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VARIETY / Nick Vivarelli

July 28, 2016

<http://variety.com/2016/film/news/venice-lineup-mel-gibson-tom-ford-terrence-malik-pablo-larrain-1201824445/>

Venice Film Festival Lineup Includes Mel Gibson, Tom Ford, Terrence Malick Movies



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## 《In Contention》

ROME — The Venice Film Festival's 73rd edition will feature a batch of star-studded English-language dramas directed by Mel Gibson, Tom Ford, Pablo Larrain, Antoine Fuqua and Damian Chazelle, as well as promising new titles by big-name international auteurs such as Emir Kusturica, Francois Ozon, and Wim Wenders, plus plenty of potential discoveries.

This year's selections look likely to reinforce the Lido's status as a discerning and effective awards-season platform. Last year, the festival launched "Spotlight," and, before that, "Birdman" and "Gravity" — all of which went on to win multiple Oscars.

The Gibson-directed "Hacksaw Ridge" stars Andrew Garfield as Desmond T. Doss, an army medic who never carried a gun during World War II. Doss was the first conscientious objector in U.S. history to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The topical drama, which is screening out-of-competition, is slated for a Nov. 4 U.S. release via Lionsgate.

Ford's competition entry, "Nocturnal Animals," a thriller set in the L.A. art scene and the Texas criminal underworld, is the second film directed by the fashion designer, following "A Single Man," which premiered in Venice in 2009.

Last year at Cannes, Ford pre-sold world rights to the dark double-narrative pic, which stars Amy Adams and Jake Gyllenhaal, to Focus Features in a standout \$20-million deal. Adams will likely be doing double duty on the Venice red carpet. She also stars in Villeneuve's competition entry, "Arrival," previously titled "Story of Your Life," as a linguistics expert recruited by the United States government after an alien spacecraft lands on Earth.

Actress Natalie Portman also stars in two movies being screened in Venice: the much-anticipated "Jackie," a biopic of sorts of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis directed by Pablo Larrain, and "Planetarium" by Rebecca Zlotowski, about two sisters who can communicate with ghosts.

"Jackie" (pictured) covers a four-day period in the former First Lady's life, beginning just before her first husband's assassination. It also features Peter Sarsgaard as Robert Kennedy and Greta Gerwig as a White House staffer. Darren Aronofsky, who directed Portman in 2010's "Black Swan," is a producer. The prolific Larrain was also in Cannes this year with his non-conventional "Neruda" biopic.

The Venice fest's announced opener, Damien Chazelle's "La La Land," is a tribute to the Golden Age of American musicals and stars Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone. "La La Land" will world-premiere in competition Aug. 31.

Fuqua's "The Magnificent Seven," a remake of the classic Western, will world-premiere as the Toronto festival's opener Sept. 8, then segue to the Lido, out-of-competition, as the Venice closer, in a rare occurrence. Venice, which starts first, usually gets its high-profile movies before Toronto.

Terrence Malick is back on the Lido with his IMAX documentary "Voyage of Time," narrated by Cate Blanchett and described as a "celebration of the universe, displaying the whole of time, from its start to its final collapse."

The robust seven-title U.S. contingent competing for a Golden Lion also includes the Jim Carrey and Keanu Reeves-starrer "The Bad Batch," said by the production to be a dystopian love story set in a Texas wasteland and directed by Iranian-American Ana Lily Amirpour, whose vampire movie "A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night" made a splash last year at Sundance. It is produced by Megan Ellison's Annapurna Pictures.

Also flying the U.S. flag in competition is "The Light Between Oceans," starring Michael Fassbender, Alicia Vikander and Rachel Weisz and directed by Derek Cianfrance ("The Place Beyond the Pines"). Disney has set a Sept. 2 U.S. release date for this drama set at an isolated lighthouse on the Western Australian coast after World War I.

Boxing drama "The Bleeder," which toplines Liev Schreiber as New Jersey liquor salesman and boxer Chuck Wepner, who at age 35 got a chance to fight against Muhammad Ali, is screening out-of-competition. The long-gestating boxing drama, also starring Naomi Watts and Elisabeth Moss, is directed by Canada's Philippe Falardeau, whose "Monsieur Lazhar" won the foreign-language Oscar in 2012.

Kusturica's "On The Milky Road" is an adventure epic in which Kusturica himself plays a man at three different stages of his life, including as a wartime milkman who has a blossoming affair with a woman played by Monica Bellucci. This hotly anticipated pic is the Serbian director's first fiction feature film since 2007's "Promise Me This."

