

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

Showcasing the Best in Independent and World Cinema
Thursday, October 5 – 15, 2017

**40TH MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL CONCLUDES WITH
GRETA GERWIG AND BAY AREA PREMIERE OF *LADY BIRD***

OVERALL AUDIENCE AWARD FAVORITE: *MUDBOUND*

Full List Of Audience Favorites Below

SAN RAFAEL, CA (October 16, 2017) – The Mill Valley Film Festival concluded its 40th anniversary last night with the Bay Area premiere of **LADY BIRD** from Sacramento native Greta Gerwig. Gerwig was in attendance for the screenings of the film as it dazzled audiences.

The screening capped the end for the annual autumn showcase of films, panels, parties and musical performances. The Festival drew over 75,000 attendees who flocked to Marin County to get an early glimpse at the Academy Award® contenders, discover some of the best films from around the globe and celebrate the many talented local filmmakers in the Bay Area.

Film has a unique ability to heal, at least temporarily, and several of our special guests expressed their sorrow to hear about the North Bay fires, and commented on the incredible spirit this wonderful community has to band together and help each other in times of crisis. The tragic events of the fires throughout Napa and Sonoma County were felt by the Festival as many attendees were affected. The Festival donated a portion of the proceeds from two screenings of **ANDRE: THE VOICE OF WINE** and the MVFF Music show **B AND THE HIVE** to the American Red Cross of California Northwest to help those affected by the tragedy.

“The bar was already set high upon entering our 40th Anniversary Festival”, said Founder and Director, Mark Fishkin. “So how does one approach a milestone like 40 years: by doing what we have done for the last 4 decades; presenting the best films, coupled with artists at the Festival that have distinguished themselves — and by introducing new talent from the bay of San Francisco to across the globe.”

“Whether it is Joe Wright (a long time friend of the Festival) who returned this year with his Churchill tour de force **DARKEST HOUR**, or by honoring its co-star Kristin Scott Thomas, (a first time guest at MVFF) who is universally regarded as one of the best actors of her generation, the Festival has always valued our community. Honoring two-time Oscar® winner and former Marin resident Sean Penn made great sense and was long overdue. Our Tribute to Holly Hunter, **THE BIG SICK** is just the latest triumph in a career that earned four Academy Award® nominations and an Oscar® for **THE PIANO**, and was something we had wanted to do for a very long time.” Fishkin continued, “As one looks at the programming in its entirety, whether our Tribute to Todd Haynes or Spotlights to Andrew Garfield, Margot Robbie, Jason Clarke, and first solo directorial effort by Greta Gerwig with **LADY BIRD** - I believe — by any definition — the 2017 MVFF was a true culmination of the 40 years.”

“MVFF continues to be a leader in driving the film industry towards gender parity and conscious inclusion: with 44% women directors across all sections at the Festival, we exceeded our goal of 40% for our 40th anniversary. It can be done! And, it was standing room only at our inaugural Mind the Gap Summit, where we brought together leaders in film and tech for a powerful day of presentations and discussion. Producers **Blye Faust (SPOTLIGHT)**, **Osnat Shurer (MOANA)**; actress **Connie Nielsen (WONDER WOMAN)**; director **Catherine Hardwicke (TWILIGHT)**; and director **Dee Rees** with the heads of department from her film **MUDBOUND** were amongst those leading an incredibly inspiring day,” added Director of Programming, Zoë Elton. “At a time when we are doing a lot of soul-searching about women in the industry, Mind the Gap articulates ways to raise the bar on agency for women, both in storytelling and in their working lives. And, an amazing community of international filmmakers could be seen amongst the redwoods in Mill Valley—from Petra Volpe (**THE DIVINE ORDER**, Switzerland) to Annarita Zambrano (**AFTER THE WAR** Italy), from Lynne Sachs (**TIP OF MY**

TONGUE, US) to Greta Gerwig (**LADY BIRD**, US). And with MVFF honors to Gerwig, Rees and actresses Kristin Scott Thomas and Holly Hunter, our 40th proved to be an extraordinary year for great female talents.”

