

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.00am WEDNESDAY 10 MAY 2017

SOUNDS ON SCREEN: FROM WHITNEY TO THE SEX PISTOLS

The 64th Sydney Film Festival (7-18 June) announces something for music fans of all tastes. There's a cine-guide to the birth-of-punk, docs on everything from Whitney Houston through to the Sex Pistols, and some rocking parties.

"From high-profile documentarian and festival guest **Nick Broomfield's** *Whitney 'Can I Be Me'*, to *Red Dog* Director **Kriv Stenders'** look at Aussie indie-band The Go-Betweens in *The Go-Betweens: Right Here*, and a stomping tribute to Native American musicians in *RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World*, our 2017 Sounds on Screen program features a truly rocking line-up," said **Jenny Neighbour**, Sydney Film Festival Programs Manager and Documentary Programmer.

"Sounds on Screen will take music and cinema lovers on tour in North Korea with Slovenian metal band **Laibach**, performing deadpan cover versions of *The Sound of Music* in *Liberation Day*, and around the UK with alt-rock indie heroes **Wolf Alice** as shot by acclaimed UK director **Michael Winterbottom** in *On the Road*.

"Also incredibly compelling is an in-depth look into the psyche of **John Lydon** aka **Johnny Rotten**, the outspoken Sex Pistol punk icon, in *The Public Image is Rotten*, and the uncompromising life story of openly lesbian Latin American singer **Chavela Vargas** – who inspired Spanish director **Pedro Almodóvar**," she said.

Beyond Johnny Rotten, the Festival's homage to the entire genre is a must for punk and movie fans. **Smash it Up: Celebrating 40 Years of Punk Rock 1977-2017** will screen five explosive features, one short and stage a talk on the punk phenomena in Australia (Smash it Up: A Queen's Birthday Conversation), providing an essential guide to punk rock cinema.

From the cinema and onto the dancefloor/moshpit, the Festival will also host two parties. Celebrate the Queen's Birthday with a crash and burn punk party featuring Aussie band Nancy Vandal smashing out classics like 'God Save the Queen', following the screening of Derek Jarman's 1978 cult classic *Jubilee*.

Or rock out to DJs celebrating Australian indie icons The Go-Betweens from their enduring early singles to final ARIA-winning album *Oceans Apart*, following the World Premiere of Kriv Stender's documentary *The Go-Betweens: Right Here*.

SFF 2017 Sounds on Screen film screenings, guests, parties and talks include:

Films

- **Chavela**
Thursday 8 June, 6.30pm, Dendy Newtown
Wednesday 14 June, 8.45pm, Event Cinemas George St
- **Desperate Living (Smash it Up Retrospective)**

- Saturday 17 June, 4.50pm, Art Gallery of New South Wales
- **Jubilee (Smash it Up Retrospective) – screens with *White Riot: London***
Monday 12 June, 6.00pm, Event Cinemas George St
Saturday 17 June, 3.55pm, Dendy Newtown
 - **Liberation Day**
Wednesday 7 June, 6.30pm, Dendy Newtown
Tuesday 13 June, 6.30pm, Dendy Newtown
 - **On the Road**
Thursday 8 June, 8.20pm, Event Cinemas George St
Saturday 10 June, 8.35pm, Dendy Newtown
 - **RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World | Introduced by Canadian producers Christina Fon and Stevie Salas**
Wednesday 14 June, 6.30pm, Dendy Newtown
Friday 16 June, 6.00pm, Event Cinemas George St
 - **The Decline of Western Civilization (Smash It Up Retrospective)**
Friday 16 June, 6.00pm, Dendy Newtown
 - **The Filth and The Fury (Smash It Up Retrospective)**
Sunday 18 June, 2.30pm, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 - **The Go-Betweens: Right Here | Introduced by Australian filmmaker Kriv Stenders**
Thursday 15 June, 6.30pm, Event Cinemas George St
Friday 16 June, 8.15pm, Dendy Newtown
 - **The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle (Smash It Up Retrospective)**
Saturday 10 June, 3.20pm, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 - **The Public Image is Rotten | Introduced by Mexican filmmaker Tabbert Fiiller**
Saturday 10 June, 6.30pm, Dendy Newtown
Monday 12 June, 8.20pm, Event Cinemas George St
Tuesday 13 June, 8.30pm, Event Cinemas George St
 - **Whitney 'Can I Be Me' | Introduced by UK filmmaker Nick Broomfield**
Wednesday 7 June, 6.30pm, Event Cinemas George St
Friday 9 June, 6.30pm, Dendy Newtown

