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BFI STATISTICS 2015: UK INDEPENDENT FILMS WIN AUDIENCES IN A BLOCKBUSTER BOX OFFICE YEAR

- *Highly anticipated blockbuster franchises thrilled UK cinema audiences in 2015 and UK independent films also held firm, achieving an 11% market share - the third highest on record*
- *2015 sees highest ever UK box office takings: £1,240 million, up 17% on 2014*
- *UK cinema admissions up 9% to 171.9 million*
- *UK spend from film production tops £1.41 billion – the second highest on record*
- *UK spend from High End Television programmes hits £759 million – up 20% on 2014's £633 million*
- *Highest grossing UK independent film in 2015 was Legend, taking £18.4 million, with The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel in second place on £16 million*

LONDON – Thursday 28 January 2016: Independent figures published today by the BFI show that in 2015 UK independent films held their own in a record year for the UK box office, with independent films and highly anticipated blockbuster franchises, including UK-made *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *SPECTRE*, pulling in record cinema audiences, and UK film production remaining strong throughout the year, with UK High End TV production showing significant growth.

Amanda Nevill, CEO of the BFI, said: “With spend from film production over £1.4 billion, audiences flocking to cinemas and UK box office topping £1.2 billion for the first time, today’s numbers show a golden age of British film continuing – and underlines film’s important contribution to the UK economy. It’s significant that a wide range of fantastic British independent films won the hearts and minds of audiences in a hugely competitive year, but it’s clear that the market is still tough for the makers and distributors of independent and specialised films – something the BFI is seeking to address through its Film Forever strategy.”

UK box office in 2015

Independent home-grown productions were embraced by UK audiences in 2015, with a wide range of titles achieving a market share at the UK box office of 11% - the third highest since records began. Previously, a strong market share for UK independents has often been driven by one or two key titles, but in 2015 a wide range of films each performed well and appealed to different audience groups – eight independent titles took over £5 million in 2015.

These were led by *Legend*, starring Tom Hardy as both Kray twins, which was the year's highest grossing UK independent with £18.4 million. Second was the sequel *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, which appealed to older audiences, and took £16 million. Aardman's Oscar®-nominated family film *Shaun the Sheep Movie* took £14 million, *The Lady in the Van* starring Dame Maggie Smith took £12 million, and the agenda-setting, female-led *Suffragette* took almost £10 million (with *The Lady in the Van* and *Suffragette* both continuing to play to cinema audiences in 2016). Asif Kapadia's Oscar®-nominated documentary *Amy*, released in 2015, became the second highest grossing non-concert documentary of all time at the UK box office, taking almost £3.8 million.

The solid result for UK independents in 2015 is particularly significant given the stellar performance of studio blockbusters, with hotly anticipated franchise titles fuelling a record year for the UK box office overall. Total ticket sales were worth £1,240 million (up 17% on 2014's £1,058 million) with admissions topping 171.9 million (up 9% from 2014's 157.5 million). The year's highest grossing film was *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* with takings of £114 million, released in December and still packing out cinemas in 2016. The latest outing for James Bond, *SPECTRE* was the second highest grossing film of the year, released late October, taking £95 million in 2015 and continuing to draw crowds in 2016. *Jurassic World* was 2015's third highest grossing film, taking over £64 million, and in fourth place was the latest in the Avengers series, *The Avengers: Age of Ultron*, which took over £48 million.

UK production in 2015

Film:

The year saw continued strength in the UK's production sector, with the total spend on film production in the UK topping £1.41 billion – the second highest figure since these statistics were first recorded 20 years ago and only a slight decrease of 6% on 2014's record-breaking total (£1.49 billion). The strength of UK film production is testament to the continuing appeal of UK

studios, facilities, locations, crews and the supportive fiscal environment created by the UK film tax relief.

International films attracted to the UK in 2015 by the creativity and expertise of the UK's crews and world-class production facilities, the UK film tax relief and the service provided by the British Film Commission, helped to generate a spend of £1.18 billion from 47 inward investment films. These included Disney's *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, 20th Century Fox's *Assassin's Creed*, Warner Bros' *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* and Universal's *The Huntsman*. Major international films making the UK their production base bring investment, create jobs, and contribute to the UK economy, with film production supported by the UK film tax relief generating almost £12.50 for the UK economy for every £1 spent in relief.

There were 124 domestic UK films made in the UK in 2015, between them spending £198 million – a slight dip of 7% on 2014's total of £212 million. Independently produced domestic titles in 2015 included *The Girl With All The Gifts* (dir. Colm McCarthy), *Viceroy's House* (dir. Gurinder Chadha), *A United Kingdom* (dir. Amma Asante), *Notes on Blindness* (writer/directors Peter Middleton and James Spinney) which has just premiered to great acclaim at the Sundance Film Festival, and *Whisky Galore* (dir. Gillies MacKinnon).

Owing to the lower budget nature of many independent UK domestic titles, which offer creative freedom to exciting UK filmmakers, there is often a time-lag in data collection so the total number of films and UK production spend will likely be revised upwards as more information is received. The January 2014 statistics release recorded 154 domestic UK titles; this figure rose to 224 as more data were received – a trend likely to be repeated this year.

There were 30 UK co-productions commencing production in 2015, between them spending £35 million in the UK, down from £38 million in 2014. UK co-productions shooting in 2015 included *I, Daniel Blake* (dir. Ken Loach), *The Receptionist* (dir. Jenny Lu) and *The Danish Girl* (dir. Tom Hooper).

High End Television

There was significant growth in spend from High End Television production in the UK in 2015, with 82 television programmes driving a UK spend of £759 million – up 20% from £633 million in 2014. The growth of the sector is testament to the UK's outstanding crews, locations, facilities

and the government's tax relief for high end television programmes and a range of titles were shot across the UK in 2015. These include *Games of Thrones 6* (HBO), *Galavant 2* (ABC Studios), *Outlander Season 2* (Sony Pictures Television/Starz/Left Bank), *The Night Manager* (AMC/BBC/Ink Factory) and *The Bastard Executioner* (FX/Fox 21/Imagine Entertainment).

Animation programmes

At the time of reporting, at least 18 animation programmes were produced in the UK in 2015 with a spend of £29 million. Of these, eight were domestic UK productions. However, there is a significant time lag in collecting animation data and these numbers are almost certain to increase as more information becomes available.

- Ends-

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Notes to editors:

Download the BFI Research and Statistics Unit releases covering the UK box office in 2015 and film production in the UK in 2015: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/film-industry-statistics-research/official-statistics-release-calendar>

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 Greg Dyke.



About the British Film Commission

The British Film Commission (BFC) is the national body responsible for maximising and supporting the production of international feature films and high-end television in the UK. With offices in the UK and the US, the BFC provides free professional advice to help make productions in the UK a reality.

The BFC has commercial sponsors, who form the membership of the agency's innovative public/private partnership: Disney, Harbottle & Lewis, Pinewood Studios Group, Saffery Champness, Warner Bros. UK and its UK-based film production operations, BBC Worldwide, Coutts, Double Negative, Elstree Studios, Framestore, MPC and Working Title Films.

The British Film Commission is managed by Film London through a public/private partnership funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport through the BFI, it also receives funding from UK Trade and Investment.

www.britishfilmcommission.org.uk

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