

Fantasia

For immediate release

FANTASIA FILM FESTIVAL 2009: THE HOME OF GENRE CINEMA

Montreal, June 29, 2009 – Due to a veritable deluge of feature presentations, Fantasia is extending its 13th edition for two extra days and will therefore be taking place from July 9th to the 29th at Concordia University's Hall Theatre. As North America's largest genre film festival, Fantasia will once again make good on its promise to deliver diversity, innovation, entertainment, food for thought and a good dose of eccentric and biting humour.

Genre cinema is experiencing a rapid growth and its influences can be felt on both auteur cinema and more mainstream films and as such is becoming harder to classify. This intense churning of ideas and images is reflected in this year's line-up and activities with a selection intended for a wide audience ranging from reinvented pop culture to auteur cinema and speculative fiction, horror flicks to martial arts and grand epics.

This year, the delirious *YATTERMEN*, from Japanese director Takashi Miike will mark the opening of the festivities. This eagerly awaited Canadian premiere will plunge its audience into a kitschy psychedelic universe taken straight from the popular '70s manga.

With over 115 feature-length films from Asia, Europe, the United States, Canada and beyond, an impressive selection of short medium and feature-length movies from Quebec, documentaries, panel discussions, outdoor screenings and much more... this marathon of events will indulge everyone from the most demanding film enthusiast to the novelty starved neophyte. All this in the warm and exuberant atmosphere that has become synonymous with Fantasia.

In addition to the prizes awarded by the bright lights of the artistic community (Best Feature Film, Best First Feature, Best International Short Film, Best Quebec Short Film, Best DIY Short Film) the publications *Écran Fantastique* and *Séquences*, long-time partners of the festival, will give prizes for Best Fantasy Feature and Best Asian Film. Of course, the much coveted Public's Choice Award will be once again presented to the movie that garnered the most votes during all three weeks of the festival.

The Fantasia Film Festival is proud to present, in association with the Cinémathèque Québécoise and Ciné-Asie, a line-up of 13 of the most memorable Japanese erotic films or *pinku eiga* ("Pink Movies") and would like to thank Jasper Sharp for his precious collaboration in putting together this prestigious retrospective. Jasper Sharp is the author of *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*.

2009 LINE-UP

The past 12 months have been a treasure trove for sharp, individualistic visions of the unusual. Keep your hands on the bars as we give you a quick tour of some of what we've got in store for you.

From Ireland, we have the Canadian Premiere of Conor McPherson's haunting supernatural drama **THE ECLIPSE**, hot off winning an award at the Tribeca Film Festival. France brings us David Morley's anticipated feature debut **MUTANTS** (North American Premiere). Also from France comes Michel Houellebecq's **POSSIBILITY OF AN ISLAND** (North American Premiere), the gifted author's long-awaited directorial debut. UK filmmaker Adam Mason continues to amaze with the intense **BLOOD RIVER** (Canadian Premiere), a film reminiscent of both Donald Cammell and Richard Stanley. The UK also brings forth a pair of unsettling Clive Barker Adaptations - Anthony DiBlasi's **DREAD** (World Premiere) and John Harrison's **BOOK OF BLOOD** (North American Premiere). Belgium's Polanski-esque **LEFT BANK** (Canadian Premiere) is a phenomenal slow-burn body-horror film, directed by Pieter Van Hees. From the USA, Michael Dougherty's much-loved **TRICK 'R' TREAT** stars Anna Paquin and Brian Cox, and has become a fan favourite at every festival it's screened. Also from the US is Robert Masciantonio's **NEIGHBOR** (World Premiere), easily the most extreme film we've seen all year— imagine AUDITION crossed with IN THE REALM OF THE SENSES! Another US film you don't want to miss is Danny Kuchuck & John Weiner's award-winning time-travel thriller **CRYPTIC** (Canadian Premiere). A couple find themselves in a fight against nature – while stranded in the Grand Canyon – in Richard Harrah's US thriller **THE CANYON** (World Premiere). Brazil's audacious **EMBODIMENT OF EVIL** (Canadian Premiere) marks the return of the great José Mojica Marins and is a new height in the annals of South American surrealist horror, well-worthy of the red carpet gala it received at the Venice Film Festival.

Children can be scary little beasts, and this year's festival showcases a trio of films that pull out all stops to illustrate this. In Paul Solet's **GRACE** (Montreal Premiere), a young woman carries a dead baby to term, with results that had numerous people fainting in their seats when the film launched at Sundance earlier this year. Tom Shankland's UK shocker **THE CHILDREN** (North American Premiere) pits parent against child in a gruelling fight for survival. It's one of our favourite horror films of the year. Jaume Collet-Serra's **ORPHAN** sees a mysterious young girl visiting hell upon her new adoptive family.

