDON LGBTQ+ FILM FESTIVAL CLOSES
HIGH PROFILE GUESTS INCLUDED HUGH GRANT, RUPERT EVERETT & TRUDIE STYLER
AND GUESTS SPEAKERS ROBIN CAMPILLO, FRANCIS LEE AND ELIZABETH KARLSEN**

LONDON – Wednesday 4th April, time 10am

BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival – the UK’s leading LGBTQ+ film event, celebrates a hugely successful 32nd edition with an increase in industry and filmmaker delegate numbers.

BFI Flare 2018 also saw a substantial increase in accreditation with 299 Industry delegates (an increase of 16% on 2017 attendance) from 17 countries outside the UK: Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Myanmar, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States. 798 guests attended BFI Flare industry events over the ten day festival.

The Festival offered an exciting industry programme alongside talks with Robin Campillo (writer / director of *120 BPM* and *Eastern Boys*), Elizabeth Karlsen (producer of *Carol*, *Colette*, *The Crying Game* and *Hollow Reed*) and recent BAFTA Nominee Francis Lee (writer / director of *God’s Own Country*). The Industry Programme also included events Anatomy of an Episode: *The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story*, with writer / executive producer Tom Rob Smith joining the BFI to dissect the show’s acclaimed fourth episode *House by the Lake*, and Casting a Wide Net, a panel on casting LGBTQ+ films and characters in partnership with Spotlight.

Michael Blyth, Senior BFI Flare programmer said:

*‘Supporting and nurturing UK talent is so important to us at BFI Flare. We opened the Festival with the powerful *My Days of Mercy*, from British screenwriter Joe Barton, and closed with the sexy and stylish *Postcards From London*. We also hosted the World Premiere of UK filmmaker Jason Barker’s *A Deal with The Universe* as our Centrepiece Presentation. This commitment to supporting UK voices continued through our annual mentorship programme, now in its fourth year, in which we welcomed 6 emerging UK filmmaking voices into the Flare family’*

Highlights of BFI Flare in 2018 included the Opening Night UK Premiere of **MY DAYS OF MERCY**. Powered by stirring performances from Ellen Page (*JUNO*, *INCEPTION*, *FREEHELD*) and Kate Mara (*HOUSE OF CARDS*, *THE MARTIAN*), Shalom-Ezer’s follow up to *PRINCESS* is a poignant love story between two women from vastly different backgrounds and opposing political views.

The Festival's Closing Gala was the European Premiere of Steve McLean's stylish and sexy **POSTCARDS FROM LONDON**. The film tells the story of beautiful teenager Jim (Harris Dickinson, *BEACH RATS*) who, having travelled from the suburbs, finds himself in Soho where he falls in with a gang of unusual high class male escorts 'The Raconteurs'. Set in a vibrant, neon-lit, imaginary vision of Soho, this morality tale manages to be both a beautifully shot homage to the spirit of Derek Jarman and a celebration of the homo-erotic in Baroque art.

For the fourth time BFI Flare and the British Council made five LGBTQ+ short films available to audiences across the world as part of the ground-breaking **#FiveFilms4Freedom** LGBTQ+ digital campaign. BFI Flare teamed up with UK government's GREAT campaign and the British Council to celebrate **#FiveFilms4Freedom** with a spectacular projection on the Tower of London with filmmakers from four of the films in attendance. The collaboration was also marked with a high-profile reception at the Houses of Parliament with BFI Flare filmmakers and industry in attendance. To date the five films have been viewed over 2.5 million times across 12 days, in 146 countries.

The Centrepiece Screening of the Festival was the World Premiere of UK feature documentary, **A DEAL WITH THE UNIVERSE**, the debut from former BFI Flare programmer Jason Barker, which tells the inspiring tale of a very different kind of pregnancy. The Special Presentation was Robin Campillo's modern queer classic: **120 BPM** a rousing, heart-breaking account of AIDS activist group ACT-UP: Paris. The Special Event was **Rise: QTIPOC Representation and Visibility in Film** - a special one-day series of talks and workshops, this examined the importance of inclusion and the stories of queer people of colour, both on and off the screen.

183 filmmaker guests represented 19 countries, covering global LGBTQ+ cultures including India, Lebanon, Argentina, Thailand, Ireland, UK, Brazil and Canada. Among the many filmmakers in attendance were: BFI Fellow Hugh Grant who introduced *Maurice* on stage alongside co-star James Wilby, Rupert Everett (writer, director and star of *The Happy Prince*), Robin Campillo (*120 BPM*), Trudie Styler (*Freak Show*), Jason Barker (*A Deal with the Universe*), David Weissman (*Conversations with Gay Elders*), Tali Shalom-Ezer (*My Days of Mercy*), David Hoyle (*Uncle David 2*), Steve McLean & Harris Dickinson (*Postcards from London*), Liz Rohburgh (*Becks*) & James Crump (*Antonio Lopez 1970: Sex, Fashion and Disco*)

For further details about BFI FLARE please visit
www.bfi.org.uk/flare

BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival was programmed by Jay Bernard, Michael Blyth, Zorian Clayton, Brian Robinson and Emma Smart, led by Tricia Tuttle Artistic Director.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival is the UK's longest running LGBTQ+ film event. It began in 1986 as Gay's Own Pictures. By its 3rd edition it was tagged the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and since then has grown to become the largest LGBTQ+ film event in the UK, and its most anticipated. The Festival changed its name to BFI Flare in 2014 to reflect the increasing diversity of its films, filmmakers and audience. The festival is programmed by Jay Bernard, Michael Blyth, Zorian Clayton, Brian Robinson and Emma Smart, led by Artistic Director, Tricia Tuttle.

MY DAYS OF MERCY opens the Festival on Wednesday 21 March with POSTCARDS FROM LONDON closing the Festival on Saturday 31 March; BFI Flare will offer for an additional day in 2018 with 'Second Chance Sunday' on 1 April, featuring on-demand repeat screenings of audience favourites.

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
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of filmmakers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

About Pureland Foundation and the BFI

Pureland Foundation is the Main Supporter of BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival. A three year commitment to the Festival, starting in 2018, this marks a significant philanthropic

contribution from the Foundation, which through its grants aims to support social, spiritual and emotional wellness and enrich lives through art and music: values of core importance to the BFI and especially BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival. The BFI are hugely grateful for this contribution.

BFI Flare Sponsors

In 2018 the Festival is delighted to introduce a number of new supporters and welcome back some of its most valued and enduring partners.

We are delighted to welcome Pureland Foundation as our Main Supporter for the first time this year. We could not deliver BFI Flare without the continuing support of the Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport. American Airlines are flying back in to ensure we can continue to bring some of the very best talent to the UK. The May Fair Hotel returns for an amazing ninth successive year to accommodate the Festival's special guests, and Renault are back as our very valued car partner. We would also like to thank our returning special screening sponsors, the Interbank LGBT Forum for their continued support of the Festival. Sky join the Festival family and are supporting one of our fantastic films at the Festival and our BFI Flare programme throughout the year. And special thanks to our Media partners Attitude and Diva, and our Distribution Partner Impact. Similarly our sincere thanks go out to our new and returning in kind partners: Barefoot Wines, Beltane&Pop, Fever-Tree, Konditor & Cook and Pink Pepper Gin, and lastly, but by no means least, our other hugely important Funding Contributors, Venue Partners and Community Partners.

