

# THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 | DAY 1 | TORONTO Hollywood THR.COM/TORONTO REPORTER

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# GERMAN FILMS IN TORONTO

## Special Presentations



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## Special Events



SPENCER

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## TIFF Docs



THE DEVIL'S DRIVERS

© Daniel Carsenty

## Wavelengths



THE CAPACITY FOR ADEQUATE ANGER

© Vika Kirchenbauer, VO Bild Markt

## Gala Presentations

**BERGMAN ISLAND** by Mia Hansen-Løve (FR/BE/DE/SE, Neue Bioskop Film)

## Special Presentations

**AHED'S KNEE** by Nadav Lapid (FR/DE/IL, Komplizen Film)

**FRANCE** by Bruno Dumont (FR/DE/BE/IT, Red Balloon Film)

**I'M YOUR MAN** by Maria Schrader (Letterbox Filmproduktion)

**LINGUI, THE SACRED BOND** by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (FR/DE/BE, Made in Germany)

**THE MIDDLE MAN** by Bent Hamer (NO/CA/DE/DK, Pandora Film)

**THE STORY OF MY WIFE** by Ildikó Enyedi (HU/DE/FR/IT, Komplizen Film)

## Special Events

**MEMORIA** by Apichatpong Weerasethakul (CO/MX/FR/GB/TH/DE/CN/CH, Match Factory Productions)

**SPENCER** by Pablo Larraín (DE/GB, Komplizen Film)

## Contemporary World Cinema

**COMPARTMENT NO. 6** by Juho Kuosmanen (FI/RU/EE/DE, Achtung Panda!)

**THE GRAVEDIGGER'S WIFE** by Khadar Ayderus Ahmed (FI/DE/FR, Twenty Twenty Vision)

**VENGEANCE IS MINE, ALL OTHERS PAY CASH**

by Edwin (ID/SG/DE, Match Factory Productions, Bombero International)

**WHETHER THE WEATHER IS FINE** by Carlos Manatad (PH/FR/DE, Weydemann Bros.)

## Discovery

**ANATOLIAN LEOPARD** by Emre Kayış (TR/DE/DK/PO, Elemag Pictures)

**TUG OF WAR** by Amil Shivji (TZ/ZA/DE/QA, Niko Film)

## TIFF Docs

**THE DEVIL'S DRIVERS** by Daniel Carsenty, Mohammed Abugeth (DE/QA/FR/LB, Mark It Zero)

## Wavelengths

**THE CAPACITY FOR ADEQUATE ANGER** by Vika Kirchenbauer

More details about the German TIFF lineup and the market screenings at the German Films Spotlight Page on TIFF Digital Cinema Pro!

german  
films



# THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

DAY 1

TORONTO

TORONTO  
WEATHER  
AND HIGH  
TEMPS

TODAY  
72° F  
22° C



TOMORROW  
78° F  
26° C



## Knightley's *Silent Night* Lands at AMC+, RLJE Films

BY ETAN VLESSING

**S**ilent Night, the U.K. dark comedy starring **Keira Knightley** and **Lily-Rose Depp**, has landed with AMC+ and RLJE Films ahead of a world premiere at the Toronto film festival on Sept. 16.

**Camille Griffin's** feature directorial debut about a family's eventful Christmas dinner in the country also stars **Matthew Goode**, **Roman Griffin Davis**, **Annabelle Wallis**, **Rufus Jones** and **Trudie Styler**.

(Continued on page 2)

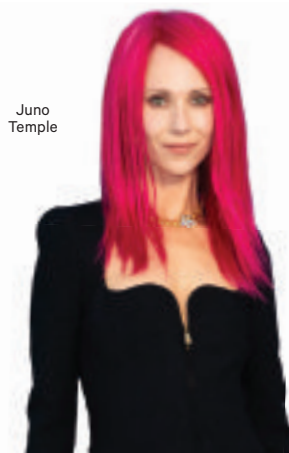
## Juno Temple Climbs Doug Liman's *Everest*

BY ALEX RITMAN

**J**uno Temple, perhaps best known for her starring role in Apple's hit soccer series *Ted Lasso*, has joined **Ewan McGregor**, **Sam Heughan** and **Mark Strong** in **Doug Liman's** upcoming frosty adventure, *Everest*.

The film — in which McGregor will play famed mountaineer **George Mallory** — will see Temple play Mallory's beloved wife, **Ruth**, who is

(Continued on page 2)



Juno Temple  
TEMPLE: VALERIE MACON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



READ MORE  
ON PAGE 14

## 10 Hot Sales Titles on Offer in Toronto

Buzzy packages and finished films will be presented virtually for the second year in a row at TIFF. Films on offer include (above, from left): *Survivor*, *Hold Your Fire*, *The Forgiven* and *The Good House*.

## Awards Contenders Come Into Focus as TIFF Kicks Off

Hopefuls like Jane Campion's *Power of the Dog* and Kenneth Branagh's *Belfast* are riding momentum out of Venice and Telluride, while buzzy premieres like *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* and *Dear Evan Hansen* will look to make a big splash in Toronto **BY SCOTT FEINBERG**

**O**n the heels of the 78th Venice Film Festival and 48th Telluride Film Festival, which both got going during the long Labor Day weekend, the awards race heads north of the border for the 46th Toronto International Film Festival, with the field of Oscar contenders beginning to come into focus.

At Venice, which is ongoing, **Pedro Almodóvar's** *Parallel Mothers* premiered in competition and received rave reviews, especially for its leading lady, **Penélope Cruz**. Out of competition debuts on the Lido included **Denis Villeneuve's** big-budget *Dune*, which seems likeliest to register in below-the-line

categories; and *Last Night in Soho*, with **Anya Taylor-Joy** and **Thomasin McKenzie** bringing to life a script by **Edgar Wright** and **Krysty Wilson-Cairns** that could contend. **Ridley Scott's** highly anticipated *The Last Duel*, co-written by and co-starring **Ben Affleck** and **Matt Damon**, will screen Friday.

Meanwhile, Telluride held the first-anywhere screenings of **Reinaldo Marcus Green's** crowd-pleaser *King Richard*, the story of **Venus and Serena Williams' dad**, who is played by **Will Smith** in a performance that many believe could bring the *Fresh Prince* his first Oscar; *Belfast*, a black-and-white period piece, which

(Continued on page 2)

For all the latest coverage of the Toronto International Film Festival, go to **THR.COM/TORONTO**

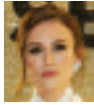
## SILENT NIGHT

Continued from page 1

The film tells the story of a group of normally stoic Brits who can't find the courage needed for their last night on Earth.

RLJE Films plans a day-and-date release in theaters and on the AMC+ streaming platform in North America this December. "With a focus on growing original and exclusive content for AMC+, we're excited to partner with RLJE Films to bring *Silent Night* to a broad audience across both streaming and theatrical," **Courtney Thomasma**, general manager for AMC+, said in a statement.

Endeavor Content is handling international sales at TIFF. **VIII**



Knightley

## EVEREST

Continued from page 1

left behind to handle their life during his life-threatening attempts to scale Everest.

Alongside the casting, HanWay Films has closed multiple key deals following the launch at the Cannes virtual market. With plans to release theatrically in all territories, deals have been secured with Sky (U.K.), SND (France), Wild Bunch (Germany, Switzerland), Notorious (Italy, Spain), Belga (Benelux), Nordisk (Scandinavia), NOS (Portugal), Madman (Australia, New Zealand), IDC (Latin America), Elevation (Canada), Paradise (CIS/Baltics), Monolith (Poland), ProRom (Central and Eastern Europe), FrontRow (Middle East), Forum (Israel), Gravel Road (South Africa), Medialink (Hong Kong), PVR (Indian subcontinent), Falcon (Indonesia), Shaw (Singapore), Joy n Cinema (South Korea), Cai Chang (Taiwan) and Echo Lake (Airlines). **VIII**

## AWARDS CONTENDERS

Continued from page 1

has been described as "Kenneth Branagh's *Roma*" and could garner similar across-the-board recognition; **Mike Mills'** *C'mon C'mon*, another black-and-white pic, this one starring **Joaquin Phoenix** and 10-year-old newcomer **Woody Norman** as uncle and nephew; **Joe Wright's** *Cyrano*, a musical vehicle for **Peter Dinklage**, who is attracting buzz; and **Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi** and **Jimmy Chin's** follow-up to their Oscar-winning *Free Solo*, the Thai cave-rescue doc *The Rescue*.

Both fests, meanwhile, screened **Paolo Sorrentino's** autobiographical *The Hand of God*, which will probably be Italy's submission for the best international feature competition; **Maggie Gyllenhaal's** *The Lost Daughter*, featuring powerhouse performances by **Olivia Colman** and **Jessie Buckley** as the same character at different stages of motherhood; *The Power of the Dog*, which **Jane Campion** regards as a bookend to her 1993 Oscar winner *The Piano*; **Pablo Larrain's** "fable from a true tragedy" *Spencer*, in which **Kristen Stewart** channels **Princess Diana** and seems bound for an Oscar nom, at least; and **Paul Schrader's** *The Card Counter*.

Toronto will host most of the aforementioned films, plus the world premieres of **Stephen Chbosky's** *Dear Evan Hansen*, an adaptation of Broadway's biggest hit since *Hamilton*, on opening night. Another adaptation of a Tony winner to keep an eye on is **Stephen Karam's** *The Humans*. **Michael Showalter's** *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* is said to feature a magnificent performance by **Jessica Chastain** as the title character. Other possible contenders include **Barry Levinson's** *The Survivor* and **Zhang Yimou's** *One Second*, which could possibly be China's entry in the international Oscar category.

Toronto will also bring back several Sundance titles, including **Jonas Poher Rasmussen's** animation/doc-hybrid hopeful *Flee*. And several award winners in Cannes could get awards attention stateside, including, **Julia Ducournau's** Palme d'Or winner *Titane*; **Asghar Farhadi's** *A Hero*, a co-winner of

the Grand Prize; *Annette*, an unusual musical for which **Leos Carax** won best director (and could contend in music categories); and **Sean Baker's** *Red Rocket*, in which lead actor **Simon Rex** and supporting actress **Suzanna Son** are standouts. Screenplay possibilities include **Mia Hansen-Love's** *Bergman Island* and **Wes Anderson's** *The French Dispatch*. And **Todd Haynes'** *The Velvet Underground* will be a contender in the doc category.