The Festival began its 40th anniversary celebration on October 5th with the Bay Area premiere of Joe Wright’s **DARKEST HOUR** with Wright and actress Kristin Scott Thomas in attendance, and the World Premiere of **WAIT FOR YOUR LAUGH**, Jason Wise’s loving portrait of Hollywood icon Rose Marie with Wise and subject Peter Marshall in attendance.

Over the 11 days, the Festival presented special Spotlight presentations to rising talent Dee Rees for her assured directing of **MUDBOUND**, Andrew Garfield for his powerful performance in **BREATHE**, Greta Gerwig for her accomplished solo directing debut **LADY BIRD** and Jason Clarke for his transformative turn as Ted Kennedy in **CHAPPAQUIDDICK**.

Additionally, the Festival presented special Tributes to acclaimed filmmakers and actors including: Kristin Scott Thomas for her work opposite Gary Oldman in **DARKEST HOUR**; Sean Penn for his decades of experience as an acclaimed actor and director; actress Holly Hunter for her astonishing career and work, most recently in **THE BIG SICK**, and acclaimed director Todd Haynes for his decades of cinema genius, including latest film **WONDERSTRUCK**.

Academy Award® nominated director Richard Linklater was on hand for the Bay Area premiere of his latest film **LAST FLAG FLYING**, which screened as the Festival’s Centerpiece Presentation.

The Festival presented a number of panel discussions, master classes, workshops and VR presentations including: **MIND THE GAP SUMMIT**, a day of networking events, discussions and master classes which highlighted the many women working in the film industry; **CANNABIS CULTURE & THE NEW ENTREPRENEUR** which looked at the slew of entrepreneurs who have risen out of the booming legal marijuana industry; **STATE OF THE INDUSTRY: FROM ACQUISITION TO EXHIBITION**, which looked at the current state of the film industry and featured panelist director and actor Danny Huston, producer and founder of Cinetic Media John Sloss, writer Sydney Levine, Ro*co Films managing director Cristine Dewey and moderator Paul Cohen; and **VR AT THE CROSSROADS**, a look at the current VR landscape, including a VR experience for the panel’s audience.

Over the course of the Festival, **CFI Education** welcomed 3,000 elementary, middle and high school students to venues across Marin County and sent a dozen local and visiting filmmakers out to Bay Area classrooms to meet with 500 more. Students got to see live owls after a screening of the Dutch film **OWLS & MICE** (and a not-so-live owl after a screening of **JANE**, as part of a WildCare presentation about wildlife conservation). They were inspired by the epic open-sea swimming feats of Kim Chambers, featured in the documentary **KIM SWIMS**. They engaged in powerful conversations about slavery and racism after several school screenings (and one teacher professional development workshop) of the documentary **THE LONG SHADOW**. They got to see the work of their peers in the youth-produced shorts program **5@5 FUTURE LEGEND**. They met filmmaker Martin Shore (and film subject Jerry Hannan) of **MAD HANNANS** in their classroom and talked about the importance of following their dreams; and discussed their own experiences with bullying with filmmaker Halima Lucas of **AMELIA’S CLOSET**. Students even got to experience the incredible virtual reality exhibit of **TREE**. These are just a few of the highlights of this year’s MVFF Education Screenings and Filmmakers Go to School programs, and the experience has been inspiring not just for the students but for the filmmakers as well, as noted by **THE LONG SHADOW** producer Don Goldmacher: “Now we know why we made the film and why we should be targeting young people as our primary audience. Being with those kids today made my day!”

