

**STEPHEN CHBOSKY'S *DEAR EVAN HANSEN*, BASED ON THE AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY PHENOMENON, WILL OPEN THE TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**TIFF announces first selections in the Gala and Special Presentation programmes and announces the Closing Night film, Zhang Yimou's *One Second***

**TIFF adds Scotiabank Theatre Toronto to its screening venues for the first five days of the Festival**



Photo credit: Courtesy of TIFF

**TORONTO** – TIFF Co-Heads Cameron Bailey and Joana Vicente announced today that the feature-film adaptation of the Tony Award–winning musical ***Dear Evan Hansen*** is the Opening Night Gala Presentation at the 46th Toronto International Film Festival® and will screen Thursday, September 9 at Roy Thomson Hall. Additional screenings of ***Dear Evan Hansen*** will take place at the Visa Screening Room at the Princess of Wales Theatre, at the RBC Lakeside Drive-In at Ontario Place and digitally on the digital TIFF Bell Lightbox platform.

Directed by Stephen Chbosky, ***Dear Evan Hansen*** is the story of a high-school senior with a debilitating anxiety disorder whose private letter to himself as part of a therapy exercise lands in the hands of a fellow classmate, with tragic consequences. The incident propels Evan on a journey of self-discovery that leads him toward belonging and acceptance, not only among the people who love him, but also by Evan himself. Starring Tony winner Ben Platt as Evan, along with Amy Adams, Julianne Moore, Kaitlyn Dever, Amandla Stenberg, and Nik Dodani, ***Dear Evan Hansen*** features songs from the original Broadway sensation.

“There was no question that ***Dear Evan Hansen*** was the ideal film to launch the Festival this year,” said Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director and Co-Head, TIFF. “This film is ultimately about healing, forgiveness, and reaffirms how

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connected and essential we all are to one another. We couldn't think of a more important idea to celebrate this year as we come together once again to share the power and joy of cinema in theatres together."

"As TIFF resumed this year in the wake of a pandemic that marked and changed all of our lives, we felt it was important to open this year's Festival with a film that connects to our shared humanity and that reminds us how deeply we need one another, need to be seen by one another, especially in times of loneliness and despair," stated Joana Vicente, Executive Director and Co-Head, TIFF.

"**Dear Evan Hansen** is a film about allowing ourselves to be found, and giving ourselves permission to be our true, authentic selves," said Stephen Chbosky. "After a year and a half of isolation, so many of us are finding our way back to each other. So, now more than ever, I am honoured that the Toronto International Film Festival has chosen **Dear Evan Hansen** to open this year's Festival. We could not have asked for a more ideal festival, or audience, or moment to premiere our film."

The Closing Night Gala of TIFF 2021, **One Second**, is the newest offering from the acclaimed Chinese director of **Raise the Red Lantern** and **Hero**, Zhang Yimou. The film tells the story of a travelling film projectionist and an escaped prisoner connected through cinema. **One Second** is a love letter to movies and a reminder of how they can unite people, regardless of our differences. "Every September we invite the whole film world to Toronto, one of the most diverse, movie-mad cities in the world," said Bailey. "And to have Zhang Yimou's film here, now, is a true joy."

TIFF is also delighted to announce the first titles selected for the Festival's Galas and Special Presentations programmes. This first list of films from the 2021 Official Selection features 10 Galas and 22 Special Presentations.

"We're so excited to be able to share this year's lineup with audiences in theatres," said Vicente. "These films reflect passion, creativity, and break new ground to tell their stories. We're honoured to have them as part of TIFF 2021."

"Some of the year's biggest films will screen at TIFF this year," added Bailey. "We're thrilled to announce these films as Galas and Special Presentations. Our programming team has been hard at work for months searching for the most compelling stories, acclaimed filmmakers, and top onscreen talent that comprise two of TIFF's highest-profile sections."

## GALA PRESENTATIONS 2021

\*previously announced

\***Belfast** Kenneth Branagh | United Kingdom  
World Premiere

**Clifford the Big Red Dog** Walt Becker | USA/United Kingdom/Canada  
World Premiere

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### Opening Night Film

***Dear Evan Hansen*** Stephen Chbosky | USA  
World Premiere

***The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*** Will Sharpe | United Kingdom  
Canadian Premiere

\****Jagged*** Alison Klayman | USA  
World Premiere

\****Last Night in Soho*** Edgar Wright | United Kingdom  
North American Premiere

\****The Mad Women's Ball (Le Bal des folles)*** Mélanie Laurent | France  
World Premiere

\****Night Raiders*** Danis Goulet | Canada/New Zealand  
North American Premiere