Post-Toronto, the race will move on to New York with a number of films from awards season heavy hitters, such as **Joel Coen's** *The*



Jessica Chastain could be an acting contender for *Eyes of Tammy Faye* (top), while *Annette* could vie in music categories.

*Tragedy of Macbeth* and perhaps **Adam McKay's** *Don't Look Up* and **Lin-Manuel Miranda's** *tick, tick ... Boom!* The London Film Fest will play host to **Jeymes Samuel's** *The Harder They Fall* starring **Idris Elba**, which could be a contender. It remains to be seen where the first screenings will be of **Guillermo del Toro's** *Nightmare Alley*, **Steven Spielberg's** *West Side Story*, **Aaron Sorkin's** *Being the Ricardos*, *House of Gucci* from Ridley Scott (again), **George Clooney's** *The Tender Bar* and whatever **Paul Thomas Anderson** ends up calling his latest film. **VIII**

## Meanwhile, in the Real World ...

→ The U.S. Justice Department sued the state of Texas on Thursday over its new six-week abortion ban, saying the state law is unconstitutional. Attorney General **Merrick Garland** said the Texas law's design seeks "to prevent women from exercising their constitutional rights."

→ President **Joe Biden** will impose stringent new vaccine rules in a sweeping attempt to contain COVID-19. Biden will direct the Labor Department to require all businesses with 100 or more employees ensure their workers are either vaccinated or tested once a week.

→ DJ2 Entertainment, the production company behind adaptations of video game properties including *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Life Is Strange* and *Tomb Raider*, has acquired rights to the iconic animatronic toy **Teddy Ruxpin**, with plans to develop the character for film and TV.



# WeAre UKFilm



Ali & Ava – Clio Barnard

## Congratulations to the filmmakers, funders, cast and crew of all the UK features, documentaries, co-pros and shorts selected to screen at TIFF 2021

A Few Miles South Ali & Ava  
A Banquet Belfast Benediction  
Bhai Dashcam Earwig Egungun  
The Electrical Life Of Louis Wain  
Encounter The Forgiven The Future  
Isn't What It Used To Be Hanging On  
Last Night In Soho Mothering Sunday  
Nobody Has To Know Silent Night  
Soft Animals Spencer True Things  
Three Minutes – A Lengthening  
The Rescue



Benediction – Terence Davies

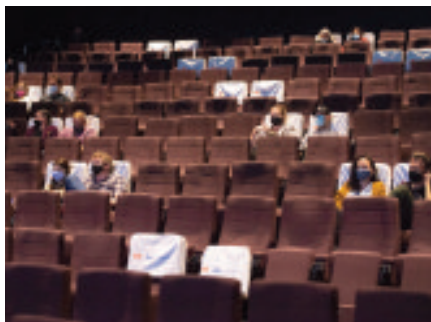


Last Night in Soho – Edgar Wright

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# Toronto's COVID Clampdown

From mobile units to couriers and house calls (even to hotels), TIFF offers festgoers a range of options for rapid testing via medical service providers throughout the city



For the second straight year, TIFF will limit capacity at screenings and require masks.

**F**ewer Hollywood talents and execs than usual are expected at Toronto for its 46th edition, as Canada is in the grip of an unsettling fourth wave of COVID-19. But for those who are on hand, TIFF is offering an array of testing options to keep things humming along.

The festival has contracted with medical services provider Medcan to complete PCR tests for key Hollywood talent in Toronto and will drive them back and forth to Medcan headquarters on York Street — a 10-minute ride from TIFF headquarters on King Street. And the festival will foot the bill.

Mobile units will conduct PCR and rapid antigen tests at Toronto hotels, existing Hollywood film and TV production sites in the city, and other locations.

"We can send nurses to wherever talent is

living or working, and we can test on site and offer a lab PCR test, or they can come to our office and get a PCR test," says **Lee Grunberg**, president and CEO of medical services provider Integracare.

TIFF organizers will accept these results as long as the full name, date of the test and a negative result are shared with the festival's on-site venue team.

And if that isn't enough, deep-pocketed major studios and streamers will be using their own discreet concierge testing services.

Private labs such as Switch Health and Datamatrix offer hotel or house calls for COVID-19 tests or can arrange for a courier to deliver home-testing kits, for a health care professional to oversee a self-swab, and subsequently for the pickup and delivery of completed tests to labs. They also offer same-day service for walk-ins at local clinics.

Then there are flights home (most airlines require a negative test for international travel). LifeLabs, another Toronto-based medical services provider, offers pre-departure testing through its FlyClear program. Once a patient is registered online, tests are performed at a local pharmacy and results are issued electronically, with LifeLabs coordinating the logistics and timing to ensure they arrive before departure. "We make sure there's a correct window to have sufficient time before you travel," LifeLabs spokesperson

**Imran Amin** tells *THR*. — ETAN VLESSING



3 Questions With ...

## MATT SMITH

**S**mith — already something of a British icon thanks to stints as the Doctor on *Doctor Who* and Prince Philip on *The Crown* — stars alongside **Anya Taylor-Joy** and **Thomasin McKenzie** in **Edgar Wright's** time-twisting psychological horror *Last Night in Soho*, set and shot in the famed central London neighborhood. Smith stars as a handsome saviour turned abusive pimp to Taylor-Joy's aspiring singer in the swinging London of the late '60s.

**How did it feel to make a film about Soho, somewhere I'm sure you've spent quite a bit of time?**

Having lived in London for 10 years, it felt like a love letter. It's home. It made me really proud of London — it's got such flair and such great sense of style. [Wright has] really made it look amazing in the '60s.

**Did you also get a sense that we might not see Soho like this again as it battles development and gentrification?**

It's awful. It really depresses me. Even now I see too many yogurt shops there. Who the fuck goes to yogurt shops? Haven't we got better things to do that go to yogurt shops? I mean, I say that and I go to pubs and they probably think: Who the fuck goes to pubs?

**With Jodie Whittaker leaving, who do you think should play the next Doctor Who?**

You know who I think would be a brilliant Doctor Who ... **Rhys Ifans**. Rhys would be sort of cool. I don't know if we've had a Welshman yet. I'm backing Rhys! — ALEX RITMAN

EXCLUSIVE  
FIRST LOOK



## Bruce Willis in *Fortress*

Bruce Willis is on the lookout in *Fortress*, an action thriller set in a top-secret resort for retired U.S. intelligence officers. When a group of criminals breach the resort compound, a retired officer (Willis) and his son (Jesse Metcalfe) must save the day. International rights for *Fortress* are being repped by Highland Film Group.




Jessica Alexander (left) and Ruby Stokes in *A Banquet*.

## Eating Leads to Body Horror in Dread-Soaked *A Banquet*

Ruth Paxton's feature debut uses the pain associated with an eating disorder to craft a slow-burn thriller that mines deeper truths about the psychology of food and power

### Hidden Gem

It's hard to know what to call **Ruth Paxton's** female-led horror pic *A Banquet*.

Yes, the Scottish filmmaker's debut feature is a discomfiting body horror movie, but it has no jump scares or ghosts or demons in the ether. More of a slow-burn psychological thriller, Paxton uses an apparent eating disorder to convey the anxiety and paranoia that descends on a once-healthy family.

The indie, based on a screenplay by **Justin Bull** and bowing at the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 10 as part of the Discovery program, tells the story of a widowed mother, Holly (**Sienna Guillory**), who struggles to help her teenage daughter Betsey (**Jessica Alexander**) escape an apparent

possession after a run-in with something demonic in a forest.

With her body seemingly no longer her own, Betsey stops eating — all to serve a higher power. But is she really possessed, or is she wrestling with mental illness? After all, both Holly and Betsy are dealing with the painful loss of their husband/father, who commits suicide early in the film.

"For me, the horror at the core of the story is a disintegration of a once-tight family unit. It tears them apart," Paxton says. A deft ability to defy convention sees the director exploring the psychology of food and power to produce a metaphor-heavy vision of a young woman at war with herself.

As the audience is left to ponder



Paxton

whether Betsey's refusal to eat stems from a family trauma or something genuinely supernatural, starvation becomes the unseen menace that powers Holly's panic. And like voiceless women through the centuries who used fasting to demonstrate religious devotion as martyrs and saints, Betsey suddenly has her mother's full attention.

"It's about control when you have no control over anything else, and having a sense of power from it. Betsey gets a reaction by not eating. Maybe she isn't hungry. But the longer she doesn't eat, the more she becomes remarkable — the more power and conviction she has over the family," Paxton explains.

The notion of gaining a sense of power by controlling food, when all else is chaos, is something Paxton knows about after having had her own bout with an eating disorder. "I had to find a way to get into Betsey's mindset, and that became easier with her restrictive eating. That's something I have done, many women have done," she says.

At one point in the film, Holly, helpless in the face of her daughter's defiance, has a nightmarish vision. Borrowing from Japanese folklore, Paxton unveils the chilling sight of her daughter as a Futakuchi-Onna — a kind of monster with two mouths — with the second mouth horrifically visible on the back of the young girl's head.

It's one of the few real horror-movie moments in a film that is otherwise bathed in a pervasive sense of doom.

Says Paxton: "There's nothing concrete about the horror in this film. I pitched early on that I wanted to permeate the film with dread, I wanted it to be an uncomfortable experience for audiences, so that you're constantly wondering where it's going and what's actually happening." — E.V.

## Toronto, According to ...

### What I miss most about not being there is ...

Not being there! (I moved to Montreal.)

### What I don't miss about Toronto is ...

The stress and guilt of being a ghost to your family while the world's biggest festival is in your hometown.

### My "only in Toronto" moment

### was ...

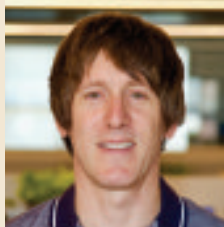
Running into **Viggo Mortensen** accidentally in the green room at ScotiaBank Cinema, inviting him to the Mongrel party ... and having him actually show up!

### What I've missed most about Toronto is ...

The intensity and excitement of the first weekend.

### The biggest challenge working

### THE DISTRIBUTOR



**Andrew Frank**  
VP, Sales & Acquisitions,  
Mongrel Media

### festivals during the COVID-19 era is ...

Missing the intel from social events with fellow buyers. It takes so much more effort to get it without the physical market.

### The one place I have to visit when in Toronto is ...

Byblos! [Eastern Mediterranean restaurant in downtown Toronto.]