Radical independent triumphs are exploding throughout the festival like land mines of inspiration. Dominic Murphy's **WHITE LIGHTNIN'**, a major discovery at Sundance and Berlin, rockets the meth-fuelled life and crimes of dancing outlaw Jesco White. Another Sundance (not to mention SXSW) hit, David Russo's **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF LITTLE DIZZLE** (International Premiere), features pregnant male characters giving birth to marine creatures. It very well may be this generation's REPO MAN. Also from the US is Alejandro Adams's **CANARY**, an unforgettable film that every Soderbergh fan should consider a must-see. Another US must is Marcel Sarmiento and Gadi Harel's undead exploration of misogyny, the controversial **DEADGIRL** (Montreal Premiere). Buddy Giovinazzo's hard-hitting **LIFE IS HOT IN CRACKTOWN** (International Premiere) plays like a strung out version of Altman's SHORT CUTS by way of LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN. Simon Ennis' Canadian Slamdance hit **YOU MIGHT AS WELL LIVE** (Canadian premiere) proves that mental illness can be fun. France lands a powerhouse punch with Pierre

Laffargue's **BLACK** (Canadian premiere), starring MC Jean Gab'1. Another Gallic must-see is Nicolas Alberny & Jean Mach's subversive **8th WONDERLAND** (Canadian Premiere), in which progressives from every part of the world unite online to create a virtual country and challenge the G8, with harrowing results. **SANS DESSEIN** (World Premiere) sees adored Quebecois comedy collective Deadcat Films deliver on the promise of their many shorts with a madcap feature debut. Also from Quebec, we've got **A QUELLE HEURE LE TRAIN POUR NULLE PART**, Robin Aubert's experimental and existential India-lensed road movie. Tearing straight out of South Africa, Mark Lebenan's adrenalized **SLAM-BANG** (World Premiere) is a Michael Mann-esque thriller with spirit and guts.

The theme of vengeance has resurfaced in world cinema with white hot fury, and is reflected in our lineup with a blistering pair of films from Australia and Canada – respectively, Steven Kastrissios' award-winning **THE HORSEMAN** (Canadian Premiere) and Andrew Hunt's **SWEET KARMA** (World Premiere). Interestingly both films deal with lone protagonists – a middle-aged, male exterminator in the former, a young female immigrant in the latter – who wage war against the underground sex trades in their communities.

Esther Gronenborn's German thriller **THE KAIFECK MURDER** (Canadian Premiere) is a triumph of atmosphere and mood. Uwe Boll does an extreme career makeover with the harrowing prison drama **STOIC** (North American Premiere), a co-production between Canada and the US. Speaking of Canada, we'll be hosting the Canadian Premiere of Max Perrier's **THE ANTE**, a low-budget Montreal crime film that turned many a head at Slamdance. Denmark gives us a crime film of a different breed with Henrik Ruben Genz's fascinating neo-Noir **TERRIBLY HAPPY** (Canadian Premiere), winner of the Crystal Globe at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival.

The Comedy/Horror subgenre has never been stronger. Witness Glenn McQuaid's **I SELL THE DEAD** (Montreal Premiere), a brilliant Victorian-era tale of grave-robbing and the supernatural that stars Dominic Monaghan, Larry Fessenden and Ron Perlman, and ranks with the best of Tim Burton. Nazi Zombies from Norway are here to change your outlook on Norwegian cinema in Tommy Wirkola's Sundance smash **DEAD SNOW** (Canadian Premiere). What do you get when the director of **JESUS CHRIST VAMPIRE HUNTER** teams up with Sasha Grey, David Hess and Michael Berryman to shoot a wacked-out tribute to '60s splatter pioneer HG Lewis? You get **SMASH CUT** (World Premiere), the latest from Canada's Lee Demarbre. Want more? UK comedy duo James Corden and Mat Horne star in the loopy SXSW hit **LESBIAN VAMPIRE KILLERS** (Canadian Premiere). Last but not least, Germany delivers one of the wildest discoveries of the year, Andreas Schaap's **MUST LOVE DEATH** (World Premiere), an astounding freak fusion of romantic comedy and extreme horror that plays as if the Coen Brothers collaborated with Takashi Miike and MANHATTEN-era Woody Allen to make something in the median between **FLIRTING WITH DISASTER** and **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**!

On the documentary side of things, we've got a quartet of USA films that are bound to provoke much post-screening discussion. A role playing game based on the Columbine massacre is the subject of Danny Ledonne's **PLAYING COLUMBINE**, a film that explores the question of responsibility in media and the culpability of creation. Barbara Bell and Anna Lorentzon's **GRAPHIC SEXUAL HORROR** (Montreal Premiere) is a stark look at the minds and mechanisms behind *insex.com*, an extreme BDSM site that was shut down by US authorities using a clause in the Patriot Act. Michael Paul Stephenson's wickedly entertaining **BEST WORST MOVIE** (Montreal Premiere) spends time with a pack of inadvertent celebrities – the cast of **TROLL 2**

(widely considered to be the worst film ever made) - whose dull, normal lives are disrupted by the surprise realization that they have fans across the world. Lastly, a year in the life of the brazenly law-un-abiding outlaw family of Jesco White is documented in Julian Nitzberg's jaw-dropping and touching **WILD AND WONDERFUL WHITES OF WEST VIRGINIA** (Canadian Premiere), a film that could very well land almost everyone involved in jail the minute it comes out!

