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A SELECTION OF AWARD-WINNING INTERNATIONAL FEATURES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Toronto, October 11, 2011 — The Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival is proud to present a dynamic international selection that includes award-winners from China, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

BLEAK NIGHT (Director Yoon Sung-Hyun, South Korea 2010, Toronto premiere)

Bleak Night won the New Currents Award at the Busan International Film Festival in 2010. Ki-tae, Dong-yoon, and Hee-june are three best friends. Suddenly, Dong-yoon finds himself caught in a power struggle between Ki-tae and Hee-june and their friendship abruptly devolves into an ugly, territorial, and violent rift. Alliances among their group of friends shift, and the joking exchanges and friendly brawls that occur between the boys take on an ominous tone. When disagreements leads to a tragic end, the friends are left bewildered and forever fractured. Director Yoon Sung-Hyun takes us into the dark and anxious heart of a young boy who, behind a carefully constructed image of confidence, collapses under the weight of his insecurities. This debut feature film reveals the complex and competitive power dynamics at play among teenaged boys, and is a dark reminder of how fragile young friendships can be.

ETERNITY (Director Sivaroj Kongsakul, Thailand 2010, Canadian premiere)

Inspired by the Thai belief that souls of the dead return to the place they once cherished in life, Kongsakul tells a heartfelt tale of love and remembrance. *Eternity* is a beautifully crafted drama about love, loss, and the memories that endure after death. The film unfolds in three interwoven chapters. It begins with a man, alone on a motorcycle, travelling through the Thai countryside. Wit (Wanlop Rungkamjad) is a ghost on a quest to retrace the footsteps of his life. As a tribute to his father who passed away when he was a child, Kongsakul has crafted a stunning drama. Winner of the Tiger Award, Rotterdam International Film Festival (2011)

FORTUNE TELLER (Director Xu Tong, China 2010, Toronto premiere)

Fortune Teller is a candid and revelatory look at individuals living on the fringes of Chinese society. Li Baicheng is a charismatic fortune teller whose clientele consists mainly of prostitutes and shadowy figures. His job, like theirs, is commonplace but technically illegal in China. He practices his ancient craft in a village near Beijing while taking care of his deaf and mentally handicapped wife, Pearl, whom he rescued from familial mistreatment. Xu Tong spent a year filming nearly every detail of Li's daily existence. The camera catches every raw and familiar strand of human desire in these ordinary people's extraordinary lives, at once epic and startling.

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST: THE SACRED STAR OF MILOS (Director Murata Kasuya, Japan 2011, Toronto premiere)

Fullmetal Alchemist is the second feature film based on the number one Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Hiromu Arakawa. The story follows the infamous Elric brothers, Edward and Alphonse, who are searching for the legendary Philosopher's Stone, a powerful object that would allow them to restore their bodies, which were lost after a disastrous attempt to bring their mother back to life through alchemy. The Elric brothers' attempt to track down a fugitive alchemist with mysterious abilities leads them to the slums of Milos Valley. Edward and Alphonse quickly find themselves in the middle of a rising rebellion as the exiled Milos struggle against bureaucratic exploitation and lash out against their oppressors. At the heart of the conflict is Julia, a young alchemist who will stop at nothing to restore the Milos to their former glory.

JOURNALS OF MUSAN (Director Park Jungbum, South Korea 2010, Canadian premiere)

Winner of the Tiger Award, Rotterdam International Film Festival (2011), *Journals of Musan* is a striking drama about Jeong Seung-chul (Park), a North Korean refugee with a bowl haircut and quiet demeanour, who is struggling to survive in Seoul. With an identity card that gives away his status and leaves him with little prospect for employment, he is stuck with low-end jobs on the streets that put him in frequent conflict with the gangsters that roam the area. While Kyung-chul, his friend from the North, gravitates to a capitalist lifestyle, Seung-chul finds solace in a church, where he develops feelings for Sook-young, a pretty churchgoer. By portraying the lives of North Korean refugees, something rarely depicted in film, Park has crafted a striking drama about a man who fled a difficult life, only to find himself in an even more perilous existence.

JUMP ASHIN! (Director Lin Yu-hsien, Taiwan 2011, Canadian premiere)

From the director of the box office hit *Jump! Boys* (2005) comes a genre-fusing motivational sports movie inspired by the life story of his gymnast brother. *Jump Ashin!* follows the adventures and mishaps of Ashin, who, despite the many obstacles he faces, is determined to be a world-class gymnast. Winner of the 2011 Taipei Film Festival Audience Award, *Jump Ashin!* features an outstanding cast including Eddie Peng, who underwent 12 hours of training a day for three months to be able to show the intensity of a gymnast, and Lawrence Ko, whose fascinating portrayal of Ashin's best friend Pickle won him the Best Supporting Actor Award at the Taipei Film Festival this year.

