



**THE 60TH BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL TO PRESENT THE  
EUROPEAN PREMIERE OF  
QUEEN OF KATWE**



Madina Nalwanga and Lupita Nyong'o as Phiona and Harriet Mutesi in 'Queen of Katwe', Walt Disney Studios

**LONDON – Wednesday 13 July, 2016:** The 60th BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express® is delighted to announce that QUEEN OF KATWE will receive its European Premiere on Sunday 9 October at the Odeon Leicester Square, screening in the Festival's prestigious headline gala section. The film stars Golden Globe® nominee David Oyelowo, Oscar® winner and Tony Award® nominee Lupita Nyong'o and newcomer Madina Nalwanga, who will attend with director Mira Nair.

QUEEN OF KATWE is the vibrant true story of a young girl, Phiona Mutesi (Nalwanga) selling corn on the streets of rural Uganda whose world rapidly changes when she is introduced to the game of chess by Robert Katende (Oyelowo) a soccer player turned missionary. As a result of the support she receives from her mother Harriet (Nyong'o), family and community, Phiona is instilled with the confidence and determination she needs to pursue her dream of becoming an international chess champion.

**Director Mira Nair**, says: “It makes me very proud that the European premiere of *QUEEN OF KATWE*, a film so close to my heart, and set in my hometown of Kampala, will take place at the BFI London Film Festival. I have so many fond memories of London. We are proud to be back.”

**David Oyelowo**, comments: “*QUEEN OF KATWE* beautifully illustrates a thing I know to be true but rarely see in films. Africa is teeming with amazing people who in spite of their, at times, difficult lives, manage to remain full of joy and hope. This is a story where the impossible is made possible through family, mentorship, encouragement, hard work, and faith, all things we can aspire to. It is a story that speaks to anyone and everyone, and I am so proud to have it screen in my hometown as part of the BFI London Film Festival.”

**Clare Stewart, BFI London Film Festival Director**, says: “*QUEEN OF KATWE* is an inspirational story, directed with vision and heart by Mira Nair and featuring performances of great depth and integrity from David Oyelowo, Lupita Nyong’o and newcomer Madina Nalwanga. We are proud to be announcing its European premiere to coincide with the launch of the BFI’s Black Star season.”

Directed by Mira Nair from a screenplay by William Wheeler, *QUEEN OF KATWE* is produced by Lydia Dean Pilcher, p.g.a. and John Carls, p.g.a. with Will Weiske and Troy Buder serving as executive producers.

*QUEEN OF KATWE* is the seventh film directed by Mira Nair to be presented at the Festival, following *Salaam Bombay!* (1988), *Mississippi Masala* (1991), *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), *Vanity Fair* (2004), *Namesake* (2006) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012).

David Oyelowo also stars in *A UNITED KINGDOM* previously announced as the Festival’s opening night film.

The BFI’s UK-wide Black Star blockbuster season celebrating the range, versatility and power of black actors on film and TV, which runs from 17 October to the end of the year, will be unveiled tonight, Wednesday 13 July 2016, at 19:30.

The 60th BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express® takes place from Wednesday 5 October-Sunday 16 October 2016. The full Festival programme will be announced on Thursday 1 September 2016.

- Ends-

## **PRESS CONTACTS**

### **For further information about the 60th BFI London Film Festival**

PREMIER - Rupert Goodwin

[rupert.goodwin@premiercomms.com](mailto:rupert.goodwin@premiercomms.com) Tel: +44 20 7292 8330

PREMIER - General Press Enquires & Accreditation

[LFFPress@premiercomms.com](mailto:LFFPress@premiercomms.com) Tel: +44 20 7292 8330

### **For further information about the UK release of *QUEEN OF KATWE***

WALT DISNEY STUDIOS – Stu Oakley / Lauren Sizer

[Stu.Oakley@disney.com](mailto:Stu.Oakley@disney.com) / [Lauren.Sizer@disney.com](mailto:Lauren.Sizer@disney.com) Tel: +44 20 8222 1000

## **Film Assets**

Images are available on [www.image.net](http://www.image.net)

## **For further information about BLACK STAR**

BFI PRESS OFFICE - [pressoffice@bfi.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@bfi.org.uk)

## **Festival Information & Ticket Booking**

BFI Members' priority booking opens 10.00am, 8 September - join at [www.bfi.org.uk/join](http://www.bfi.org.uk/join)

Public booking opens 10.00am, 15 September

Telephone Bookings: 020 7928 3232 between 10:00 – 20:30

Online: [www.bfi.org.uk/lff](http://www.bfi.org.uk/lff)

In person: BFI Southbank Office: 11:00 – 20:30

## **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. Craig 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®**

American Express is a diversified worldwide travel, financial and network services company founded in 1850. It is a leader in charge and credit cards, Travellers Cheques, travel and insurance products.

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.

For more detail on the enriched service American Express offers its Cardmembers, please visit [americanexpress.co.uk/whyamex](http://americanexpress.co.uk/whyamex) or connect with AmericanExpressUK on Facebook or Twitter @AmexUK