Wenders, a Venice aficionado, is coming with 3-D drama "The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez," based on a play by his "Wings of Desire" co-writer Peter Handke. Like "Wings," it features a Nick Cave cameo. The story turns on a conversation about love between a man and a woman played by Reda Kateb and Sophie Semin.

Other standouts from Europe in the competition include Francois Ozon's period piece "Frantz," starring rising Gallic actor Pierre Niney ("An Ideal Man," "Yves Saint Laurent"); fellow Frenchman Stephane Brizé's "Une Vie," an adaptation of the classic novel by Guy de Maupassant; revered Russian auteur Andrei Konchalovsky's World War II drama "Paradise"; and "Brimstone," the English-language debut of Dutch director Martin Koolhoven ("Winter in Wartime"). A female empowerment Western, "Brimstone" stars Dakota Fanning as a woman falsely accused of a crime.

"The curious thing about this is film is that it's by a Dutch director and it's shot entirely in Europe," said Venice artistic director Alberto Barbera. "But I challenge anyone who sees this film to tell me that it doesn't look like it's shot in the U.S. by an American director."

At a news conference in Rome, Barbera said the defining novelty of this edition is the profusion of genre movies, including science fiction pics, period pieces, melodramas, and adaptations of great novels and plays.

"In past years I've pointed out how auteur cinema seemed geared towards having an unfiltered rapport with reality and contemporary society," Barbera noted. "But cinema changes. This year the impression I got from the lineup is of a different, much more indirect, non-naturalistic narrative approach."

He cited the two sci-fi movies in competition: "Arrival," which Barbera described as "both Spielberg and Malick — sort of like 'The Tree of Life' meets 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind,'" and "The Bad Batch," which he said "imagines that all rejects of society get literally kicked out and have to survive somehow."

"These films talk about today," Barbera said. "They talk social ills, about immigrants, about an economy that pushes an increasing number of people outside our society."

The Italian trio competing this year includes two coming-of-age films: Giuseppe Piccioni's depiction of contemporary student life in the Italian provinces, "Questi giorni" ("These Days"), and teen pregnancy drama "Piuma," by Italo-Brit writer and director Roan Johnson. The third entry is "Spira Mirabilis," a docu of sorts described as "a visual symphony about immortality," shot in different parts of the world by husband-and-wife team Massimo D'Anolfi and Martina Parenti.

The standout Italian offering in the official selection isn't a movie at all but rather Paolo Sorrentino's TV series "The Young Pope," toplining Jude Law as conservative, cigarette-smoking American pontiff Pius XIII. The first two episodes will screen as a special event.

Arriving from Asia in competition is the latest from Filipino auteur Lav Diaz, titled "The Woman Who Left," which is almost four hours long. Asian entries elsewhere in the selection include Japanese manga movie "Gantz:O," directed by Yasushi Kawamura, which will play out-of-competition as a midnight movie. Also from Japan is Kei Ishikawa's "Gukoroku," about a multiple murder in Tokyo, screening in the more cutting-edge Horizons section where well-known Chinese documaker Wang Bing's "Bitter Money" will also unspool.

Other highlights in Horizons include Israeli director Rama Burshtein's "Through the Wall," which like her debut drama, "Fill the Void," delves into the world of an Orthodox Jewish family in Tel Aviv; Federica Di Giacomo's "Liberami," a docu about exorcists in Sicily; U.S. director Bill Morrison's "Dawson City: Frozen Time," centered on a collection of some 500 films dating from the 1910s and '20s found buried in a sub-arctic swimming pool deep in the Yukon; and Nepalese director Deepak Rauniyar's sophomore film "White Sun," about life in a mountain village in the wake of Nepal's decade-long civil war.

The 73rd edition of Venice is being dedicated to recently deceased greats Abbas Kiarostami and Michael Cimino. Kiarostami is being commemorated with the screening of montage movie "76 Minutes and 15 Seconds with Kiarostami," made by close friend and collaborator Seifollah Samadian, and also an unseen digital short that's part of an unfinished series he was shooting titled "24 Frames." In this series, each film is a fixed tableau, based on paintings and photographs from before the advent of cinema. Cimino will be remembered with a screening of Mickey Rourke-starrer "Year of the Dragon."

This year's 55-pic selection was whittled down from 1,468 feature films viewed. Sam Mendes will preside over the jury.

The festival runs from Aug. 31 to Sept. 10.