Talks

- **Smash it up: A Queen's Birthday Conversation (Talking Movies in the Treasury Room)**
Monday 12 June, 8.00pm, Treasury Room Town Hall

Parties

- **Jubilee (Parties at The Hub)**
Monday 12 June, 9.00pm, SFF Hub Town Hall
- **The Go-Betweens (Parties at The Hub)**
Thursday 15 June, 9.00pm, SFF Hub Town Hall

Sydney Film Festival runs 7 – 18 June 2017.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2017 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Amber Forrest-Bisley, Publicity Manager, Sydney Film Festival

E: amber@cardinalspin.com.au P: 02 8065 7363 M: 0405 363 817

Amy Owen, Communications Advisor

E: amy@cardinalspin.com.au M: 0404 977 338

***Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL



From **Wednesday 7 June to Sunday 18 June 2017**, the 64th Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, international guests and more.

Sydney Film Festival also presents an Official Competition of 12 films that vie for the Sydney Film Prize, a highly respected honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners: *Aquarius* (2016); *Arabian Nights* (2015); *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011); *Heartbeats* (2010); *Bronson* (2009); and *Hunger* (2008).

The Festival takes place across Greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Randwick Ritz, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen in Pitt Street Mall.

The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit: www.sff.org.au.

The 64th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

DOCUMENTARIES

CHAVELA

Directors: Catherine Gund, Daresha Kyi | USA | 90mins | In English and Spanish with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

When Latina superstar Chavela Vargas died in 2012 at age 93, director Catherine Gund revisited her invaluable interview footage from the 1990s and set out to expand on her original material with concert footage and interviews. Criticised from an early age for her boyish behaviour, teenage Chavela left her Costa Rican home for Mexico. Initially billed as a *ranchera* singer, in heels and gown, it was only when she shook off convention and donned her iconic poncho, that Chavela became the darling of the cabaret crowd. Tragically, excessive drinking destroyed her career. Her re-emergence, sober after 20 years, and her soul-baring performances are achingly defiant.

THE GO-BETWEENS: RIGHT HERE

Director, Screenwriter: Kriv Stenders | Australia | 95mins | In English | World Premiere
Director Kriv Stenders (*Red Dog, Australia Day*, also screening at this year's festival) uncovers the people who made The Go-Betweens. Conceived in Brisbane in the late 1970s, and fronted by singer-songwriters and guitarists Robert Forster and Grant McLennan, the band recorded such resonant Australian classics as 'Streets of Your Town' and 'Cattle and Cane'. They were later joined by Lindy Morrison on drums, and Amanda Brown on violin and oboe, among others, before disbanding in 1989 and reforming in 2000. With extraordinary access, music clips, and a distinctively Queensland style, Stenders follows the band's three decades, through countless successes, failures, romances, break-ups, betrayals, triumphs and tragedies.

LIBERATION DAY

Director, Screenwriter: Morten Traavik, Ugis Olte | Norway, Latvia | 98mins | In Norwegian, Slovenian, English and Korean with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
When the news broke that the cult Slovenian group Laibach would be taking part in North Korea's 70th anniversary celebrations of their liberation from Japanese rule, the western media had a field day. The band and its entourage arrive in Pyongyang, amid accusations of fascism, to a chilly reception. A tricky start, but manager and co-director, Morten Traavik, is undeterred as he faces a late venue change, rabid censors, and an uphill battle to delivery a 21st century gig on out-dated



equipment. Featuring a sonorous version of 'Do-Re-Mi' and a contentious adaptation of a beloved Korean folk song, this documentary is by turns illuminating, comic and absurd.

