



60TH BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL AMERICAN EXPRESS® GALA
ANNOUNCED AS THE UK PREMIERE OF
LION



LONDON – Wednesday 17 August, 2016: The 60th BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express® is thrilled to announce that LION starring Dev Patel, Rooney Mara, David Wenham and Nicole Kidman will be the American Express Gala at this year’s Festival. The film will receive its UK premiere on Wednesday 12 October at London’s Odeon Leicester Square, with Dev Patel and Nicole Kidman expected to attend.

Directed by Garth Davis, and adapted from Saroo Brierley’s engrossing memoir “A Long Way Home”. LION tells the true story of how a wrong train takes a five-year-old Indian boy hundreds of miles from home; he survives many challenges before being adopted by an Australian couple. Twenty-five years later, haunted by memories of his childhood, he learns of a new technology called Google Earth, and sets out to find his lost family.

BFI London Film Festival Director, Clare Stewart says: "We are delighted Garth Davis' LION will be this year's American Express Gala. This sweeping adaptation is a rousing tribute to the tenacity of the human spirit, and is more intricate in its texture, and more astounding in its narrative twists than most works of fiction."

Garth Davis, director says: "Whilst LION traverses many continents, it has a very special home here at the BFI London Film Festival and we are honoured to be a part of it. Dev Patel gave us everything for this story, and this being his home town, makes it deeply special."

Dev Patel says "LION is in essence, a story about mothers and sons and it's a real honour for me to be in London among so many of my colleagues, friends and family to share this triumphant, immersive and visually breathtaking story."

LION is a Weinstein Company presentation in association with Screen Australia, a See-Saw Films Production in association with Aquarius Films and Sunstar Entertainment. Produced by Emile Sherman, Iain Canning and Angie Fielder, executive producers are Bob Weinstein, Harvey Weinstein, David C Glasser, Andrew Fraser, Shahen Mekertichian and Daniel Levin.

The 60th BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express takes place from Wednesday 5 October-Sunday 16 October 2016. The Festival opens with Amma Asante's A UNITED KINGDOM and closes with Ben Wheatley's FREE FIRE. The full Festival programme will be announced on Thursday 1 September 2016.

Following a successful six year collaboration, the BFI announced in May this year, a continuation of the partnership between the BFI London Film Festival (LFF) and American Express, which will see them remain as Principal Sponsor and Preferred Payment Partner.

- Ends-

Festival Information & Ticket Booking

Purchase Festival tickets online at bfi.org.uk/lff, by phone from 10:00-20:30 daily at +44 (0)20 7928 3232, or visit the BFI Southbank Box Office 11:00-20:30. BFI Members' priority booking opens 10.00am, 8 September - join at bfi.org.uk/join. American Express priority booking for Cardmembers opens 10:00am, 13 September. Public booking opens 10.00am, 15 September.

Social Media:

@BFI | #LFF

Facebook.com/londonfilmfestival

PRESS CONTACTS

For further information about the 60th BFI London Film Festival

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For further information about LION

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger.

The BFI London Film Festival

BFI London Film Festival is Britain's leading film event and one of the world's best film festivals. It introduces the finest new British and international films to an expanding London and UK-wide audience and attracts significant international film industry participation. LFF is a compelling combination of red carpet glamour, friendly audiences and vibrant exchange. LFF provides an essential profiling opportunity for films seeking global success; promotes the careers of British and international filmmakers through its industry and awards programmes and positions London as the world's leading creative city.

BFI London Film Festival 2015

The 2015 BFI London Film Festival opened with the European premiere of Sarah Gavron's agenda-setting *Suffragette*. The film kicked off a festival focusing on and celebrating strong women, including a keynote address from campaigner Geena Davis as part of the Global Symposium on Gender in Media, hosted by the LFF in collaboration with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and Women in Film and Television (WFTV). The festival closed with the European Premiere of Danny Boyle's *Steve Jobs*, and saw 164,000 attendances across 568 screenings in 16 London venues and Opening and Closing night cinecasts to 45 venues across the UK.

The festival welcomed leading lights from across the international film industry in 2015, Acting talent supporting films at the Festival included: Carey Mulligan, Meryl Streep, Michael Fassbender, Kate Winslet, Johnny Depp, Benedict Cumberbatch, Saoirse Ronan, Emory Cohen, Cate Blanchett, Rooney Mara, Tom Hiddleston, Sienna Miller, Elizabeth Moss, Mohammed Assaf, Maggie Smith, Alex Jennings, Alan Bennett, Rachel Weisz, Colin Farrell, Ben Foster, Chris O'Dowd, Brie Larson, Agyness Deyn, Peter Mullan, Bryan Cranston, Helen Mirren, John Goodman, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje, Michael Caine and Harvey Keitel.

Directors presenting their work included Lenny Abrahamson, Hany Abu-Assad, Sean Baker, Mir-Jean Bou Chaaya, Danny Boyle, Esther May Campbell, Scott Cooper, John Crowley, Jonás Cuarón, Terence Davies, Stephen Frears, Cary Fukunaga, Sarah Gavron, Luca Guadagnino, Davis Guggenheim, Lucile Hadžihalilović, Todd Haynes, Nicholas Hytner, Yorgos Lanthimos, Guy Maddin, Deepa Mehta, László Nemes, Jerzy Skolimowski, Simon Stone, Ondi Timoner, Johnnie To, Athina Rachel Tsangari, James Vanderbilt, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Ben Wheatley and S. Graig Zahler.

Clare Stewart biography

Clare Stewart's 20 year programming career has encompassed leadership roles as Festival Director, Sydney Film Festival (2006-2011) and the inaugural Head of Film Programs at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne (2002-2006) as well as various roles at the Australian Film Institute (1996-2001), including Exhibition Manager, and programmer and Committee Member of the Melbourne Cinémathèque (1995-2002). She has been BFI Head of Festivals and BFI London Film Festival Director since October 2011.

About American Express

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Through American Express Invites®, Cardmembers have access to enriched experiences at some of the UK's most sought after entertainment events, including best seats, exclusive offers and early-on-sale tickets. The company has multi - year partnerships with a range of entertainment institutions including AEG, Live Nation, Ticketmaster, Somerset House, The British Film Institute and National Theatre.

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