VERS LES ÉTOILES: CEREBRAL SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA (see press release)

This year, Fantasia will be dedicating an instalment to science fiction. Not the kind which can be summed up with flashy special effects and mere technical prowess but rather deep introspective and philosophical films. All four films shown this year share a common aim, to use familiar themes and settings in order to trigger a certain degree of contemplation from the audience. In various ways, these novel works epitomize the hopes and anxieties of today's society. They foresee a possible future where our endless quest for health, peace and immortality have forced us to turn a blind eye to cruelty and ultimately give up the very things that make us human. The road to redemption will not be an easy one but with a bit of luck we will reach the stars.

DOCUMENTARIES OF THE EDGE (see press release)

The critically and publicly acclaimed second edition of the DOCUMENTARIES FROM THE EDGE series proved last year that it holds a distinguished place at Fantasia. This section returns this summer with five debut films taking on curious and disturbing social phenomena. A debate over a video game, a modern out-law family, a site dedicated to fetishism, a passion for a lemon, and a mysterious notebook are all subjects that have fascinated the directors and touched them intimately. These captivating documentaries demand that the audience take a stand on what is presented to them on screen. Enter the room, and on with the debate!

FIRST-CLASS ASIAN CINEMA

Over 50 Asian films, 35 from Japan, the rest from Korea, China/Hong Kong and Thailand, are invading Montreal as part of the Fantasia Film Festival's 13th edition. With a mix of highly anticipated award-winning films presentations and guaranteed crowd pleasers, the Festival will be featuring the very best in Asian cinema.

FANTASIA IS BRIMMING WITH AWARD WINNING FILMS

Fantasia is thrilled to present the North American premiere of Park Chan-wook's *THIRST*, this tale of love and vampires which is part *film d'auteur*, part horror flick made quite an impact at the Cannes Festival where it was awarded the Jury prize. Also from South Korea comes *BREATHLESS*, a first effort by Yang Ik-june who will be gracing us with his presence this year. *BREATHLESS* was conferred the highest distinction at the Rotterdam International Film Festival and earned the Critic's Prize at Deauville. Hong Kong brings us the epic *THE WARLORDS* and *IP MAN* a historical martial arts movie both of which were highly praised during the last Hong Kong Film Awards. Not to be left behind, Japan will be delighting us with the comedy *FINE, TOTALLY FINE*, Audience Award winner at the 2008 New York Asian Film Festival. Also noteworthy are such prominent new films as Kim Ki-duk's *DREAM* and Sion Sono's *LOVE EXPOSURE*, as well as *YATTERMAN* (this year's opening film which will be presented by producer Yoshinori Chiba) from

none other than Japanese cinema's favourite black sheep, Takashi Miike. Finally, let's not forget MY DEAR ENEMY a movie with magnificently intricate aesthetics which was an official selection at the Berlin International Film Festival and whose leading lady Jeon Do-yeon is a Cannes best actress winner for her role in SECRET SUNSHINE.

HUMOUR, ACTION, EMOTION!

Kung-fu, Taekwondo and Muay Thai will all take center stage in such films as COWEB, SPARE and FIREBALL. All the comedy lovers can look forward to INSTANT SWAMP from Satoshi Miki (ADRIFT IN TOKYO), CRUSH AND BLUSH (produced by Park Chan-wook who also had a hand in the screenplay) and CRAZY RACER. An informed public thirsting for some thrills will not want to miss THE CHASER (a surprise 2008 hit in Korea, it was presented at Cannes last year) and ROUGH CUT (produced and co-written by Kim Ki-duk). Tetsuya Nakashima (MEMORIES OF MATSUKO) is back with the family friendly PACO AND THE MAGIC BOOK a funny, touching and offbeat journey somewhere between *Scrooge* and Tim Burton. Japanese animation is back to claim its place in the Festival with such features as HELLS brought to us by Madhouse and GENIUS PARTY BEYOND, from beloved 4°C studio. Finally, for those who just can't resist some good old over the top screwball fun we have VAMPIRE GIRL VS. FRANKENSTEIN GIRL, hosted by Yoshihiro Nishimura (TOKYO GORE POLICE), and last but not least HARD REVENGE, MILLY where the audience will get to meet writer/producer Takanori Tsujimoto.

A lavish slice of Asian cinema, the Fantasia Film Festival is proud to offer a rich mosaic of lush, inspired and audacious cinema.

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