ON THE ROAD

Director, Screenwriter: Michael Winterbottom | UK | 121mins | In English | Australian Premiere

The irreverent UK director follows the indie rock band from Belfast to London, through an exhausting mesh of live shows, backstage hassles and awkward radio performances. Ellie (guitar, vocals), Joff (guitar), Joel (drums), Theo (bass) and their crew set up gigs, jam in rehearsal rooms and doze on tour buses. The documentary footage of the tour is covertly embroidered with two fictional characters: experienced roadie Joe (James McArdle, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*) and PR newbie Estelle (Leah Harvey). The duo's passionate flirtation adds additional sweat to the trip. Winterbottom, however, rightly gives the band and their music top billing as they head full-pelt across the country.

THE PUBLIC IMAGE IS ROTTEN

Director: Tabbert Fiiller | USA | 103mins | In English | Australian Premiere

In this entertaining record of John-post-Johnny, Lydon demonstrates his undeniable tenacity: "I'm one of the very few people in the pop industry who will just not go away!" Director Tabbert Fiiller dramatically illustrates this by documenting the various incarnations of PiL – from their first show in 1978 (the year that Sid Vicious died) through 'Flowers of Romance' (1981) and 'This is Not a Love Song' (1983) to their 21st century reformation. Past and present band members offer their own interpretation of events. However, it's Lydon who drives the film with his punkish comments, stories of his childhood and managerial troubles, and unexpected insight into his life in the media spotlight.

RUMBLE: THE INDIANS WHO ROCKED THE WORLD

Director, Screenwriter: Catherine Bainbridge, Alfonso Maiorana | Canada | 103mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Bainbridge and Maiorana's Sundance winner kicks off with the thumping riffs of Shawnee guitarist Link Wray's 1950s classic 'Rumble'; a track that E Street Band's Steven Van Zandt tagged "the theme song of juvenile delinquency". We hear how Native American musicians and rhythms influenced the South from North Carolina to the streets of New Orleans. Fascinating interviews and archival clips tell stories of music greats like jazz singer Mildred Bailey, guitar genius Jesse Ed Davis, and Native Canadians Buffy Sainte-Marie and The Band's Robbie Robertson. Executive produced by Apache guitarist Stevie Salas, this engaging documentary expertly reveals how Native American musicians are consistently left out of the story.

WHITNEY 'CAN I BE ME'

Directors: Nick Broomfield, Rudi Dolezal | UK, USA | 111mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Broomfield (*Heidi Fleiss: Hollywood Madam*, SFF 1996; *Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer*, SFF 1993) and Dolezal bring us never-before-seen backstage footage from the height of Houston's career. Touching, intimate interviews with the star, friends and colleagues (including her real-life bodyguard), round out this impressive recounting of a life so promising, and ultimately so tragic. The film doesn't evade her drug taking, troubled marriage or rumours of her bisexuality, nor does it ignore her undeniable talent (including several music clips). The title aptly illustrates the film's resonant core: that of a remarkable talent from the 'hood, struggling to keep her identity in a world of compromises and demands.

SMASH IT UP: CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF PUNK ROCK 1977-2017

DESPERATE LIVING

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: John Waters | USA | 90mins | In English

The anarchism and sense of societal decay that propelled the punk rock movement inhabits every frame of *Desperate Living*. From the moment we see that dinner plate and meet neurotic Baltimore housewife Peggy Gravel (Mink Stole, superb) we're plunged into a beautifully bizarre punk-inspired fantasy only John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*, *Hairspray*) could have so perfectly created. Kinkiness,



perversity and utter hilarity are the order of the day as Peggy and her 400-pound lesbian maid become killers and wind up in Mortville, a crazy fascist state populated by skid row bums and ruled by wicked Queen Carlotta (the immortal Edith Massey). Fairytales don't get any more fractured or funny than this.

THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Director, Screenwriter: Penelope Spheeris | USA | 100mins | In English

In 1979 Penelope Spheeris was directing music videos for million-selling West Coast bands whose very existence was part of the reason why punk rock erupted in the first place. But Spheeris preferred fast and loud music. At night she snuck out to bars and pointed her camera at much more exciting bands such as Black Flag, X, Circle Jerks and Germs. The result was an exhilarating portrait of the LA punk scene at its white-hot pinnacle. Complete with the first footage of real mosh pit action, *Decline...* combines incendiary live performances with amazingly candid and frequently hilarious interviews to create a priceless record of American musical, social and personal revolutions-in-progress.