### Closing Night Film

***One Second*** Zhang Yimou | China  
North American Premiere

***The Survivor*** Barry Levinson | USA/Canada/Hungary  
World Premiere

### SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS 2021

\*previously announced

***Ali & Ava*** Clio Barnard | United Kingdom  
North American Premiere

***All My Puny Sorrows*** Michael McGowan | Canada  
World Premiere

\****Benediction*** Terence Davies | United Kingdom  
World Premiere

***Bergman Island*** Mia Hansen-Løve | France  
International Premiere

\****Charlotte*** Eric Warin, Tahir Rana | Canada/France/Belgium  
World Premiere

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**\*Dionne Warwick: Don't Make Me Over** Dave Wooley, David Heilbroner | USA  
World Premiere

**Drive My Car** Ryusuke Hamaguchi | Japan  
North American Premiere

**Encounter** Michael Pearce | United Kingdom/USA  
International Premiere

**The Eyes of Tammy Faye** Michael Showalter | USA  
World Premiere

**\*The Guilty** Antoine Fuqua | USA  
World Premiere

**I'm Your Man** Maria Schrader | Germany  
North American Premiere

**Inexorable** Fabrice du Welz | Belgium/France  
International Premiere

**\*Lakewood** Phillip Noyce | Canada  
World Premiere

**The Middle Man** Bent Hamer | Norway/Canada/Germany/Denmark  
World Premiere

**Official Competition (Competencia Oficial)** Mariano Cohn, Gastón Duprat | Spain/Argentina  
North American Premiere

**Paris, 13th District (Les Olympiades)** Jacques Audiard | France  
North American Premiere

**\*Petite Maman** Céline Sciamma | France  
Canadian Premiere

**\*The Starling** Theodore Melfi | USA  
World Premiere

**The Story of My Wife** Ildikó Enyedi | Hungary/Germany/Italy/France  
North American Premiere

**Three Floors (Tre Piani)** Nanni Moretti | Italy/France  
North American Premiere

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**Violet** Justine Bateman | USA  
International Premiere

**The Worst Person In The World (Verdens Verste Menneske)** Joachim Trier | Norway/France/Sweden/Denmark  
North American Premiere

For more information, see [tiff.net/galas](https://tiff.net/galas) and [tiff.net/specialpresentations](https://tiff.net/specialpresentations).

For images, see [tiff.net/press](https://tiff.net/press).

The Federal government announced yesterday that the Canadian border will open to fully-vaccinated US citizens and permanent residents as of August 9, 2021, and to the rest of the world as of September 7, 2021, thus allowing TIFF to welcome a portion of its traditional volume of international press, industry and talent back to the Festival as permitted by the Canadian government. As a result of the opening of the border and cinemas in Ontario, TIFF has added the Scotiabank Theatre Toronto for the first five days of the festival to its list of venues to accommodate a select number of additional public and press & industry screenings. Press and industry screenings will also remain available online on TIFF Digital Cinema Pro for press and industry unable to travel. The Industry conference will continue to be a digital event only. More information on in-person screening capacities for press & industry, and how access will operate, to follow in the coming two weeks.

TIFF continues to work closely with the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, and public health officials on the safe execution of the Festival, with its number-one priority being the health and well-being of both Festival filmgoers and residents of the community.

To help ensure the safest possible experience, TIFF has once again partnered with Medcan, a global health care leader providing medical expertise, consultation, and health inspiration to achieve its mission to help people “Live Well, For Life.” Based on the pillars of evidence-based care, exceptional client service, and the latest in technology, Medcan’s team of over 90 physicians supports employee health care across the continuum of health, including its “Safe at Work System,” which helps organizations navigate the pandemic.

The 46th Toronto International Film Festival runs September 9–18, 2021.

TIFF prefers Visa.

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#### **About TIFF**

TIFF is a not-for-profit cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world through film. An international leader in film culture, TIFF projects include the annual Toronto International Film Festival in September; TIFF Bell Lightbox, which features five cinemas, learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative

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national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$200 million CAD. TIFF Bell Lightbox is generously supported by contributors including Founding Sponsor Bell, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the City of Toronto, the Reitman family (Ivan Reitman, Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels), The Daniels Corporation and RBC. For more information, visit [tiff.net](http://tiff.net).

**TIFF is generously supported by Lead Sponsor Bell, Major Sponsors RBC, L'Oréal Paris, and Visa, and Major Supporters the Government of Ontario, Telefilm Canada, and the City of Toronto.**

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**The Special Presentations programme is presented by VISA.**

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