

BFI FUNDS NEW FEATURE FILMMAKERS
MICHAEL LENNOX WITH *A PATCH OF FOG* AND
MICHAEL PEARCE WITH *BEAST*

LONDON – Thursday 18 September 2014. The BFI Film Fund announces today that it is funding two new filmmakers, **Michael Lennox** with **A PATCH OF FOG** and **Michael Pearce** with **BEAST** through its First Feature Awards. The Film Fund considers features from first-time directors, working with budgets under £2million, at quarterly intervals

Ben Roberts, Director of the BFI Film Fund, says: “The number of feature debuts by British filmmakers in selection at international festivals this year is testament to the exciting talent we have breaking through in the UK. Getting new filmmakers off the mark is a priority for the Film Fund, and our first features strand is an open process that allows space for fresh voices to tell unique stories. *A PATCH OF FOG* and *BEAST* are excellent examples of original filmmaking that will grip audiences, and we’re looking forward to working with the two Michaels on their first feature projects.”

Michael Lennox is a Belfast born filmmaker who studied directing at the National Film and Television School (NFTS). His short *THE BACK OF BEYOND* was nominated for best short film at the European Film Awards and won awards at Locarno International Film Festival and at the Royal Society of Television Awards. His latest short *BOOGALOO & GRAHAM* was selected to screen at the Toronto International Film Festival 2014. Chosen as the winner of Northern Ireland Screen’s New Talent Focus scheme, *A PATCH OF FOG* is being produced and financed by The Fyzz Facility and supported by Northern Ireland Screen and Goldcrest Post Production .. Robert Jones, (*THE USUAL SUSPECTS*, *GOSFORD PARK*, *THE CONSTANT GARDENER*), Wayne Marc Godfrey (*SILENCE*, *CAKE*, *THE SURVIVALIST*) and David Gilbery (*SHELBY*, *DEAD SNOW: RED VS DEAD*, *XMOOR*) will produce.

A PATCH OF FOG is a gripping psychological thriller set in Belfast, which follows the celebrated, one-time published novelist, Sandy Duffy's, slow entrapment within the clutches of the increasingly obsessive Robert, a lonely security guard.

Jersey born writer and director **Michael Pearce** was named a Screen International Star of Tomorrow in 2011 and his National Film & Television School graduation film MADRUGADA film won Best Short Film at the RTS awards. His next short film, RITE, was nominated at the BAFTAs and BIFAs, screened at 40 international film festivals and won Best Film at the Rushes Soho Film Festival, Message2Man and the Almeria Film Festival. His recent short, KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES, was produced through the BFI Shorts scheme and was nominated for a BAFTA this year.

Pearce's first feature film **BEAST**, produced by Kristian Brodie and Myles Payne of Agile Films, is a love story trapped within a horror film; a dark fairytale about a an emotionally isolated woman who comes under the spotlight of an island community when she falls in love with a man who is suspected of a series of brutal murders.

Supporting developing new and emerging talent is a priority for the BFI and outlined in *Film Forever*, the BFI's strategy for UK film. The First Feature Awards editorial process, in which the BFI Film Fund continues to welcome applications throughout the year but considers them collectively at quarterly intervals, is designed to create a level playing field and provide an opportunity for fresh and exciting voices from a diverse range of filmmakers to shine through.

As is now standard practice for the BFI Film Fund, applicants who receive a positive decision in principle will be issued with a Letter of Intent, enabling some of the projects to secure the final stage of their funding by demonstrating the Film Fund's commitment and endorsement.

– Ends –

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BFI FILM FUND

With over £26m to invest a year, the BFI Film Fund is the UK's largest public investor in film - supporting first-class film-making through development and production, to distribution and international sales.

Recent releases backed by the BFI Film Fund include Jonathan Glazer's **Under the Skin**, Ralph Fiennes' **The Invisible Woman**, Amma Asante's **Belle**, Ken Loach's **Jimmy's Hall**, Joanna Hogg's **Exhibition**, Stephen Frears' **Philomena**, Lenny Abrahamson's **Frank**, Dexter Fletcher's **Sunshine on Leith**, Ruairi Robinson's **The Last Days On Mars**, Richard Ayoade's **The Double** and John Michael McDonagh's **Calvary**.

New films that the BFI Film Fund has backed include Mike Leigh's J.M.W Turner **Mr. Turner**; Matthew Warchus's **Pride**; John Boorman's **Queen & Country**; Yann Demange's **'71**, Lone Scherfig's **The Riot Club**; Duane Hopkins' **Bypass**; Daniel Wolfe's feature debut, **Catch Me Daddy**; Debbie Tucker-Green's **Second Coming**; John Crowley's **Brooklyn**; Andrew Haigh's **45 Years**; Louise Osmond's **Dark Horse**; Peter Strickland's **The Duke Of Burgundy**; Rufus Norris' **London Road**; Sarah Gavron's **Suffragette**; James Kent's **Testament of Youth**, Yorgos Lanthimos' **The Lobster**; Randall Wright's **Hockney**; Guy Myhill's **The Goob**; Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard's **20,000 Days on Earth**; Gerard Johnson's **Hyena**; John Maclean's **Slow West**; Terence Davies' **Sunset Song**; Richard Bracewell's **Bill**; Carol Morley's **The Falling**; Destiny Ekaragha's **Gone Too Far!**; Brian Hill's **Thomas Quick**; Beeban Kidron's **InRealLife**; Jon Wright's **Robot Overlords**; Morgan Matthews' **X+Y**; and André Singer's **Night Will Fall**.

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
- 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 Fyzz Facility

The Fyzz Facility is owned and run by Wayne Marc Godfrey and Robert Jones, two producers with over 40 years of industry experience between them. Over the last four years the company has part-financed more than 40 films and raised over \$40 million. Credits include the forthcoming **Cake** starring Jennifer Aniston, Sam Worthington and Anna Kendrick, **The Prince** starring Bruce Willis and John Cusack, **London Fields** starring Billy Bob Thornton, Amber Heard and Theo James, based on the best-selling Martin Amis novel and Martin Scorsese's forthcoming historical thriller **Silence**.

In 2013 the company raised financing for five first-time feature films including a film fund development slate run by our Head of Development Emma Lamont: **Superbob** which stars Brett Goldstein, Catherine Tate, David Harewood and Natalia Tena from director Jon Drever, and the dystopian thriller from writer/director Stephen Fingleton **The Survivalist** which stars Martin McCann, Mia Goth and Olwen Fouéré.

Upcoming projects include, **Alleycats**, due to shoot in London next year, from director Ian Bonhôte. Adapted by David Marconi and based on the best-selling 1995 novel, TFF are also in development for The **Chinaman**, which will shoot Q1/2 in 2015.