### The place I avoid during the festival is ...

The elevator at the Bell Lightbox! (Will they ever open the stairs?)

### My favorite Canadian director/talent is ...

The one who trusts us to release their film the way we trust them to make their movie.

### The most Canadian thing about Toronto is ...

A kind of passive aggressiveness obfuscated by cheerfulness (as opposed to my own American brand of unabashed aggressiveness). — SCOTT ROXBOROUGH

Interview edited for length and clarity.

## Stephen Chbosky

The writer-director on taking *Dear Evan Hansen* from Broadway to the big screen, the responsibility he feels toward the play's fans and why opening Toronto is like 'coming home'

BY ETAN VLESSING

While Broadway shows like *Mean Girls* and *Spider-Man* began as Hollywood movie franchises that jumped to the stage after strong multiplex runs, Stephen Chbosky, who wrote the screenplay for Disney's live-action *Beauty and the Beast* and the film adaptation of R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*, has turned a hit Broadway musical into an awards-season hopeful set to open the Toronto International Film Festival.

Chbosky, best known for adapting his 1999 novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, says he's happy his new movie, with its powerful message to young audiences about the perils of social media and isolating themselves, is getting an exclusive theatrical release by Universal on Sept. 24 before heading to digital.

"The movie in part is about how screens have changed the teenage and adolescent experience — in many ways for the worse," he tells *THR*.

Chbosky's adaptation of the Broadway phenomenon — starring Ben Platt, Amy Adams, Julianne Moore, Kaitlyn Dever, Amandla Stenberg and Nik Dodani — is based on a script by Steven Levenson, who wrote the book for the original stage play. And Platt, who originated the role and won a Tony for it, is reprising the character of Evan Hansen, a

painfully awkward teen who gets caught up in a lie when he claims he was best friends with a school-mate who dies by suicide.

Chbosky sat down with *THR* ahead of *Evan Hansen*'s premiere to talk about how he created a Broadway musical suited to the big screen, the responsibility he felt toward the play's rabid fan base and why he's thrilled to be opening TIFF.

**Did you feel a responsibility to get the movie version of *Dear Evan Hansen* just right, given that the Broadway play has such a huge fan base?**

I did feel a responsibility, but I didn't feel a lot of pressure. I loved the show. I made the movie as a fan of the show. I always felt that in doing my job, I was always looking out for the fans.

**What parts of the stage play did you keep intact and what parts did you change for the movie?**

There were a few different changes. One, very naturally, when you're looking at a Broadway production, the stage takes on more of a metaphoric and abstract spatial relationship, where a bed represents an entire bedroom or a couch an entire living room. So we always knew [with the movie] that what was an abstraction becomes quite real. We have to find that house, we



### BY THE NUMBERS

5

Feature films directed

1

Independent Spirit Award: best first feature for *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

\$33.4M

Global box office for *Perks of Being a Wallflower*

have to find that school, we have to find what Evan's bedroom and Evan's house really looks like. And we knew the minute you brought it into the real world, we would bring it into close-up and change the emotional intensity of the piece. So that was step one.

**And some songs in the stage play didn't make it to the movie, and some songs were written for the movie itself?**

The minute you take a song and move it from a stage to an actual dining room, the minute you change a scene from a stage to an actual school, it feels different. And so, as a result, to make the audience understand Evan's point of view even further than they do on a stage, we took out a couple songs and added a couple songs that spoke to those larger themes.

**Universal will give *Dear Evan Hansen* a theatrical release. How important is it for you that the movie, like the play, is seen before a live audience as opposed to young people seeing it at home on their own?**

I'm so happy that we're having a theatrical release. We worked so hard so that, if you went to the theater, you would experience it in a truly immersive way. To me, to see it in the theater is to see it as it should be seen. I really hope, with everything going on,

people can go and go safely. It feels like in Hollywood, more and more movies are going straight to streaming. That's a shame when the theatrical experience isn't given more time and attention. We all understand why it's happening. But I'm very moved that we're going to theaters.

**How excited are you to open TIFF?**

It's a dream come true. Nine years ago, I brought *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, my first studio feature, to Toronto. It was a magical premiere. The idea that not only do we get to go back, the idea that they wanted to invite the movie to be the opening-night movie — it's a dream come true. I love Toronto. I love Canada. I've spent a lot of time there. It's a home away from home. In a lot of ways, bringing *Dear Evan Hansen* to Toronto is like coming home.

*Interview edited for length and clarity.*



Ben Platt, with Amandla Stenberg, reprises his Broadway role for Universal's *Dear Evan Hansen*.

For all the latest coverage of the Toronto Film Festival, go to [THR.COM/TORONTO](https://www.thr.com/toronto)





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# A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

It took nearly a decade for Jessica Chastain to bring her passion project, *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, to the screen, but even after immersing herself in the role — she visited the evangelist's church once a week during production — she had to get past her fear: 'I'm going to fail so spectacularly'

BY MIA GALUPPO



On the first day of production, right before cameras rolled on *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*,

Jessica Chastain said a prayer.

By that point, she had spent nearly a decade trying to get the movie made, having bought the film rights to the 2000 documentary of the same name from directors Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato after watching it in 2012 during a night of insomnia while on the *Zero Dark Thirty* press tour. It had been long enough that in the intervening years, she was nominated for two Oscars (for *Zero Dark Thirty* and 2011's *The Help*), worked with Ridley Scott (2015's *The Martian*) and Aaron Sorkin (2017's *Molly's Game*), and started her own production company, Freckle Films. Long enough that when she first pitched it to exec David Greenbaum, there was still a "Fox" in front of Searchlight Pictures. Still, despite the lead time, on that mid-November morning in North Carolina, Chastain had one last hurdle to get over — her own fear. "I'm going to fail so spectacularly," she remembers thinking of the part. "This will follow me for the rest of my career."

The actress sees her role as Tammy Faye Messner (formerly Bakker) — the televangelist who became a tabloid regular once it was revealed that her husband,





Jim Bakker, had used church donations for personal expenses, including hush money for Jessica Hahn, a former church secretary who accused him of rape — as her biggest swing to date. It's one she was willing to take because of her dedication to play a woman whose story she desperately wanted to recast after it was relegated to mean-spirited — and what Chastain saw as misogynistic — late night joke fodder. “The media has done an injustice that it could be interesting to correct,” says Chastain of her desire to tackle the role. “People were more interested in how much mascara Tammy Faye Bakker was wearing than what she was actually saying.” And, with the movie set for a Sept. 12 Toronto Film Festival premiere and Chastain already generating early buzz for the type of deeply transformational role that can carry a campaign for the requisite six months, she is likely to be laughing all the way through awards season.

But the worry on that November morning on the North Carolina set was that she, like Messner, would wind up on the end of a punchline. This is when Chastain reached for the hands of her *Tammy Faye* cast and crew, including director Michael Showalter and co-stars Andrew Garfield and Cherry Jones, to lead them in a blessing — because it was what Messner would do. Says Chastain, “I kind of had to just shove myself off a cliff.”

It was only one month prior that the actress had been in London with her Freckle Films partner Kelly Carmichael, wrapping up production on a markedly different project: Universal's splashy all-female spy thriller *The 355*. “Jess would shoot all day, she would get home and have dialect lessons, then we would interview [heads of departments], then we would review prosthetic molds and drawings,” explains Carmichael of the hectic schedule that had the duo doing prep for *Tammy Faye* while filming *355*. Transforming into Messner

involved perfecting her singular Minnesotan drawl and compiling a wardrobe with enough gold lamé to make Liberace blush. The first time Chastain saw herself in the prosthetics and Messner's signature makeup, she admits to having a “bit of a panic.”

Notes Carmichael, “This was a very crucial piece that had to work. I think the prosthetics and the look of the actors was the thing that kept us all awake at night.”

To further prepare for the role, Chastain read Messner's and Bakker's memoirs, watched every clip available on YouTube and procured unseen footage from Messner's children, Tammy Sue and Jay (Messner died of cancer in 2007). Chastain had called both while the project was still in development to explain the premise: “[Tammy Sue] said, ‘No one's ever reached out to us. So many people have profited off of our family, and no one's even asked us what we thought about anything.’”



Jessica Chastain on the set of *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*. She admits that the first time she saw herself in prosthetics and Messner's signature makeup, she had a “bit of a panic.”

The research continued into production, with Chastain and Garfield attending church services at the Bakkers' former Fort Mill headquarters (and amusement park), Heritage USA. “We were very shy. Like, ‘Are people going to recognize us? Are they going to throw us out?’ We didn't know what was going to happen,” says Chastain, who adds that they were welcomed, openly. They continued to attend services once a week during production.

For Chastain, the most important scene to get right was Messner's 1985 interview with Christian AIDS patient Steve Pieters, notable for showcasing LGBTQ issues to her markedly conservative, Christian audience at PTL Network. Every day, to get into character and practice her accent, Chastain would rehearse the exchange. She notes that the movie's re-creation is not a “carbon copy,” but one element was important for her to duplicate — a heart-shaped necklace like the one Messner wore in the original

broadcast — because she saw it as an important outward manifestation of Messner's message that “everyone is deserving of love.” And the day production filmed the interview scene, Tammy Sue happened to visit the set and was wearing her mother's necklace. “They were on the monitor, and when I finished shooting I came to hug them, and I was like, ‘That's the necklace!’” remembers the actress, who read the coincidence as a positive omen.

Chastain likens Messner's story to Lorena Bobbitt's and Tonya Harding's, who have gotten their Hollywood recontextualization with Amazon's *Lorena* and the Margot Robbie-fronted *I, Tonya*. With *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* readying for release, Chastain hopes that audiences revisit their own preconceptions. Either way, the actress no longer is plagued by the worry that “people will make fun of me.”

Says Chastain: “Tammy Faye probably thought that and then she did it anyway.” **THR**



# THE REAL POWER BEHIND THE POWER OF THE DOG

Jane Campion talks toxic masculinity in her acclaimed new drama, starting a pop-up film school in New Zealand and why she won't be making a superhero flick any time soon: 'I don't understand Marvel movies' **BY REBECCA KEEGAN**

**J**

Jane Campion's first film in over a decade, *The Power of the Dog*, which has played to glowing reviews at the Venice and Telluride film festivals ahead of its screening at TIFF, is a kind of bookend to her 1993 Palme d'Or-winning period drama, *The Piano*, in its portrait of caged sensuality and repression. But for the first time in Campion's career, the protagonist in *The Power of the Dog* is a man, Montana rancher Phil Burbank, played by Benedict Cumberbatch.