#### VENICE FILM FESTIVAL — IN COMPETITION

“The Bad Batch,” Ana Lily Amirpour (U.S.)  
“Une Vie,” Stephan Brizé (France, Belgium)  
“La La Land,” Damien Chazelle (U.S.)  
“The Light Between Oceans,” Derek Cianfrance (U.S., Australia, New Zealand)  
“El ciudadano ilustre,” Mariano Cohn, Gaston Duprat (Argentina, Spain)  
“Spira Mirabilis,” Massimo D’Anolfi, Martina Parenti (Italy, Switzerland)  
“The Woman Who Left,” Lav Diaz (Philippines)  
“La region salvaje,” Amat Escalante (Mexico)  
“Nocturnal Animals,” Tom Ford (U.S.)  
“Piuma,” Roan Johnson (Italy)  
“Paradise,” Andrei Konchalovsky (Russia, Germany)  
“Brimstone,” Martin Koolhoven (Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, U.K. Sweden)  
“On the Milky Road,” Emir Kusturica (Serbia, U.K., U.S.)  
“Jackie,” Pablo Larrain (U.S., Chile)  
“Voyage of Time,” Terrence Malick (U.S., Germany)  
“El Cristo ciego,” Christopher Murray (Chile, France)  
“Frantz,” Francois Ozon (France)  
“Questi Giorni,” Giuseppe Piccioni (Italy)  
“Arrival,” Denis Villeneuve (U.S.)  
“The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez,” Wim Wenders (France, Germany)

#### OUT OF COMPETITION

##### Special Event

“The Young Pope” (episodes 1, 2), Paolo Sorrentino (Italy, France, Spain, U.S.)

#### FICTION

“The Bleeder,” Philippe Falardeau (U.S., Canada)  
“The Magnificent Seven,” Antoine Fuqua (U.S.)  
“Hacksaw Ridge,” Mel Gibson (U.S.)  
“The Journey,” Nick Hamm (U.K.)  
“A jamais,” Benoit Jacquot (France, Portugal)  
“Gantz:O,” Yasushi Kawamura (Japan)  
“The Age of Shadows,” Kim Jee woon (South Korea)  
“Monte,” Amir Naderi (Italy, U.S., France)  
“Tommaso,” Kim Rossi Stewart (Italy)

#### NON-FICTION

“Our War,” Bruno Chiaravallotti, Claudio Jampaglia, Benedetta Argentieri (Italy, U.S.)  
“I Called Him Morgan,” Kasper Collin (Sweden, U.S.)  
“One More Time with Feeling,” Andrew Dominik (U.K.)  
“Austerlitz,” Sergei Loznitsa (Germany)  
“Assalto al cielo,” Francesco Munzi (Italy)  
“Safari,” Ulrich Seidl (Austria, Denmark)  
“American Anarchist,” Charlie Siskel (U.S.)

## HORIZONS

- "Tarde para la ira," Raul Arevalo (Spain)
- "King of the Belgians," Peter Brosens, Jessica Woolworth (Belgium, Netherlands, Bulgaria)
- "Through the Wall," Rama Burshtein (Israel)
- "Liberami," Federica Di Giacomo (Italy, France)
- "Big Big World," Reha Erdem (Turkey)
- "Gukuroku," Ishikawa Kei (Japan)
- "Maudit Poutine," Karl Lemieux, (Canada)
- "Sao Jorge," Marco Martins (Portugal, France)
- "Dawson City: Frozen Time," Bill Morrison (U.S., France)
- "Reparer les vivants," Katell Quillevere (France, Belgium)
- "White Sun," Deepak Rauniyar (Nepal, U.S., Qatar, Netherlands)
- "Malaria," Parviz Shahbazi (Iran)
- "Kekszakallu," Gaston Solnick (Argentina)
- "Home," Fien Troch (Belgium)
- "Die Einsiedler," Fien Troch (Germany, Austria)
- "Il più grande sogno," (Italy)
- "Boys in the Trees," Nicholas Verso (Australia)
- "Bitter Money," Wang Bing (China)

## Special Out-Of-Competition Screening

- "Dark Night," Tim Sutton (U.S.)
- "Planetarium," Rebecca Zlotowski (France, Belgium)

## CINEMA IN THE GARDEN

- "Inseparables," Marcos Carnevale (Argentina)
- "Franca: Chaos and Creation," Francesco Carrozzini (Italy, U.S.)
- "In Dubious Battle," James Franco (U.S.)
- "The Net," Kim Ki-duk (South Korea)
- "Summertime," Gabriele Muccino (Italy)
- "The Secret Life of Pets," Chris Renaud, Yarrow Cheney (U.S.)
- "Robinu," Michele Santoro (Italy)
- "My Art," Laurie Simmons (U.S.)