The Festival’s official program included 120 feature films, and 95 short films representing 52 countries, and 43 premieres, with over 330 filmmakers, musicians, panelists and special guests in attendance. Festival highlights included: Academy Award® winning writer Aaron Sorkin attended in support of his directorial debut **MOLLY’S GAME**; acclaimed filmmaker Sean Baker presented his latest film **THE FLORIDA PROJECT** to Bay Area audiences; Swiss Foreign Language Oscar entry **THE DIVINE ORDER** screened with director Petra Volpe; local Bay Area film producer Frazer Bradshaw presented his directorial debut, **THE DEEP SKY**; British filmmaker Simon Curtis attended the screening of his latest film **GOODBYE CHRISTOPHER ROBIN**; actor and director Danny Huston presented the North American Premiere of his film **THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH**; Berkeley born director Santiago Rizzo was on hand for the premiere of his personal film **QUEST** with cast and crew including Lou Diamond Phillips; director Michael Rubenstone and original founding members of Sly and the Family Stone were present for **ON THE SLY: IN SEARCH OF THE FAMILY STONE**; subject Jerry Hannan and special

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guests were present for the World Premiere of **MAD HANNANS** and performed an intimate concert following the film; local filmmaker Kate Webber presented the World Premiere of her documentary **KIM SWIMS** with subject Kim Chambers in attendance; the World Premiere of **MARY JANES: THE WOMEN OF WEED** highlighted the Festival's Focus on Cannabis Culture; **METAMORPHOSIS: JUNIOR YEAR**, created by Palo Alto High School students in collaboration with James Franco and Esther Wojcicki, a modern coming of age tale based on a Young Adult novel by Betsy Franco, presented in conjunction with a teen screenwriting workshop, facilitated by producers Tom Franco and Iris Torres; director Christopher Coppola presented the World Premiere of his latest film **TORCH**, a jungle thriller set in Belize; and actress Sophie Nélisse was on hand for the U.S. Premiere of Léa Pool's **WORST CASE WE GET MARRIED**.

Other special "Only at Mill Valley Film Festival" moments include:

Rose Marie graciously thanking the Festival via live video stream for her special MVFF Award delivered to her home by Founder and Director Mark Fishkin and Director of Programming Zoë Elton before the screening of the World Premiere of Jason Wise's film about her extraordinary life **WAIT FOR YOUR LAUGH**; local band **WONDER BREAD 5** totally rocking attendees at our **OPENING NIGHT GALA** at Marin Country Mart; Jerry Hannan playing guitar and singing a song written by his departed brother Sean onstage at the Sequoia Theater to a sold-out audience, including several generations of the Hannan family, attending the World Premiere of Martin Shore's film **MAD HANNANS**; Mill Valley families gathering for a free screening of **MOANA** at Old Mill Park, presented by the Festival and CFI Education; director Greg Kohs coining the new genre 'dra-cumentary' to describe the dramatic narrative in his well-received non-fiction film **ALPHAGO**; amazing live animation by Polish animator Mariusz Wilczynski scored with live music by Beth Custer and Trance Mission at **UNDER THE RADAR: 70 YEARS OF POLISH ANIMATION**; Dee Rees accepting her MVFF Award from Bay Area poet and activist Ericka Huggins, exchanging a heart-felt hug and acknowledging Huggins as one of Rees' early role models; director Catherine Hardwicke presenting Director of Programming Zoë Elton with an award for 40 Years of Excellence in Film Curating at the Mind The Gap Summit; filmmaker Renee Felice Smith bringing her adorable pup Hugo to the screening of her film **THE RELATIONTRIP**; filmmaker Matteo Troncone seemingly everywhere with his literal marketing vehicle: the van he lived in during the filming of **ARRANGIARSI**, emblazoned with graffiti and artwork from the film; The Family Stone rolling up to the Sequoia Theater in a black stretch limo to watch Michael Rubenstone's documentary about them, **ON THE SLY: IN SEARCH OF THE FAMILY STONE**, for the first time; undisputed classiest-guest-at-the-Fest Danny Huston strolling the streets of Mill Valley before and after the North American premiere of his film **THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH**; patrons completely blown away by the incredible immersive VR experience **TREE**, including visiting Festival guest Lou Diamond Phillips and his family; proud dad Joe Satriani attending the screening of son ZZ's World Premiere documentary about Satriani on tour, **BEYOND THE SUPERNOVA**; Closing Night Party attendees enjoying cocktails and delicious food inside the giant red-themed tent set up in downtown Mill Valley and getting down with glowing rings and headphones at the silent disco on the Plaza; and Mark Fishkin receiving two awards at Closing Night events: from the Board of Directors, in Celebration of 40 Years of Creative Leadership and from the Festival, Honoring the Visionary Work of our Founder and Director, presented onstage at the Sweetwater Music Hall by **HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS**. We all look forward to creating more magic moments at MVFF 41, October 4 – 14, 2018!