At Telluride, Campion spoke with *THR* about

her movie's themes of toxic masculinity, her fleeting sense of power in the film industry and why there will never be a Jane Campion comic book movie.

**What kind of feedback are you getting about *The Power of the Dog* now that it has screened in Venice and Telluride?**

Our screenings are full. That's what makes me think it must be some good word ... Well, you don't know. Nobody's going to say to me, "Oh, you're full of shit." I don't read reviews because it's always ... you pick up the one thing that's shit, the one comment. I feel it's easier

just not to read those. They [the studio] give you percentages. So I now know it's going well. There's a different warmth coming toward me. When people don't really like your movie, it's like you've got leprosy or something. They avoid you.

**Have you had that with a film, where people treat you like you have leprosy?**

I've had those. I've been in the business a long time, and I've had films that were more troubled. I don't really feel I've ever made a complete failure. But sometimes they've been divisive. My very first film, *Sweetie*, the view



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on it now is that it was audacious and bold. At the time it was very divisive. I had some really powerful critics on my side, like Vincent Canby, who were saying, “This is amazing.” And others saying, “This is a disgusting piece of nonsense melodrama crap. She doesn’t even know how to frame a shot.”

**In *The Power of the Dog*, Benedict Cumberbatch’s character Phil Burbank is an example of toxic masculinity circa 1925. How much were you thinking about contemporary examples of toxic masculinity when you were making it?**

Because of the previous president, I think everybody felt it. Phil’s style of masculinity, and the ethos of masculinity that is heralded in the cowboy world, it’s very romanticized. Cowboys are seen as being about the natural life, the simple life. However, the Burbanks had one of the wealthiest ranches in Montana. They wield a lot of power, and I think power is always the real issue. It comes through with women too, when they have power and how they choose to use it. Power is always it. And money is often power. Don’t you reckon?

**Do you think of yourself as having power within the film world?**

I don’t think of myself as having power because my films don’t always make that much money. If your films are popular, then you’ve got power. And if they’re unpopular then it’s the opposite. I had power after *The Piano*. I noticed that people were interested in what I had to say, which was an absolute new thing. But it definitely does travel up and down. I didn’t identify with it too much because I knew it was

temporal. It’s going to change.

**How early on did Netflix get involved with *The Power of the Dog* and what went into your decision to take the film there?**

When [producers] Roger [Frappier] and Tanya [Seghatchian] and I decided to do this project, there was some discussion about who to do it with. Who would give us our freedom? And who would give us enough budget? It’s actually a really expensive film because of the [set] build. I worked again with See-Saw — I worked with them on *Top of the Lake*. I said, “What about, instead of us going to Amazon or one of those big online people, what about you develop it with us? And you arrange the financing and take care of all that side of it.” Then we got money from the BBC. [BBC Films director] Rose Garnett really supported us. She’s fantastically supportive to me and to Tanya about anything we want to do. There’s a bit of a women’s mafia underneath, slim as it is. So we didn’t want to go out to anyone before it was written. The idea was that we don’t want it to languish at Amazon when they had paid for it to be written and then they didn’t want to pay for it to be made, but they didn’t give it back to us. And that often happens. That’s when Netflix came in. We went to Cannes in 2019. We pitched it to several people, everybody who was interested that we thought would be good partners. But Netflix were the only people that would actually give us enough money to make it.

**How much did it cost?**

Somewhere in the \$30 millions. I think it is economical, but the story itself was a bit risky

for people. Anyway, that’s what the market was telling us. It’s an art film writ large, which is what *Piano* was, too, really. That is a very hard area to actually raise money in now. They want a lot of guarantees. They want stars. They want experienced directors. You’ve got the Academy race that supports that discussion and raises the profile of films. As I analyzed it, television was where you had your freedom. You could really almost do anything. Nobody would shut you down. Discuss any topic, be as crazy as you want. It was fantastic for that. Cinema is a lot more conservative. I understand the Marvel movies, the big superhero movies, being like that [conservative]. I don’t enjoy them. I don’t get horror movies. I don’t even get piles of entertainment that lots of people love. I don’t understand them.

**So we won’t be seeing a Jane Campion comic book movie?**

No, I’ll never do that. Do you know what? I just don’t need the money. I understand why the others do it because ... you can have a career where you go between. I actually don’t know how much that’s true, because once you get used to the big toys ... I don’t see so many people going backwards into smaller budgets once they go out and do a great big Marvel movie. I think it’s hard to go back into personal stories.

**Do you know what your next project will be after this one?**

No. The only thing I do know is that the very next thing I’m going to do is start a pop-up film school in New Zealand. I know that people are working on the environment, but I’m working on the intellectual environment, the learning environment and educational environment. I want it to be for free. It’s really important to me that people have the option to become filmmakers without having wealthy parents. I know I’m going to get the money for it. I’ve actually already spoken to Netflix about it and they’re going to support me doing it. I’ll start with 10 students, I think. I also think it could be for people of any age group to explore their creativity. And people, too, who’ve done maybe a couple of features, but know that they need more education, they need more time to explore who they really are and what they could do, and how they can do it. I actually think that, barring dementia, you’re at your strongest in your capacity and your wisdom in your 60s and 70s. You’ve got insight, because you’ve got the length and breadth of a life behind you.

*Interview edited for length and clarity.*

In *The Power of the Dog*, Benedict Cumberbatch plays Phil Burbank, a powerful, wealthy rancher in 1920s Montana.







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**READY TO ROLL**

# 10 HOT SALES TITLES READY FOR THE TAKING

Dealmaking will likely be subdued thanks to the COVID-19 effect (again), but from an action thriller about beekeeping (you read that correctly) to a time-traveling rom-com, there are plenty of buzzy projects to entice buyers

BY TATIANA SIEGEL AND SCOTT ROXBOROUGH

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Nowadays, no one has the same agenda," says Sony Pictures Classics co-president Tom Bernard. That precept sums up the post-COVID market landscape, which has forced streamers, day-and-daters and traditional theatrical distributors to carve out an increasingly specialized niche within their own subset. As a result, agents are finding fewer, but more focused, players vying for any given title. While finished films will continue to screen in person in Toronto, albeit to a smaller audience of potential buyers, hot packages will be presented virtually for the second year in a row. "We've gotten so used to being flexible and pivoting at the last minute to navigate how best to sell these films," says ICM's Jessica Lacy. "And that's how we're approaching it for our films this year, too." Ultimately, the sales slates are markedly smaller, and the buyers are homing in on their targets with never-before-seen efficiency. Still, expect a few bidding wars, and these 10 projects, which represent an eclectic mix of finished films and presales, will likely kickstart a shopping spree.

## THE BEE KEEPER

**STARS** Jason Statham  
**SALES** Miramax

**BUZZ** Action movies starring Statham are as good as money in the bank with international distributors, so expect this thriller, set in the mythology of beekeeping, to fly off the shelves for Miramax, which is planning a September 2022 shoot.

## THE FORGIVEN

**STARS** Ralph Fiennes, Jessica Chastain  
**DIRECTOR** John Michael McDonagh  
**SALES** CAA  
**BUZZ** Based on Lawrence Osborne's critically acclaimed best-seller, the film takes place over a weekend in the High Atlas mountains of Morocco, where a random accident upends the lives of the local Muslims and Western visitors. McDonagh (*Calvary*) directs a strong ensemble cast that also includes Matt Smith and Caleb Landry Jones.

## THE GOOD HOUSE

**STARS** Sigourney Weaver, Kevin Kline  
**DIRECTORS** Maya Forbes, Wallace Wolodarsky  
**SALES** ICM Partners/UTA Independent  
**BUZZ** Weaver and Kline, who've played onscreen couples in the comedy *Dave* and the drama *The Ice Storm*, reunite for this relationship drama as former high school sweethearts who reconnect after decades apart.

It's a sure bet for buyers targeting older audiences.

## HOLD YOUR FIRE

**DIRECTOR** Stefan Forbes  
**SALES** Submarine  
**BUZZ** This documentary, which takes a page from such narrative features as *Dog Day Afternoon*, chronicles the longest hostage siege in NYPD history and the birth of modern hostage negotiation. The '70s-set film already nabbed the 2020 Library of Congress Better Angels trophy for historical film and is seen as an awards contender.

## THE HONEYMOON

**STARS** Maria Bakalova  
**DIRECTOR** Dean Craig  
**SALES** Endeavor Content/CAA  
**BUZZ** Broad comedies remain a staple of the international market, and this rom-com looks to be a winner thanks to Bakalova, who's following her star-making (and Oscar-nominated) performance in *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm* by playing a new wife whose romantic honeymoon in Venice is ruined when her husband's needy best friend crashes the party. Bakalova is also producing.

## MASTER GARDENER

**STARS** Joel Edgerton, Sigourney Weaver  
**DIRECTOR** Paul Schrader

**SALES** HanWay Films/  
David Gonzales

**BUZZ** The international reception for Schrader's Venice competition release *The Card Counter* demonstrates that there remains a strong market for the director's brand of dark drama. In this one, Edgerton stars as the titular master gardener at an American estate who is forced to confront his past.

## MEET CUTE

**STARS** Kaley Cuoco, Pete Davidson  
**DIRECTOR** Alex Lehman







Clockwise from top left: the documentary *Hold Your Fire*, *The Survivor*, *Silent Night* and *Montana Story*.

**SALES** The Exchange/ICM Partners  
**BUZZ** Internationally bankable stars Cuoco (*Big Bang Theory*) and Davidson (*Suicide Squad*) should draw attention to this rom-com with a sci-fi twist: The concept imagines couples being able to travel into their partners' past to fix their problems.

### MONTANA STORY

**STARS** Haley Lu Richardson, Owen Teague

**DIRECTORS** Scott McGehee, David Siegel

**SALES** ICM  
**BUZZ** From the directors of TIFF

acquisition *What Maisie Knew*, this drama revolves around two estranged siblings as they return home to the sprawling ranch they once knew and loved. Teague, best known for creepy horror fare like Stephen King's *It* films, switches gears with this dramatic Western, while Richardson has been dubbed a potential breakout.

