

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 11 Galas and 21 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

The Eyes of Tammy Faye Michael Showalter | USA
World 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

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

***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 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 and tiff.net/specialpresentations.

For images, see 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 national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$200 million

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The Special Presentations programme is presented by VISA.

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