THE FILTH AND THE FURY

Director: Julien Temple | UK, USA | 107mins | In English

How many filmmakers have returned to the same subject 20 years later and told a radically different story? Julien Temple does just that in his superb essay on the Sex Pistols and the times in which the band evolved, soared and ultimately imploded. In the perfect riposte to manager Malcolm McLaren dominating *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, it's the fiercely intelligent and supremely witty John Lydon (née Rotten) who holds the floor here. A free-form collage with kitschy '70s TV commercials and clips of ancient British comedy acts pointedly spliced into its raucous proceedings, *Filth...* tells us exactly why the Sex Pistols and punk rock needed to happen.

THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE

Director, Screenwriter: Julien Temple | UK | 101mins | In English

Known for masterful music documentaries including *Joe Strummer: The Future is Unwritten* (SFF, 2007), Temple began filming the Sex Pistols from practically the moment they formed. In this exhilarating combo of scripted drama, music videos, animation, hilarious fake newsreels and priceless archival footage, Temple tells a Dickensian rock 'n' roll story. Malcolm McLaren plays a Fagin-in-bondage trousers who chiselled a fortune from gullible record companies and enlisted figures such as fugitive train robber Ronnie Biggs in his 'cash from chaos' master plan. The 'truth' may have been something quite different (see *The Filth and the Fury*, also screening in this year's Festival), but what really matters here is the dazzling technique and furious energy captured in Temple's essential punk rock document.

JUBILEE

Director: Derek Jarman | UK | 106mins | In English

While the Sex Pistols rewrote 'God Save the Queen' as their 1977 Silver Jubilee offering, Jarman directed Britain's first punk movie. Elizabeth I is transported to Elizabeth II's England to discover a crumbling wasteland populated by nihilistic punks, where monarchy and traditional values are no longer relevant. The realm now belongs to tough-girl punks like pyromaniac Mad Medusa (Toyah Willcox) and nymphomaniac Crabs (Little Nell). But this is no rosy punk promo reel. Jarman lashes into punks for offering only apathy and violence as alternatives to the system. Armed with a killer soundtrack and featuring Jordan's immortal performance of 'Rule Britannia', *Jubilee* is a state-of-the-nation vision like no other.

WHITE RIOT: LONDON

Director: Rubika Shah | UK | 9mins | In English | Australian Premiere

In 1977, immigration divides Britain. What happens when a punk fanzine challenges the status quo?

TALKS



SMASH IT UP: A QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY CONVERSATION

The Music presents an inside look at Derek Jarman's iconoclastic genre-buster *Jubilee*, and the punk phenomena in Australia, from the UK's safety pin-stylin' and Johnny Rotten swagger to the sweaty pub-rock masses of Sydney that defined a generation.

PARTIES

JUBILEE

What better way to mark the Queen's birthday than with a crash and burn punk party featuring Aussie band Nancy Vandal alongside former roadie for The Damned, DJ Richard Kuipers. Following the screening of Derek Jarman's 1978 cult classic *Jubilee*, we'll turn up the volume at The Hub where Frenzal Rhomb's Jason Walley will rejoin his Nancy Vandal bandmates to cough up a storm with classics like 'God Save The Queen', while Richard Kuipers spins all your other favourite punk 45s from '77 and beyond. Be sure to check out the rest of our punk film program including the new John Lydon doco.

THE GO-BETWEENS

Join us and some very special guests for a night that celebrates the indelible music of Australian indie-icons The Go-Betweens. Right after the World Premiere of Kriv Stender's documentary *The Go-Betweens: Part Company*, friends, fans and the famous will gather to re-live and re-love a remarkable back catalogue. Hear DJs covering everything from enduring early singles 'Lee Remick', 'Cattle and Cane' and 'Streets Of Your Town', to the band's final ARIA-winning album *Oceans Apart* and crowning tune 'Darlinghurst Nights', they'll all be right here.