OVERHEARD 2 (Directors Felix Chong, Alan Mak, Hong Kong 2011, Canadian premiere)

After their wildly successful film *Overheard*, which opened the Reel Asian Film Festival in 2009, directors Alan Mak and Felix Chong have returned, alongside actors Lau Ching Wan, Louis Koo and Daniel Wu. Their latest offering is a thrilling new suspense story about greed and betrayal in the high stakes world of insider trading and corporate espionage. Manson Law (Lau), a highly successful stockbroker, is involved in a car accident after realizing someone is following him. Jack Ho (Koo), the lead investigator on the case, discovers that a mysterious man named Joe (Wu) has been watching Law. As more details emerge about the case, the duo draws the attention of the Landlord Club, a powerful group of outlaw brokers led by the elusive Tony (Kenneth Tsang). *Overheard 2* is a classic Hong Kong action thriller that will keep you guessing until the end.

PIERCING 1 (Director Liu Jian, China 2009, Canadian premiere)

Winner of Best Animated Feature Film, Asia Pacific Screen Awards (2010), this remarkable debut film by Chinese artist Liu Jian is a nightmarish, punk-style animation about corruption, discrimination, and disaffected youth in modern-day China. Set during the 2008 financial crisis, the story takes place in a sombre city where many factories have been forced to close their doors. Despite having a college degree, Zhang is one of many who loses his job. One day, he is accused of stealing and gets beat up by a supermarket security guard. Zhang and his friend conspire to get compensation from the store's owner who happens to be one of the wealthiest businessmen in town. A chain of events gets the two friends entangled in a complicated conspiracy between the store owner's competitors and the police. The battle over power and money culminates in a brilliant and unexpected showdown at a teahouse.

SAIGON ELECTRIC (Director Stephane Gauger, USA/Vietnam 2011, Canadian premiere, director in attendance)

From the director of *Owl and the Sparrow* (Reel Asian 2007) comes a fresh new dance film with a distinctly Vietnamese flair. Featuring a cast of up-and-coming young dancers, the film is packed with awesome dance-offs and a ton of attitude. Mai, a traditional ribbon dancer from the countryside, arrives in the big city of Saigon with hopes of being admitted to the national dance academy. After falling victim to her own insecurities and failing her auditions, Mai befriends a rebellious hip hop dancer named Kim and her dance crew of local street kids, Saigon Fresh.

SUMMER PASTURE (Director Lynn True, Nelson Walker, USA/Tibet 2010, Canadian premiere, directors in attendance)

Summer Pasture is a feature-length documentary about a young nomadic couple living with their infant daughter in the high grasslands of Eastern Tibet. Locho and his wife, Yama, depend on their herd of yaks for survival, just as their ancestors have for generations. In recent years, however, their community of Dzachukha has undergone rapid development, which poses unprecedented challenges to nomadic life. Rigid government policies, rangeland degradation, and the allure of modern life have prompted many nomadic families to leave the pastures for permanent settlement in towns and cities. *Summer Pasture* is a sensitive portrait of a family at a time of great transition.

SURROGATE VALENTINE (Director David Boyle, USA 2011, Toronto premiere, cast in attendance)

From the director of *White on Rice* comes a new light-hearted romantic comedy starring San Francisco Bay Area-based musician Goh Nakamura. Nakamura makes his acting debut—playing himself. Goh's life of solitude is disrupted when he is hired to teach TV actor Danny Turner (Chadd Stoops) how to play guitar for an upcoming film. Hell-bent on accurately portraying Goh's mellow vibe for his role, Danny meticulously studies Goh's every move. Together, the two embark on a hilarious West Coast adventure involving live gigs, groupies, shotgun-wielding record execs, and an unexpected friendship. Along the way, Goh discovers that Danny may be the missing piece of the puzzle in his lifelong chase for Rachel (Lynn Chen), the one who got away.

WHEN LOVE COMES (Director Chang Tso-Chi, Taiwan 2010, Canadian premiere)

Winner of four awards at the 2010 Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival 2010 including best feature film, Director Chang Tso-chi is undoubtedly one of Taiwan's most notable directors. Working-class family conflicts and social alienation are common elements of his work. *When Love Comes* is a heartfelt film that tells the story of a dysfunctional but loving family that must find strength and love in one another during their most difficult times. Lai-chun is a flirtatious 16-year-old girl living in a claustrophobic house with her complicated family in Taipei. The family runs a small restaurant in a shopping arcade while Lai-chun lives in her own world, distant from her family. She spends her days dreaming about boys, but when her irresponsibility turns her life upside down and her boyfriend abandons her, she must change the way she runs her life.

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