### SILENT NIGHT

**STARS** Keira Knightley, Lily-Rose Depp, Roman Griffin Davis, Matthew Goode

**DIRECTOR** Camille Griffin

**SALES** Endeavor Content

**BUZZ** It's the end of the world as we know it in Griffin's feature directorial debut. With mankind's imminent destruction looming, a group of friends reunite to celebrate one last Christmas in this very British horror-comedy hybrid. The film was recently picked up AMC+ and RLJE Films for North America.

### THE SURVIVOR

**STARS** Ben Foster, Vicky Krieps, Billy Magnussen, Peter

Sarsgaard, John Leguizamo, Danny DeVito

**DIRECTOR** Barry Levinson

**SALES** Endeavor Content

**BUZZ** Bron Studios returns to TIFF after its *Pieces of a Woman* sold at the fest last year. Based on the true story of Harry Haft (Foster), a Jewish boxer who fought fellow prisoners in Auschwitz to stay alive, *The Survivor* follows his post-World War II career as he attempts to use high-profile bouts against boxing legends like Rocky Marciano as a way to come to terms with his past. **TIFF**



# CANADA'S TOP FILM FINANCIER CONFRONTS RACIAL INEQUALITY

With a new development fund targeting under-represented filmmakers, Telefilm Canada is shifting its focus to remove the systemic barriers hindering progress on inclusion and diversity: 'We're just at the beginning' **BY ETAN VLESSING**

**T**elefilm Canada, the top Canadian indie film financier, insists it has reached some initial goals on racial parity while promising to do more on diversity and inclusion efforts.

"We have been really focused in a very singular fashion on increasing access for filmmakers who have been historically disadvantaged by systemic barriers," Christa Dickenson, executive director of Telefilm Canada, which invests around \$100 million in Canadian indie film annually, tells *THR*.

Telefilm's strategy is to ensure the many — and not just the few — get the full benefits of its indie film financing amid a racial

reckoning for the Canadian industry. That means diversifying the process around which the federal agency finances and supports indie filmmakers from underserved communities, especially among Black and Indigenous Canadians and people of color who in the past were stifled as they entered the domestic industry due to systemic racism.

Telefilm has launched a development fund for Black and people of color, with around \$2.5 million having been invested in 143 projects written and produced by filmmakers in those underserved communities. Of the 143 projects backed, about 36 percent had Black screenwriters and producers, and around 63 percent were written and produced by

people of color.

"We're just at the beginning. We're at a fragile place where only with time and consistency will we see the change and those results come through," Dickenson adds. Canadian BIPOC filmmakers *THR* has talked to for this story are mostly embracing Telefilm's ambitious efforts to produce meaningful and sustainable diversity and inclusion — but with impatience.

"We're in the early stages, and it's early to call whether or not there's been equitable change that's been made and will be made. At this point, it's about taking advantage of the opportunity and doing the work, and we can reassess in four or five years," says





From left: Thyron Tommy's *Learn to Swim*, Andrew Chung's *White Elephant* and Haya Waseem's *Quickenin*, which all received funding from Telefilm Canada as part of its new diversity initiative.

Thyron Tommy, whose feature debut, *Learn to Swim*, will premiere at the Toronto Film Festival after receiving Telefilm investment.

Joan Jenkinson, executive director of the Black Screen Office, applauds filmmakers from BIPOC communities getting on Telefilm's radar as the indie film funder reworks its investment criteria. "They are doing more consultations with equity-seeking organizations and being more transparent," she says. "This is definitely a move in the right direction. But when you're starting from scratch there is so much to be done."

Others fear whatever progress has been made could be reversed if the federal film funder does not accelerate its efforts. "We want to see progress obviously move very quickly," says Andrew Chung, who debuted his first feature, *White Elephant*, at NewFilmMakers LA in July.

He points to a typically short career span for most Canadian filmmakers that could see many diverse talent never enjoy the fruit of Telefilm's efforts toward racial parity if they go elsewhere for more sustainable careers. "That's why the urgency is so great for racialized communities because if we don't see this happen soon, then we get left out of the process and then we move on to different careers," Chung adds.

Pakistani-Canadian director Haya Waseem credits Telefilm financing for ensuring her

debut feature, *Quickenin* — a coming-of-age immigrant tale having its world premiere Sept. 12 at TIFF — got made. "Telefilm was and is the only option to make a movie in Canada at the moment. Maybe Netflix is coming in and things are changing, but Telefilm remains the only main resource for film financing," she insists.

At the same time, Waseem is wary about being pigeonholed as an under-represented filmmaker. "I'm a diverse filmmaker, but I also have a huge respect for the craft of filmmaking. And I'm not getting acknowledgement



Dickenson

for the work that I'm doing and that I put so much effort into," she argues.

The new film funding requirements for racial equity also are putting cost pressures on diverse filmmakers. Vancouver-based director Anthony Shim is currently shooting his second feature, *Riceboy Sleeps*, about the struggle of a Korean immigrant and her son, and received key Telefilm financing to get his cameras rolling.

But the Canadian film, which will shoot partly in South Korea, requires key Korean Canadian talent to be drawn from a relatively small pool in Vancouver compared with the available white Canadian talent available in the city. "I'm trying to hire more Korean people and more Asian people in general, and

I'm limited to a small pool, and a lot of time it doesn't work because I don't have the money to fly people out from Toronto or Ottawa where there's more Asian," Shim explains.

Dickenson knows there's criticism from some industry quarters about whether the indie film funder's reforms are significant and sustainable. She points to new measures that include advisory committees that will recommend which indie projects that Telefilm should finance so that the decision is not made by one person. The funder also is tackling language and how it plays into what is considered a "Canadian-content" film in one of the country's three official languages — English, French and Indigenous.

"There was a push for us to update our eligibility requirements to bring them more towards the reality of producers and content creators who want to tell their stories in another authentic language," Dickenson recalls as she anticipates a new framework for diverse language projects to be rolled out later this year.

Telefilm has faced criticism over its racial-parity initiatives from established producers who have called for a Canadian caste system that guarantees financing to those at the top remain in place, albeit with reforms. The pushback coincides with Telefilm undergoing a shift from reliance on measuring domestic box office to accounting for digital audiences in an expanding streaming space dominated by Netflix and Amazon.

"Streaming platforms such as Netflix and Starz prize Black filmmakers and TV producers now that they see the value in attracting Black audiences," the Black Screen Office's Jenkinson argues. "Canadian broadcasters and distributors seem to be driven by equity and inclusion policy directives rather than the business case for satisfying the demand for Black content."

She sees the structural shift in movie viewership online working to the advantage of Black filmmakers as Telefilm considers more access to promotional funding so diverse filmmakers can attend international Black film festivals like the American Black Film Festival stateside.

Telefilm's Dickenson accepts that expending care and money on achieving racial parity isn't easy and that progress will take time as Telefilm continues to collect data on the progress being made by diverse filmmakers in the Canadian industry or not. Says Dickenson, "This will continue to evolve because until we know what our blind spots are, we can't provide the outreach and support where it may be more greatly needed." **THR**

# Reviews

Film



## *Huda's Salon*

In Palestinian director Hany Abu-Assad's political thriller, a routine hair appointment turns into a nightmare situation **By Lovia Gyarkye**

Self or nation? Loyalty or betrayal? Stay or leave?

These are the questions pulsing through *Huda's Salon*, the eighth film from Hany Abu-Assad. They are not unfamiliar themes for the Palestinian director; his previous films, including the Oscar-nominated *Paradise Now* and *Omar*, explored similar questions with precision and sensitivity. But *Huda's Salon*, a tightly conceived political thriller based on real events, heightens the stakes of these questions by applying them to Palestinian women, whose oppression under Israeli occupation is compounded by the patriarchal forces within their homes and communities.

*Huda's Salon* opens with a humorous and congenial scene of bonding. Huda (Manal Awad),

a stylist in Bethlehem, stands over her client, Reem (Maisa Abd Elhadi), while running warm water through her thick black hair. As she pumps shampoo into her hands and gently massages Reem's scalp, Huda laments about the state of the world. Business is slow because her usual clients, empowered by YouTube, think they can color and cut their own locks. Facebook allows those same people to share their poor efforts widely. It's all a mess.

Reem laughs, and as Huda guides her from the sink to the salon chair, the conversation becomes more personal. Huda, with her voluminous coffee-brown hair and rouged lips, asks Reem, who recently had a baby, when she plans to resume her work as a hairdresser. "You have

golden hands," Huda says of the young woman's styling skills. A conflicted Reem confesses that she'd like to open her own salon one day when her baby, Lina, is older — even though her husband, Yousef, would prefer that she stay home.

The conversation, shot in an impressive continuous take and teeming with warmth, underscores the similarities between Reem and Huda, two sharp women with firm convictions. The palpable maternal connection makes it all the harder to process Huda's shocking betrayal. As Reem carries on talking, Huda drugs her coffee and, with the help of a hired model (Samer Bisharat), lugs the soon unconscious mother to a room in the back of the shop. Working quickly and efficiently, the salon owner strips Reem, poses her in compromising sexual positions next to the male model, and snaps a few pictures.

When Reem finally comes to, she is stunned and confused by Huda's actions and subsequent

Maisa Abd Elhadi is a new mother caught in an impossible situation.

proposal: Reem must spy for the occupation forces' secret service or Huda will show Reem's photos to the new mother's jealous husband and family. But this isn't really a choice — for a woman in this community, the only thing worse than being a traitor is to be considered sexually impure. Scared and shocked, Reem hurries out of Huda's salon, which neither party realizes is being surveilled by the resistance.

From here, *Huda's Salon* picks up speed, becoming a fast-paced thriller centered on the interconnected fates of the two women and hewing close to the genre's conventions. That evening, members of the resistance kidnap a restless Huda from her home and bring her to a dark underground hideout for interrogation by Hassan (Ali Suliman). Their conversation doubles as a heated exchange of ideas about women in Palestine.

Suliman, who many will remember as Khaled in



*Paradise Now*, and Awad have a thrilling onscreen dynamic that prevents the intellectual spar from fully succumbing to pretension. The intensity of their eye contact, the restrained body movements and the vigor of their random bursts of anger add a titillating layer to the conversation (it's a spy thriller, after all), which swings relatively smoothly between broad sociopolitical beliefs and the personal experience on which they are formed.

Neither Hassan nor Huda stays rigid, and the inclusion of these softer moments makes it easier to digest the times when the script gets lost in its sweeping arguments. And, not to give too much away, but Huda proves to be a more complicated spy, whose alliance with the occupation isn't as clear-cut as Hassan assumes.

