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Palm Springs Film Festival

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Palm Springs International Film Festival lineup called 'astonishing'

DEBORAH NICOL • THE DESERT SUN • DECEMBER 19, 2007

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The lineup for the 19th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival features 222 films representing more than 66 countries and 69 premieres, officials announced Tuesday.

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The January festival will screen most of the films submitted for consideration in both the Best Foreign Language Film and Best Documentary categories, confirming the event's status as a showcase for international contenders and Oscar hopefuls.

"That's astonishing," Steven Gaydos said of the lineup. Gaydos is the executive editor of features at trade publication Variety and author of the "The Variety Guide to Film Festivals."

"Sundance kind of followed Palm Springs' lead," he said. "It did not have a world section until it saw there was a need to augment American films with filmmakers from around the world."

The Palm Springs festival kicks off Jan. 3 with the U.S. premiere of Oscar-winner Helen Hunt's directorial debut, "Then She Found Me," and closes Jan. 13 with the French comedy, "Priceless."

Other highlights include:

Director John Sayles' "Honeydripper."

Cannes Film Festival's Coup de Cœur du Jury-winner "The Band's Visit."

Cannes Golden Palm-winner "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days."

A sing-along screening of "Hairspray."

"We've streamlined the festival lineup this year, trimming the overall numbers while adding some exciting new features and showcases," said festival director Darryl Macdonald, who returns for his fifth consecutive year at the helm.

Special programs include Cine Latino, World Cinema Now, True Stories, Archival Treasures and an Israeli film showcase. One of 10 films focusing on emerging international talents will be honored with the New Voices/New Visions Award.

"While the festival may not have the heft of Sundance or Toronto, it attracts celebrities seeking attention just before the Oscars," said Variety Editor-in-Chief Peter Bart in October.

Celebrities slated to attend the Jan. 5 Awards Gala include the casts of "Juno" and "Hairspray," directors Joe Wright ("Atonement") and Sean Penn ("Into the Wild"), and actors Emile Hirsch, Daniel Day-Lewis and Halle Berry.

The event also will feature 55 of the 63 films submitted for consideration in the Best Foreign Language Film category and 12 of the 15 films up for Best Documentary.

"This was an incredibly strong year for emerging international filmmakers, especially those from the countries of Israel, Italy and throughout Latin America," festival co-directors of programming, Carl Spence and Helen du Toit, said in a statement.

Tickets for the event go on sale Dec. 26.



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Courtesy photo

"4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days"

IF YOU WANT TO GO

For tickets or additional information for the 19th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival, call 322-2930 or (800) 898-7256 or www.psfilmfest.org.

Film fest highlights

Opening night gala screening and reception:

"Then She Found Me," directed by Helen Hunt

Special Presentations:

"The Band's Visit," directed by Eran Kolirin

"Hairspray" (sing-along version), directed by Adam Shankman

"Honeydripper," directed by John Sayles

World Cinema Now Gala:

"Before the Rains," directed by Santosh Sivan

Italian Film Gala:

"My Brother is an Only Child," directed by Daniele Luchetti

The Gay! La:

"Shelter," directed by Jonah Markowitz

Closing Night Gala screening and wrap party:

"Priceless," directed by Pierre Salvadori

Israeli Film Day Gala:

"Beaufort," directed by Joseph Cedar

Israeli Focus:

"The Champagne Spy," directed by Nadav Schirman

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MarkUnowen wrote:

Too bad they can't have a Film Festival year 'round. Palm Springs might die a much slower death.
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