

WINDSOR
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL



DIGGER BUDGET



... ACTION!

BY TED SHAW

STAR ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

The Windsor International Film Festival has been built for a bigger audience, but the challenge is still the same: Will they come?

The third annual festival opens Tuesday at the Art Gallery of Windsor and runs through Sunday, Nov. 11, with screenings at four locations in Windsor and Lakeshore.

Festival programmer Otto Buj has assembled what he calls a more accessible lineup of 25 titles, nearly half of them Canadian and many screening here before anywhere else.

WIFF has bumped up its overall budget to \$130,000, an increase of about \$30,000 over last year, putting more money into the operational side, said execu-

tive director Debi Croucher.

The festival has added more galas at the renovated former Windsor Armouries, 37 University Ave. E., and included titles by Windsor filmmakers, all with an eye to increasing attendance.

Croucher is confident last year's total attendance of 7,000 can be eclipsed and increased to about 10,000, reflect-

ing the festival's higher profile. Last year's attendance for the same number of titles was about 125 a show.

Buj hopes this year's stronger lineup could bump that number up considerably. No fewer than nine of the films will be shown in Windsor ahead of their general release dates.

They are: Brick Lane, When Did You Last See Your Father?, The Walker, Persepolis, Emotional Arithmetic, Poor Boy's Game, The Band's Visit, Klimt, and Normal.

And these aren't obscure art films that would appeal only to film buffs. Some of the A-list stars in those films are Susan Sarandon, Woody Harrelson, Lauren Bacall, Max von Sydow, Danny Glover, John Malkovich and Colin Firth.

The main attraction this year is the Canadian-made feature Poor Boy's Game, starring Danny Glover and Rossif Sutherland, which screens Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Armouries, followed by a gala reception at The Room, 255 Ouellette Ave.

There are also a number of other galas, seven in all, scheduled for the Armouries:

- **Bluff**, directed by Simon Olivier-Fecteau and Marc-Andre Lavole, Wednesday at 7 p.m.
- **Emotional Arithmetic**, directed by Paolo Barzman, Friday at 6:45 p.m.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GRUMPY BURGER:

Marshall Sfalcin, left, and Matt Gallagher

Photo: Kevin Kavanaugh



THE WALKER: Lauren Bacall, Woody Harrelson

WIFF SCHEDULE

(For descriptions of films, visit www.windsorfilmfest.com)

- TUESDAY**
• **100 Films and a Full House**, 6 p.m., Art Gallery of Windsor, Riverside Dr. W.
- WEDNESDAY**
• **Bluff**, 7 p.m., Windsor Armouries, 37 University Ave. E.
- THURSDAY**
• **Poor Boy's Game**, 7 p.m., Windsor Armouries.
- FRIDAY**
• **Emotional Arithmetic**, 7 p.m., Windsor Armouries.
• **The Union: The Bus Getting High**, 6:45 p.m., Windsor Armouries.
• **Once**, 7 p.m., Palac 300 Ouellette Ave.
• **The Walker**, 9 p.m., Windsor Armouries.

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Film festival offers diversi

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- **The Walker**, directed by Paul Schrader, Friday at 9 p.m.
- **Persepolis**, directed by Vincent Paronnaud, Saturday at 5 p.m.
- **When Did You Last See Your Father?**, directed by Anand Tucker, Saturday at 7:15 p.m.
- **The Rise and Fall of the Grumpy Burger**, directed by Windsorite Matt Gallagher, Saturday at 9:15 p.m.

Gallagher's film is one of two made by former Windsorites, and it's the first time the festival has turned the spotlight on contributions by local filmmakers.

• **Michael McNamara's 100 Films and a Funeral** is leading the list of premieres with its opening night slot Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Art Gallery of Windsor. This insider's look at double-dealing in Hollywood promises to turn heads. McNamara got unprecedented access to the people behind the demise of Polygram Filmed Entertainment Pictures, a short-lived but aggressive studio that made such movies as *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Trainspotting* and *The Usual Suspects*. It will be screened twice, with the second also at AGW Saturday at 3 p.m. McNamara

will attend both screenings.

• Gallagher's **The Rise and Fall of the Grumpy Burger** is fresh off the grill and will have its world premiere Saturday at 9:15 p.m. at Windsor Armouries. Gallagher, an award-winning maker of documentaries now based in Toronto, turned his cameras on fellow filmmaker, Marshall Sfalcin, who attempted to make a dramatic film based on his grandfather's experiences running Windsor's Hi Ho Restaurant. This film-within-a-film examines the blurred line between truth and fiction.

These films represent increased exposure for Canadian film this year — 12 of the 25 titles were made in Canada. That has ensured the participation by some of the producers, stars and directors who plan to attend the Windsor screenings.

- **Simon Olivier-Fecteau and Marc-Andre Lavoie**, directors of the hit Quebec film, **Bluff**, will attend the gala screening Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Windsor Armouries. They will also participate in a high school workshop at St. Clair Beach's école secondaire l'Essor earlier that day.
- **Wes Williams**, who used to be known as Maestro Fresh Wes in his hip-hop days, will attend the screening **Poor**

Boy's Game, Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Armouries. Williams has a small role in the boxing film set in Halifax, that also stars Danny Glover and Rossif Sutherland.

• **Laurie Lynd**, who directed **Breakfast with Scot**, will attend the screening Saturday at 9 p.m. at Palace Cinemas. This controversial yet charming film follows the life of a former NHLer and broadcaster who is involved in a gay relationship. It was based on actual events.

• **Will Wennekers**, who wrote the screenplay for **Weirdsville**, will also be in town for two screenings, Friday at 9 p.m. at the Palace, and Saturday at 9 p.m. at Lakeshore. **Weirdsville** is a sort-of update of Bob and Doug McKenzie, in which two slackers try to survive a Canadian winter's night.

Buj has also landed a couple of hot new titles before they go into theatres.

• **Kurt Cobain: About a Son**, directed by A.J. Schnack, is a regional premiere, well-ahead of its scheduled Detroit run. The documentary traces the last days of the troubled founder of Nirvana, using archival film and filmed interviews. It screens Friday at 9 p.m. at the Art Gallery of Windsor.

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