As Huda and Hassan argue in the lair, Reem finds herself in a cat-and-mouse chase with Hassan's men. The young mother realizes she can't trust anyone, and the isolation causes her to become increasingly withdrawn and desperate. Elhadi, who played a young mother in Palestinian filmmaker Mai Masri's *3000 Nights*, taps into the same anguish and pulls from it an equally emotional performance, here.

Unlike with his other films, Abu-Assad seems to gesture at a more direct point of view in *Huda's Salon*, one that respects — or perhaps a better word is “reveres” — the perspective of women. “*Huda's Salon* explores equality from the perspective, not of women being equal to men, but men as equal to women,” he writes in his director's statement. “I believe that we should be equal to the values of women and not the values of narcissistic men.” With this sentiment, it's clear that *Huda's Salon* is a humble offering to the existing, and incredibly diverse, tradition of art that understands that the garden of liberation will not thrive without eradicating its patriarchal weeds.

#### Platform

**CAST** Ali Suliman, Maisa Abd Elhadi, Manal Awad

**DIRECTOR-SCREENWRITER** Hany Abu-Assad  
1 hour 31 minutes



Timothée Chalamet, right, has visions of Zendaya.

## Dune

Frank Herbert's 1965 sci-fi classic gets epic screen treatment with an all-star cast that features Timothée Chalamet, Rebecca Ferguson, Jason Momoa and Zendaya **By David Rooney**

Unless you're sufficiently up on Frank Herbert's 1965 sci-fi classic to know your Sardaukars from your Bene Gesserit, your crysknife from your hunter-seeker, chances are you'll be glazing over not too far into *Dune*. Or wishing that House Atreides and House Harkonnen would kick off a vogue ball.

Denis Villeneuve's attempt to tame the notoriously difficult novel about an interstellar empire at war over control of a precious natural resource has no lack of cinematic spectacle — from its majestic landscapes to its monumental architecture, nifty hardware and impressive spacecraft. It also benefits from a charismatic ensemble led by Timothée Chalamet in intensely swoony form as the young messiah who might lead the oppressed out of tyranny. But it doesn't quash the frequent claim that the book is unfilmable. At least not in part one of what is being billed as a two-part saga.

Decades after Alejandro Jodorowsky's aborted 1970s attempt to bring *Dune* to the screen and David Lynch's baffling 1984 version — which was memorable mostly for putting Sting in a winged metal diaper — Villeneuve's film at least gets closer to the elusive goal than its predecessors. It has a reasonable semblance of narrative coherence, even if a glossary would be helpful to keep track of the Imperium's various planets, dynastic Houses, mystical sects, desert tribes and their respective power players.

What the film doesn't do is shape Herbert's intricate world-building into satisfyingly digestible form. The history and complex societal structure that are integral to the author's vision are condensed into a blur, cramping the mythology. The layers of political, religious, ecological and technological allegory that give the novel such exalted status get mulched in

the screenplay by Jon Spaihts, Villeneuve and Eric Roth into an uninvolved trade war, with the blobby Baron Vladimir Harkonnen (Stellan Skarsgård) ordering a genocide to secure a monopoly of the addictive Spice found only in the desert wastelands of the planet Arrakis.

That drug looks like a glitter bomb set off in the sand in the dreamlike visions of Paul Atreides (Chalamet) that punctuate the action with numbing regularity. The mind-expanding substance's benefits to health, longevity and knowledge place it in high demand, as we learn during an exposition dump disguised as Paul's study time. Those visions also feature Chani (Zendaya), a member of the Fremen civilization that lives on Arrakis; she haunts Paul throughout in a spiritual connection but doesn't show up physically until the final scenes, just in time to say, “This is only the beginning.” Never a good sign at the end of a two-and-a-half-hour movie that has been long since sagging under its dense thicket of plot. Part hero's journey and part survival story, the film keeps throwing arcane details at you, which might thrill the Herbert geeks but will have most everyone else zoning out.

On a scene-by-scene basis, *Dune* is occasionally exciting, notably whenever Atreides swordmaster Duncan Idaho (Jason Momoa) is in action, backed by Hans Zimmer's thundering orchestral score. (Duncan also benefits from being the only guy in this dull old universe with a sense of humor.) But the storytelling lacks the clean lines to make it consistently propulsive. Paradoxically, given its lofty position in the sci-fi canon, much of the narrative's novelty has also been diluted, rendered stale by decades of imitation. Looking at you, George Lucas.

Perhaps the biggest issue with *Dune*, however, is that this is only the first part, with the second film in preproduction. That means an awful lot of what we're watching feels like laborious setup for a hopefully more gripping film to come — the boring homework before the juicy stuff starts happening.

#### Special Event

**CAST** Timothée Chalamet, Rebecca Ferguson, Oscar Isaac, Josh Brolin, Stellan Skarsgård, Dave Bautista, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Zendaya

**DIRECTOR** Denis Villeneuve  
Rated PG-13, 2 hours 36 minutes

Film

# The Power of the Dog

Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst, Jesse Plemons and Kodi Smit-McPhee star in Jane Campion's study of blistering family tensions in the American West

By David Rooney

Twelve years after her last feature, Jane Campion makes a thrilling return with *The Power of the Dog*, a work as boldly idiosyncratic, unpredictable and alive with psychological complexity as anything in the revered director's output. For a filmmaker who has predominantly focused on forensic investigations of the female psyche, this riveting adaptation of the 1967 Thomas Savage novel represents an assured thematic shift to corrosive masculinity and repressed sexuality. The intimately uncomfortable drama is a chamber piece on an epic canvas, driven by transfixing performances from Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst, Jesse Plemons and, in a stunning breakout turn, young Australian actor Kodi Smit-McPhee.

After a festival tour that began with a Venice competition launch followed by TIFF, the film will be released in theaters and on Netflix in the fall.

Though Campion made the New York City thriller *In the Cut* and dissected the social mores of Americans in Europe in *The Portrait of a Lady*, this kind of fine-grained Americana is entirely new to her and will no doubt draw fresh attention to Savage's mostly

forgotten novel. The time and place are superbly evoked in Grant Major's production design, dominated by a cattle ranch homestead reminiscent of the Sam Shepard character's in *Days of Heaven*, but more oppressively Gothic.

The place is home to wealthy ranchers the Burbank brothers, who could not be less alike. Phil (Cumberbatch), with his coarse vernacular, is a rugged man of the land, coating himself in mud and swimming naked in a secluded river retreat rather than using the house bath, as his gentlemanly brother, George (Plemons), recommends. While Phil is seldom seen in anything but boots and spurs and dirty sheepskin chaps, George is nattily dressed at all times in tweedy three-piece suits and bow ties. (The character-defining costumes are by Kirsty Cameron.) He takes care of the business side of the ranch, leaving the physical labor to Phil and his cowhands.

They still share a bedroom like children, and "Georgie boy" seems almost immune to the sneering taunts of his brother. Any discussion of their citified parents, referred to as the Old Gent (Peter Carroll) and the Old Lady (Frances Conroy), suggests there has never been much love in the family.

In a scene of knife-edge tension early on, George, Phil and the latter's rowdy crew stop for dinner on a market day at the Red Mill, an eye-catching structure of weather-beaten splendor. While the restaurant's pianola and its proximity to the

local saloon attract drunks and whores, widowed proprietress Rose (Dunst) strives to keep the place respectable, helped only by her sensitive beanpole son, Peter (Smit-McPhee), who waits tables and makes intricate paper flowers to decorate them.

Such signs of gentility in a place that seems hostile to refinement bring out the worst of Phil's bullying. His cruel mockery of Peter's perceived effeminate delicacy, played up for the benefit of his adoring cowhands, prompts the young man to retreat into nervous behavioral tics while reducing Rose to tears. George stays behind after the dinner to apologize for his brother and comfort Rose, marking the beginnings of a gentle romance.

Leaning into the material's literary origins, Campion breaks up the story into five chapters, marked only by Roman numerals. An unspecified amount of time has passed when the third of them begins, and George's courtship of Rose has proceeded away from the eyes of his mean-spirited brother. Phil is quietly enraged to learn of their marriage only after the fact, when George brings Rose to live at the mansion. Meanwhile, Peter has begun medical school.

George visibly lightens up with the introduction of warmth into his life. "I just wanted to say how nice it is not to be alone," he tells Rose in one of several scenes where the rapport between real-life partners Dunst and Plemons adds lovely authenticity to the

Friction abounds between brothers played by Benedict Cumberbatch (left) and Jesse Plemons in Jane Campion's drama.

depth of feeling between their characters.

Phil's malicious campaign to make Rose feel unwelcome and undermine her stability begins by openly calling her a "cheap schemer." Phil takes pleasure in signs of her unraveling as she begins drinking, hiding bottles of bourbon around the house.

The mounting dread embedded in the narrative and enhanced by the increasingly agitated strings of Jonny Greenwood's atmospheric score seems to have set the story on an inevitable trajectory toward sorrow. But Campion keeps shifting expectations, even after Peter comes to stay on his summer break, giving Phil a new target for his cunning psychological assaults. This is where Smit-McPhee's layered characterization reveals intriguing surprises; the actor's edgy scenes with Cumberbatch are among the movie's most nuanced.

This is an exquisitely crafted film, its unhurried rhythms continually shifting as plangent notes of melancholy, solitude, jealousy and resentment surface. Campion is in full control, digging deep into the turbulent inner life of each of her characters with unerring subtlety.

Special Presentation

**CAST** Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst, Jesse Plemons, Kodi Smit-McPhee  
**DIRECTOR-SCREENWRITER** Jane Campion  
127 minutes







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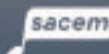
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# Last Night in Soho

Thomasin McKenzie and Anya Taylor-Joy play what could almost be polar-opposite versions of the same young woman across a six-decade divide in this dark psycho-thriller that shimmies between the glamour and the gutter **By David Rooney**

In an early scene of Edgar Wright's wickedly entertaining *Last Night in Soho*, British screen veteran Rita Tushingham, playing the protagonist's doting grandmother, Peggy, reminisces about the excitement, the music and the fashions of London in the swinging '60s. If your film knowledge of the period goes back far enough, you might find yourself thinking not only of Tushingham's signature role in a classic of kitchen-sink realism, *A Taste of Honey*, but of her strolling down Carnaby Street with Lynn Redgrave singing the title song of *Smashing Time*, a kitschy guilty pleasure from 1967.

