

SCREEN

AT TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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Lorenzo Vigas with his Golden Lion

From Afar wins top Venice prize

BY MICHAEL ROSSER

From Afar (*Desde Alla*), the first Venezuelan production to appear in Competition at Venice Film Festival, has won the Golden Lion for best film.

Lorenzo Vigas's directorial debut centres on a man who pays young boys to spend time with him, and whose life changes when he befriends a teen delinquent.

The Silver Lion for best director went to Argentinian film-maker Pablo Trapero for kidnap drama *The Clan* (*El Clan*) while the Grand Jury Prize was awarded to US film *Anomalisa*, the first animated feature from Charlie Kaufman, who co-directed with Duke Johnson.

Cary Joji Fukunaga's *Beasts Of No Nation*, which screens here tonight in Special Presentations, saw young star Abraham Attah win the best young actor prize for his portrayal of an African child soldier.

Best debut film went to Brady Corbet's fascist fable *The Childhood Of A Leader*, starring Robert Pattinson. Corbet also picked up best director in the Horizons (Orizzonti) strand of the festival.

TIFF talents lay down marker in awards race

BY JEREMY KAY

Awards season is in its infancy but that has not stopped early buzz coalescing around a cluster of early acting contenders.

Brie Larson looks likely to become a strong presence in the actress race after *Room* got tongues wagging at Telluride while Oscar winner Cate Blanchett is in contention for her widely admired turn in *Carol* and may earn additional plaudits for *Truth*, which premiered here last night.

Alicia Vikander impressed critics in *The Danish Girl*, as did Carey Mulligan and Saoirse Ronan for

Suffragette and *Brooklyn*, respectively. Warner Bros and Sandra Bullock pulled off an Oscar win for *The Blind Side* in 2010 and could be a potent force again with *Our Brand Is Crisis*. Another Academy Award winner, Julianne Moore, stars opposite Ellen Page in *Freeheld* that premiered here last night.

Male contenders could see Michael Keaton back in the mix for *Spotlight* after his nod earlier this year for *Birdman* but he faces stiff competition from Johnny Depp in what some have called a career-best performance in Venice premiere *Black Mass*. Meanwhile, regular

heavyweight Michael Fassbender has earned champions since *Steve Jobs* premiered at Telluride.

Harvey Weinstein is known to be high on Jake Gyllenhaal in *Southpaw* and his way has been cleared somewhat now that Fox Searchlight will launch Toronto opener *Demolition* in April 2016.

The best picture race has yet to come into clear focus, however Hany Abu-Assad's *The Idol* must be a foreign-language frontrunner, while Venice prize-winner *Anomalisa* will doubtless be rubbing shoulders with Pixar's *Inside Out* in the animation category.

Hubert Boesl



Alicia Vikander and Eddie Redmayne at the North American premiere of *The Danish Girl* here last night

Mister Smith scores Un Plus Une

UK sales outfit Mister Smith Entertainment has inked a string of deals on Oscar-winning director Claude Lelouch's romance *Un Plus Une* following the film's world premiere here on Friday.

Deals have closed in Israel (United King), Switzerland (Ascot Elite), Baltics (Acme), Turkey (Aqua Group), Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia (Blitz), Greece (Odeon) and the Middle East (Jaguar).

Jean Dujardin stars alongside Elsa Zylberstein in the story of a composer who falls in love with a woman he meets while in India, despite both already having partners (see review, page 12).

Cast and Metropolitan Films' producers Samuel and Victor Hadida were in Toronto for the film's debut screening. It will be released in France on December 9.

Andreas Wiseman

Rabbit pings around world

BY JEREMY KAY

Cinema Management Group (CMG) has secured key sales on Mili Pictures' animation *Ping Pong Rabbit*. Deals have closed in South Korea (First Run), Poland (Kino Swiat), Turkey (Associated Euromedia), Israel (FilmHouse), Hungary (Bohemia Motion Pictures), Bulgaria (Tandem Film), former Yugoslavia (2i Film) and Central America (Producciones Latinamericanas). CMG, in Toronto showing new

footage from the ongoing production, licensed rights in the Middle East to Front Row Entertainment in Cannes.

Mike Johnson and Song Yuefeng co-direct the animation about a rabbit who aspires to win the fabled Jade Table prize awarded to the finest table-tennis player in the land, but must overcome the dastardly monkey champion.

Mili Pictures US executive Bill Borden produces *Ping Pong Rabbit* with Jack Zhang.



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TORONTO BRIEFS

Arclight sells *Less Men*

Arclight has pre-sold comedy sequel *A Few Less Men* to Australia and New Zealand (StudioCanal), Italy (Lucky Red), Middle East (Italia Films), eastern Europe (Modus Vivendi), Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Columbia (Eastwood Holdings) and Vietnam (Galaxy).

Headhunter's calls cast

Willem Dafoe and Alfred Molina have joined *The Headhunter's Calling*, produced by Gerard Butler and being sold here by Voltage Pictures.

DDI takes *Metanoia*

Double Dutch International (DDI) has acquired worldwide sales to biopic *Metanoia* and attached Michael Gambon to join David Tennant on the cast.

film domain launches

Motion Picture Domain Registry has launched the film domain dedicated exclusively to film content and marketed as an anti-piracy move. Nu Image/Millennium Films, which were victims of piracy when *The Expendables 3* was leaked online, have registered with the domain.

Deauville win for Ramin Bahrani's *99 Homes*

Ramin Bahrani's *99 Homes*, which played at last year's TIFF, won the Grand Prize at Deauville American Film Festival yesterday.

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