

First South African film selected for Venice Film Festival

At the announcement of the films selected to compete for the top prize 'The Golden Lion' award at the Venice International Film Festival, award-winning director, Oliver Hermanus made history when his third film, 'Endless River' became the first South African film selected for this festival...



The line up of films at the 72nd Venice International Film Festival (2-12 September 2015) was announced on 29 July 2015 at an official press conference at the Excelsior Hotel in Rome.

The Venice International Film Festival's main competition selection is considered, each year, to represent the greatest in cinematic achievement from around the world. Hermanus, who also penned the screenplay, becomes the first South African director to be included in the illustrious competition, which has formerly included some of the global entertainment industry's most celebrated movies. Last year *Birdman*, the 2014 Academy Award Best Picture winner, competed for the coveted Golden Lion prize.

Grand masters of cinema such as Jean Luc Godard, Andrei Tarkovsky, Michelangelo Antonioni, Wim Wenders and Krzysztof Kieslowski have previously won 'The Golden Lion'. The Jury President for the 72nd edition of the festival is Mexican director and Academy Award winner, Alfonso Cuarón (*Gravity*, *Children of Men*).

The Endless River stars South African actress, Crystal Donna Roberts, and French actor, Nicolas Duvauchelle. Set in the small town of Riviersonderend in the Overberg region, the human drama tells the story of a French expatriate and a small town waitress who form an unlikely bond after the brutal murder of his family on a farm. Crystal Donna Roberts, in her first leading role, will also be competing for the "Best Actress" prize at the festival - another South African first.

With *The Endless River*, Hermanus reunites with producers Didier Costet of Swift Productions in Paris; and Marvin Saven and Genevieve Hofmeyr of Moonlighting Films in Cape Town, who are the producing team of his multiple award-winning *Skoonheid*. This had its world premiere in "Un Certain Regard" competition at the 64th Cannes Film Festival, where it garnered critical acclaim and world attention for the local filmmaker.

"We are thrilled about this prestigious selection, it is a great achievement for Oliver, the entire team and the broader South African industry," commented producer, Genevieve Hofmeyr. Other South African talent includes Denise Newman (who collaborated with Hermanus on his debut film, *Shirley Adams*), and *Egoli* veteran Darren Kelfkins.

The creative production team includes Director of Photography, Chris Lotz, Production Designer, Franz Lewis, and Costume Designer, Reza Levy. Braam du Toit composes the original score. Hermanus also edited the film.

The Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa (IDC), the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) provided local funding.

Black Sheep Films will release the film on the South African theatrical circuit.

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