Tushingham, along with Terence Stamp and Diana Rigg — the latter in a glorious swan song that marks her final film appearance before her death last fall — provide poignant links, affectionate gestures from Wright toward an era in British cinema he clearly adores. (The simple dedication, "For Diana," is lovely.) Not to mention a bounty of choice needle drops. But familiarity with that time, its screen icons and its chart hits is not a requirement of this Focus Features release. Young audiences will groove equally on the time-travel thriller as it spirals into bloody horror, even if they've never heard of *The Knack ... and How to Get It*.

Wright at his best is an adrenalized storyteller with a gleeful spirit that hurtles you along like a dizzying carnival ride. As in films like *Baby Driver*, he understands the visceral thrills for moviegoers of dynamic camera-work, editing and music cues, plus the visual bang of color and design. But he never lets all the virtuosic craft contributions overwhelm the core ingredients of plot and character.

There's an infectious sense here of a filmmaker having a cracking good time, winking back to his own feature origins in *Shaun of the Dead* with a bunch of zombified skeeves in Establishment gray suits. If that already sounds like more than you want to know, take this as a warning to stop reading.

The movie opens on a giddy high with a winsome Thomasin McKenzie as Eloise Cooper, dancing exuberantly around her bedroom in present-day Cornwall to vocal duo Peter and Gordon's 1964 hit, "A World Without Love," while rocking a fabulous pleated newsprint gown of her own design. Orphaned as a child and raised by her grandmother, Eloise is obsessed with the '60s; posters of Twiggy and of Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* adorn her walls, and she treasures the family's vintage vinyl collection. The soundtrack, which mainlines female artists like Dusty Springfield, Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw and Petula Clark, along with the guys, is retro heaven, even if it favors chartbusters over deep cuts.

When Eloise is accepted into the London College of Fashion, Peggy sends her off with her blessing but reminds her granddaughter to proceed with caution; the capital proved too much for her mother (Aimee Cassettari). With swift economy, Wright and co-scripter Krysty Wilson-Cairns (*1917*) indicate that visions of her late mother have weighed on Eloise's mental health, with later disclosures referencing a history of schizophrenia in the family. More than once, she's warned, "London can be a lot."

When student housing proves a poor fit, thanks to monstrously selfish and overconfident roommate Jocasta (Synnøve Karlsen)

Thomasin McKenzie plays an aspiring fashion designer who finds herself transported to swinging '60s London.

and her posse of mean girls, Eloise rents an upstairs room from Ms. Collins (Rigg), a stern but not unfriendly working-class landlady who long ago was a cleaner in the building. "If I could live anywhere at all, it would be London in the '60s," Eloise tells her. But timid young women with little voices and big imaginations like Eloise should be careful what they wish for in an Edgar Wright movie.

The schizophrenia mention is something of a tease — or is it? — in a screenplay that plays constantly with reflections and mirrors, positioning Eloise as an imperiled Alice in a *Through the Looking Glass* riff with escalating slasher and sexual-predation elements.

Bathed in the predominantly red neon glow of the signage outside her bedroom window, Eloise pulls the sheets over her head to sleep and drifts back in time in dreams that become increasingly dark and alarmingly real. She steps out into the glittering lights of Piccadilly Circus when 007 entry *Thunderball* is beckoning moviegoers and the Cafe de Paris is the place to be seen. Down the velvet-lined stairs of that club she goes, transformed in the mirror from mousy Eloise to aspiring singer Sandie (Anya Taylor-Joy), a sensual vision in pastel-pink chiffon with a blond backcombed 'do. Is Eloise becoming Sandie or merely observing her? Wright keeps blurring the line.

The lines separating past and present begin to dissolve as Sandie's fate takes an ugly turn. In *Nightmare on Elm Street* style, Eloise starts to fear going to sleep at night and becoming immersed once again in that increasingly violent world. But before long, the sinister forces dragging Sandie down begin to infiltrate Eloise's daylight hours too, prompting her to investigate a terrifying incident she witnesses and figure out what really happened all those years ago in her room at Ms. Collins' place.

As he showed recently even working within the entirely different frame of a music documentary with *The Sparks Brothers*, Wright is masterful at shaking up rhythms and visual textures to keep the senses stimulated beyond basic narrative engagement. *Last Night in Soho* is an immensely pleasurable film that delights in playing with genre, morphing from time-travel fantasy to dark fairy tale, from mystery to nightmarish horror in a climax that owes as much to '60s Brit fright fare as to more contemporary mind-benders.

Gala Presentation

**CAST** Thomasin McKenzie, Anya Taylor-Joy, Matt Smith, Diana Rigg, Terence Stamp

**DIRECTOR** Edgar Wright

1 hour 56 minutes

PROMOTION

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BFI LONDON 10/6-10/17

MIPCOM 10/8-10/13

TOKYO 10/30-11/8

AFM 11/2-11/7

# Screening Guide

Toronto International Film Festival

Today  
(Sept. 10)

9:00

[Attica](#), Scotiabank 1

9:30

[The Electrical Life of Louis Wain](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 2  
[Triumph: Rock & Roll Machine](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 4  
[Violet](#), Scotiabank 13

10:00

[Cool Abdoul](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Domingo](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Lemon and Poppy](#)  
[Seed Cake](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Nightride](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Old Henry](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Attica](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Kicking Blood](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Mothering Sunday](#), Scotiabank 4  
[Mothering Sunday](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[The Box](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

10:30

[To Kill the Beast](#), Scotiabank 3

11:00

[The Power of the Dog](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

[Treat It Right: Starting a Canada-Ukraine Co-Production Treaty Project](#), TIFF Bell Digital Talks

11:30

[Kicking Blood](#), Scotiabank 2

12:00

[The Writers' Room](#), TIFF Bell Digital Talks

12:30

[Memory Box: Echoes of 9/11](#), Scotiabank 9

13:00

[Christiane F.](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[In the Light of the Night](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Le Prince](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Nostromo](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[The King of Laughter](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[All My Puny Sorrows](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

[From a Moment to a Movement: How Film Finance Is Changing the Industry for Women and Non-binary Filmmakers](#), TIFF Bell Digital Talks  
[Night Raiders](#), Scotiabank 1  
[The Guilty](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 2  
[The Hill Where Lionesses Roar](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[The Panthers](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox

[The Panthers](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[The Story of My Wife](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

[To Kill the Beast](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Vengeance Is Mine, All Others Pay Cash](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Vengeance Is Mine, All Others Pay Cash](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Violet](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

13:30

[The Box](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 4

14:00

[All My Puny Sorrows](#), Scotiabank 3  
[Breaking Through the Lens Finalist Presentations](#), TIFF Bell Digital Talks

14:30

[Mlungu Wam \(Good Madam\)](#), Scotiabank 4

15:00

[Aloners](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Earwig](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 1  
[Greig Fraser](#), TIFF Bell Digital Talks  
[The Hill Where Lionesses Roar](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[The Story of My Wife](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox

15:30

[Jockey](#), Scotiabank 2

[Working With CBC Films](#), TIFF Bell Digital Talks

16:00

[Beyond the Skies \(Preview\)](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Man of God](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Secret Name](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[The Employer and the Employee](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
[Twinkle Dammit!](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro

[Aloners](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Building a Greener Industry: How Can We Create a More Sustainable Future?](#), TIFF Bell Digital Talks

[Drive My Car](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Dug Dug](#), Ontario Place Cinesphere  
[Jockey](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Memory Box: Echoes of 9/11](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

[Mlungu Wam \(Good Madam\)](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Scarborough](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 2  
[The Power of the Dog](#), TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
[Titane](#), Scotiabank 12

16:30

[Wochiigii lo: End of the Peace](#), Scotiabank 9

17:00

[Drive My Car](#), Scotiabank 1

[Huda's Salon](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Short Cuts Programme 01](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[The Box](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[The Girl and the Spider](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[The Power of the Dog](#), VISA Screening Room at the Princess of Wales Theatre

17:30

[Aloners](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 4  
[Night Raiders](#), Roy Thomson Hall

18:00

[Hold Your Fire](#), Scotiabank 3  
[La Soga 2](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 3

18:30

[As in Heaven](#), Scotiabank 4

19:00

[La Soga 2](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Mlungu Wam \(Good Madam\)](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Mothering Sunday](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Silent Land](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 1  
[Terrorizers](#), Scotiabank 13  
[Violet](#)  
[Intéregalde](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox

20:00

[A Banquet](#), TIFF Bell

Lightbox 2  
[Neptune Frost](#), Ontario Place Cinesphere

20:30

[Becoming Cousteau](#), Scotiabank 9  
[The Power of the Dog](#), VISA Skyline Drive-In at Ontario Place

20:45

[Encounter](#), VISA Screening Room at the Princess of Wales Theatre

21:00

[As in Heaven](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Earwig](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Kicking Blood](#), Scotiabank 2  
[Last Night in Soho](#), Roy Thomson Hall  
[Scarborough](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[The Power of the Dog](#), digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
[Triumph: Rock & Roll Machine](#), RBC Lakeside Drive-In at Ontario Place  
[Violet](#), West Island Open Air Cinema at Ontario Place

21:30

[Last Night in Soho](#), TIFF Bell Lightbox 3

23:59

[Titane](#), VISA Screening Room at the Princess of Wales Theatre



## Saturday (Sept. 11)

### 9:00

**Spotlight on Portugal: Best Shooting Destination**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks  
**The Worst Person in the World**, Scotiabank 1

### 9:30

**Farha**, Scotiabank 13  
**Hellbound**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 4

### 10:00

**107 Mothers**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Commitment Hasan**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**My Night**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Sinjar**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Yaya e Lennie — The Walking Liberty**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Apichatpong Weerasethakul**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks  
**Celebrating Alanis Obomsawin — Portraits: Programme 1**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Comala**, Scotiabank 3  
**Earwig**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Hold Your Fire**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 3  
**Neptune Frost**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Night Raiders**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Scarborough**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Terrorizers**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**The Gravedigger's Wife**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

### 10:30

**Silent Land**, Scotiabank 4

### 11:00

**Memory Box: Echoes of 9/11**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

### 11:30

**Maria Chapdelaine**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1  
**Scarborough**, Scotiabank 2

### 11:45

**Reset: Dismantling Toxic Behaviours on Set and in the Industry**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks

