

'Still' launches flurry of Whistler pix

By Jennie Punter

TORONTO

Michael McGowan's "Still," starring James Cromwell as a feisty 88-year-old battling bureaucrats while building a house for his ailing wife, will open the Whistler Film Festival and confab, it was announced Thursday morning along with the full 75-title slate.

The 12th annual mountain resort-set fest and confab will screen 41 features, only eight of which unspooled in Toronto.

As new director of programming Paul Gratton said in a statement, this indicates the event is "succeeding in carving out a distinct niche for Whistler amidst the plethora of film festivals that currently dot the media landscape."

U.S. titles include Dan Mirvish's "Between Us" and Todd Berger's "It's a Disaster" (both of which star Julia Stiles), Bill Guttentag's "Knife Fight," Brian Young's scenically appropriate "The Mountain Runners," William Krieg's "Ready to Fly" and Liz Garbus' docu "Love, Marilyn."

Closing gala "The Sheepdogs Have a It," John Barnard's docu about the Saskatchewan quartet



that won Rolling Stone's Do You Wanna Be a Rock and Roll Star contest earlier this year, is one of six world prems, all Canuck titles.

The others are Jason Bourque's docu about a notorious Mumbai ad agency "Bird Co. Media," David Mortin's tale of a quixotic prairie adventure "Mad Ship," Karen Cho's docu exploring the Canadian feminist movement "Status Quo?" and the director's cut of Joel Goldberg's music docu "Bruce Cockburn Pacing the Cage" and David

Hicks' British Columbia-lensed buddy comedy "The Movie Out Here," which is exec produced by Jeff Sackman and Michael Baker.

Fest will also screen hot Canuck horror pics "American Mary," from twin sister helmers Jen and Sylvia Soska, and Rue Morgue publisher-turned filmmaker Rodrigo Gudino's feature bow "The Last Will and Testament of Rosalind Leigh."

The festival runs Nov. 28-Dec. 2 in Whistler, B.C.

International Briefs

INDIA

BBC Worldwide shuts two nets

BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of the U.K. pubcaster, is shuttering two of its channels, BBC Entertainment and CBeebies, in India.

It said the webs were closing due to delays in digitization and the cost that cable platforms charge for carriage.

BBC World News would continue broadcasting in India.

Decision was taken by Mark Whitehead, senior VP and general manager, BBC Worldwide Channels Asia.

The webs will close at the end of November.

— Steve Clarke

POLAND

Schumacher tops Camerimage jury

Joel Schumacher will head the main competish jury at Plus Camerimage film festival, which unspools in Bydgoszcz, Poland from Nov. 24 to Dec. 1.

The helmer-producer-scribe heads one of eight juries at the event, one of the world's leading showcases of cinematography.

Other jury prexies are helmers Alan Parker, who leads the student jury, Roger Spottiswoode, who heads the directors' debuts jury, Michael Lindsay-Hogg, who is in charge of music vids, Pawel Lozinski, overseeing the feature docus, and Steven Okazaki ("Days of Waiting"), who judges the short docs.

Other jury toppers are film editor Alan Heim ("All That Jazz"), who presides over the Polish film section, and d.p. Karl Walter Lindenlaub ("Independence Day"), leading the cinematographers' debuts.

The festival opens with a gala presentation of Ang Lee's "Life of Pi," and docu "Side by Side," produced by Keanu Reeves, who will be in attendance.

— Nick Holdsworth



Schumacher