2017 MVFF Audience Award Winners

OVERALL FAVORITE

The MVFF Audience Favorite 2017
MUDBOUND
 Dee Rees

US CINEMA

Audience Favorite - US Cinema
 Gold Award
MOLLY'S GAME
 Aaron Sorkin

Audience Favorite - US Cinema
 Silver Award
LADY BIRD
 Greta Gerwig

Audience Favorite - US Cinema Indie
Gold Award
QUEST
Santiago Rizzo

Audience Favorite - US Cinema Indie
Silver Award
THE LIGHT OF THE MOON
Jessica M. Thompson

WORLD CINEMA

Audience Favorite - World Cinema
Gold Award
GOODBYE CHRISTOPHER ROBIN
Simon Curtis

Audience Favorite - World Cinema
Silver Award
THE INVISIBLES
Claus Råfle

Audience Favorite - World Cinema Indie
Gold Award
AN ACT OF DEFIANCE
Jean van de Velde

Audience Favorite - World Cinema Indie
Silver Award
THE DIVINE ORDER
Petra Volpe

VALLEY OF THE DOCS

Audience Favorite - Valley of the Docs
Gold Award
KIM SWIMS
Kate Webber

Audience Favorite - Valley of the Docs
Silver Award
CITY OF JOY
Madeleine Gavin

MIND THE GAP

Audience Favorite – Mind the Gap
Gold Award
FACES, PLACES
Agnès Varda

In collaboration with the San Francisco Film Critics Circle (SFFCC), the Festival, along with SFFCC President, Randy Myers, awarded filmmakers Richard O’Connell and Annelise Wunderlich with the inaugural SFFCC Award for Best Documentary with Bay Area Ties, for their compelling documentary, **THE CORRIDOR**. “The SFFCC members who served on the jury acknowledge that there were a number of excellent choices. However *The Corridor*, an inspiring look at an innovative program that enables Bay Area prisoners in the county jail system to earn high school diplomas, stood out the most,” said SFFCC President, Randy Myers.

About the Mill Valley Film Festival

Presented by the California Film Institute, the 40th Festival runs October 5-15, 2017. Locations this year include: CinéArts@Sequoia (Mill Valley), Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center (San Rafael), Lark Theatre (Larkspur), Cinema Corte Madera and other theatres throughout the Bay Area. With a reputation for launching new films and creating awards season buzz, MVFF has earned a reputation as a “filmmakers’ festival” by celebrating the best in American independent and world cinema alongside high profile and prestigious award contenders.

About the California Film Institute

The non-profit California Film Institute (CFI) celebrates and promotes film by presenting the annual Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, exhibiting film year-round at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael

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Film Center, and building the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CFI Education. CFI relies on the generosity of its community to sustain these core programs. The invaluable support of our sponsors, foundations, and individual donors ensures our continued success as we celebrate our 40th year. For more information please visit www.cafilm.org.

Supporters

CFI is once again proud to acknowledge the leadership support of Christopher B. and Jeannie Meg Smith and Jennifer Coslett MacCready, and the continued major support of The Bernard Osher Foundation, The Gruber Family Foundation, The EACH Foundation and The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. We are also fortunate to have the contributions of the following Signature and Major Sponsors of the Mill Valley Film Festival: Wells Fargo, Jackson Square Partners, Lucasfilm, Ltd., Maroevich, O'Shea & Coghlan Insurance Services, Wareham Development, Bellam Self Storage and Boxes, Ghilotti Construction Company and San Francisco Chronicle.

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