### 12:00

**Becoming Cousteau**, Ontario Place Cinesphere  
**Dune**, Scotiabank 12

### 12:30

**Terrorizers**, Scotiabank 9

### 13:00

**Ama**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Born Dead**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Jill**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Mi lubita, Mon Amour**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**The Love You Don't Know**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**A Banquet**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Celebrating Alanis Obomsawin — Portraits: Programme 2**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Comala**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Documenting Celebrities**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks  
**Lingui, the Sacred**

**Bonds**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Murina**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Neptune Frost**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Night Raiders**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Night Raiders**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Short Cuts Programme 02**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Short Cuts: YYZ Edition**, Scotiabank 1  
**Silent Land**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**The Gravedigger's Wife**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Wildhood**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

### 13:30

**Inu-Oh**, Scotiabank 13  
**Last Night in Soho**, Roy Thomson Hall  
**WL Shorts: Present, Tense**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 4

### 14:00

**Dionne Warwick: Don't Make Me Over**, VISA Screening Room at the Princess of Wales Theatre  
**Encounter**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 3  
**La Soga 2**, Scotiabank 3  
**Writing in the Margins: The Need for New Voices and New Platforms in Film Criticism**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks

### 14:30

**Wildhood**, Scotiabank 4

### 15:00

**Celebrating Alanis Obomsawin — Portraits: Programme 1**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Dug Dug**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Short Cuts**

**Programme 02**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Silent Land**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox

### 15:15

**Wildhood**, Ontario Place Cinesphere

### 15:30

**Earwig**, Scotiabank 2  
**Inexorable**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2  
**Telefilm's Talent to Watch**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks  
**Telling Family Stories**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks

### 16:00

**Ghost Song**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Language Lessons**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Shark: The Beginning**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**The Marijuana Conspiracy**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Walking With Herb**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox Pro  
**Becoming Cousteau**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Celebrating Alanis Obomsawin — The Dignity of Children: Programme 1**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Compartment No. 6**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Encounter**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Hold Your Fire**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Inexorable**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**La Soga 2**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro  
**Oscar Peterson: Black + White**, Scotiabank 12  
**Special Industry Event — The Next Generation of Actors: Meet the 2021 TIFF Rising Stars**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks

**WL Shorts: Present, Tense**, TIFF Digital Cinema Pro

### 16:30

**A Banquet**, Scotiabank 9  
**Christopher Guest, Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara on Best in Show**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

### 17:00

**Hold Your Fire**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Maria Chapdelaine**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Spotlight on Russia: Feature Films and Series**, TIFF Bell Digital Talks  
**Terrorizers**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**The Worst Person in the World**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox

### 17:30

**All My Puny Sorrows**, VISA Screening Room at the Princess of Wales Theatre  
**Anatolian Leopard**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 4  
**The Forgiven**, Roy Thomson Hall

### 18:00

**Beba**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 3  
**Compartment No. 6**, Scotiabank 3

### 18:30

**Murina**, Scotiabank 13

### 19:00

**A Banquet**, Scotiabank 4  
**Encounter**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Inexorable**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Learn to Swim**, Scotiabank 1  
**The Tsugua Diaries**

digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Titane**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox

### 19:15

**Dune**, Ontario Place Cinesphere

### 19:30

**Colin in Black and White**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2  
**Lingui, the Sacred Bonds**, Scotiabank 2

### 20:00

**Costa Brava, Lebanon**, Scotiabank 12

### 20:30

**Anatolian Leopard**, Scotiabank 9  
**Arthur Rambo**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1  
**The Electrical Life of Louis Wain**, VISA Skyline Drive-In at Ontario Place

### 21:00

**Encounter**, West Island Open Air Cinema at Ontario Place  
**Kicking Blood**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Learn to Swim**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**Listening to Kenny G**, RBC Lakeside Drive-In at Ontario Place  
**Montana Story**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**The Forgiven**, digital TIFF Bell Lightbox  
**The Guilty**, VISA Screening Room at the Princess of Wales Theatre

### 21:30

**The Electrical Life of Louis Wain**, Roy Thomson Hall

### 23:59

**Dashcam**, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1



1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 **2000** 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010

## In 2000, Kenneth Branagh Revealed His Lighter Side

It was a rare foray into black comedy that brought Kenneth Branagh to the 25th Toronto International Film Festival in 2000. Although he had not yet earned his honorific “Sir,” he already was considered Shakespearean royalty, having directed and starred in *Henry V* and *Hamlet*. But in director Michael Kalesniko’s *How to Kill Your Neighbor’s Dog*, chosen to screen as that year’s closing-night film, he stepped into a more contemporary role, playing a struggling and caustic British-American playwright living in Los Angeles who strikes up an unlikely friendship with a young girl living next door. “It’s a very gentle comedy with wonderful repartee,” festival director Piers Handling enthused. “It’s just the perfect end to a festival.” For his part, meeting with the press, Branagh downplayed his serious credentials, saying: “It’s easy to pull on a pair of tights and do a lot of tragic acting. People will say, ‘Oh, look — real tears! Isn’t it marvelous? He got so worked up!’” On the other hand, in the case of comedy, Branagh argued that the ultimate goal is to be funny and real at the same time. “In that way, it’s a lot more brutal.” The film was

greeted with mixed reviews, clocking in at just 58 percent on Rotten Tomatoes. “A wordy wisp of a comedy,” proclaimed the *New York Post*’s Megan Turner, while *The New York Times*’ Stephen Holden offered a more positive assessment, writing, “It is a tribute to Mr. Branagh’s considerable comic skills that he succeeds in making a potentially insufferable character likable by infusing him with the same sly charm that Michael Caine musters to seduce us into cozying up to his sleazier alter egos,” although Holden added a word of caution: “Sadly, it is the very qualities that distinguish *Dog* from run-of-the-mill comedies that may doom it at the box office. Audiences conditioned to getting weepy over saucer-eyed, downy-cheeked moppets and their empathetic caretakers will probably feel emotionally cheated by the film’s tart, sugar-free wit.” That proved prophetic, for the film — produced at the cost of \$7.3 million — went on to receive just a token release, grossing a meager \$73,510 worldwide. Branagh should find himself on surer footing this year as his latest directorial effort, *Belfast*, is unveiled as a gala presentation. With the Focus release, he

has re-created his own boyhood in Northern Ireland amid the Troubles of 1969, enlisting a cast that includes Jamie Dornan, Caitriona Balfe, Ciarán Hinds, Judi Dench and 10-year-old newcomer Jude Hill. On its way to Toronto, the black-and-white memory piece made a stop at the Telluride Film Festival, where it already has been enthusiastically embraced by both critics and audiences, setting itself up as an instant Oscar contender. — GREGG KILDAY



From left: Robin Wright, Kenneth Branagh and Suzi Hofrichter at a Toronto press conference for *How to Kill Your Neighbor's Dog*. *THR*'s review (inset) called Branagh “rumpled yet robust” in the film.



**THR**

# PRESENTS

**GLOBAL**

POWERED BY VISION MEDIA

THE GOLD STANDARD OF VIRTUAL SCREENINGS

## WATCH

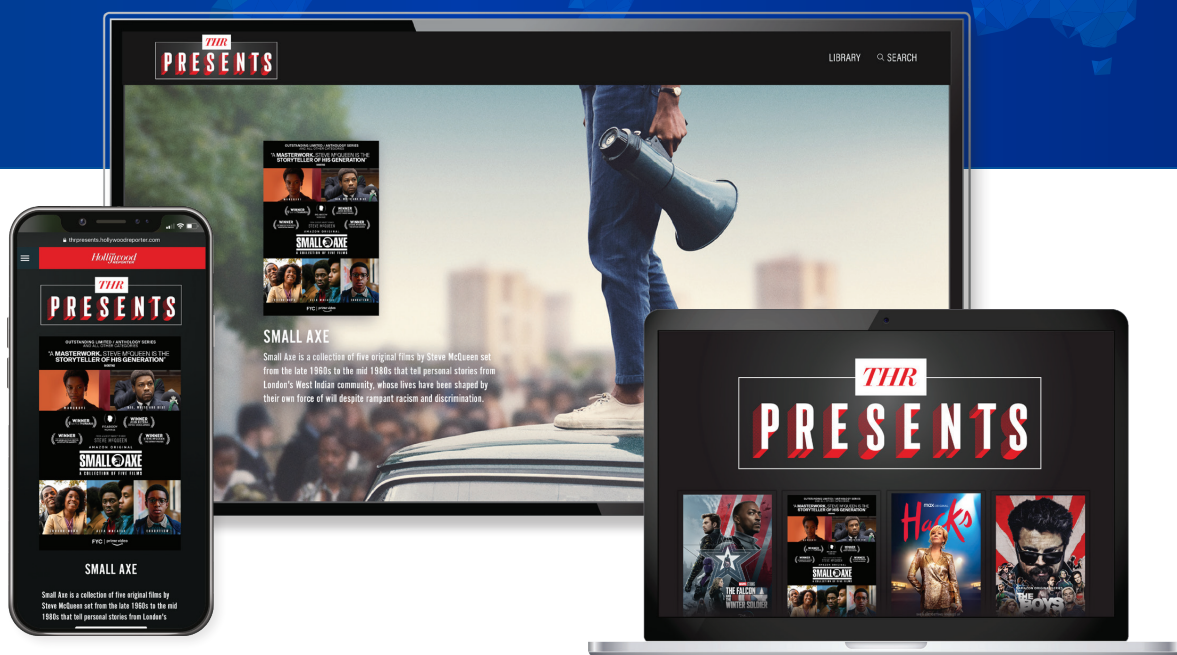
and explore  
contending series

## MEET

leading talent in  
moderated Q&As

## REACH

voters & more with a  
robust media package



## PROGRAM ELEMENTS

### VIRTUAL SCREENING

Invitation-only, protected event for our database of self-identified TV Academy members, network/studio executives and influencers

### TALENT Q&A

Interview moderated by a distinguished *THR* writer/editor to follow the screening

### PUBLIC HUB

Site featuring the Q&A, supporting content (e.g. EPK, featurettes), title synopsis/details + relevant *THR* links

*THE*  
**Hollywood**  
REPORTER





THE FIRST STOP FOR FILM



*The Gold Standard  
of Virtual Screenings*



*Awards Season's Signature  
Interview Series*



*Awards Season's  
Premier Podcast*



*Daily Source  
for Awards News*

*THE  
Hollywood  
REPORTER*