

25th Anniversary for Videovision Entertainment in Cannes

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25th ANNIVERSARY FOR VIDEOVISION ENTERTAINMENT IN CANNES

South Africa's leading film production company, Videovision Entertainment are attending the Cannes International Film Festival for the 25th consecutive time this year. Leading the company's delegation to Cannes is producer, Anant Singh with Head of Acquisition and Distribution, Sanjeev Singh and the company's Head of Production, Helena Spring.

During the 25 years of attending Cannes, Videovision Entertainment has developed into an international company, producing films in South Africa and abroad. Singh and his team are having meetings with the major studios present in Cannes with respect to the company's productions, both in South Africa and in other countries.

Among the South African films are the company's latest productions, Prey, Faith's Corner, Mama Jack and Spoon. Prey is directed by Darrell James Roodt (the Academy Award nominated, Yesterday) and stars Bridget Moynahan (I Robot, Lord of War), Peter Weller (24, RoboCop, Naked Lunch) and Carly Schroeder (Firewall, Mean Creek). Faith's Corner also written and directed by Darrell James Roodt, stars Yesterday's Leleti Khumalo and is scored by multi-award-winning composer, Philip Glass. Leon Schuster's blockbuster hit comedy, Mama Jack which was South Africa's highest boxoffice earner last for the 2005/2006 period will also be presented to international distributors at the Festival. Spoon, currently shooting in Cape Town, is a sci-fi thriller with supernatural overtones, is the first feature of the writing / directing team of Simon Hansen and Sharlto Copley who are known for their short films, 2001: A Space Oddity and Hellweek. Among the forthcoming productions being discussed are Long Walk To Freedom, which is film on Nelson Mandela's autobiography and will star Morgan Freeman and More Than Just A Game, which is the dramatic and little-known story of organized soccer played among inmates of the Robben Island prison.

The international productions that Videovision Entertainment is involved in are Kite, American East. Kite is a live action version of the Japanese anime cult classic which will be directed by Rob Cohen (XXX, The Fast And The Furious). Dubbed as the first Arab-American film since 9/11, American East examines long-held misunderstandings about Arab culture and puts a human face on a segment of this American population that is presently in the spotlight. The film which will begin principle photography in Los Angeles on 3 July, will be directed by Hesham Issawi and will star Tony Shalhoub, the Emmy-winning star of the hit series Monk; Kais Nashef, leading actor in the international hit and Oscar-nominated Palestinian film, Paradise Now; and Egyptian-American actor Sayed Badreya.

Videovision Entertainment holds a unique position as a leading independent film distribution company in South Africa. In the distribution sphere, Singh and his team will be advancing discussions with major studios and leading international distributors for output arrangements for their products in South Africa. The company also has a successful track record of acquiring high profile movies in Cannes, among which are National Lampoon's Van Wilder 2: The Rise of the Taj acquired this year, the Academy Award and Golden Globe Nominee, Paradise Now and the animated film, Valiant were acquired last year, Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11 acquired in 2004 and Phantom Of The Opera which was acquired in 2003.

On a broader level, the South African Film Industry will have a high profile at the Festival with a high-powered delegation led by the Minister of Arts And Culture, Pallo Jordan, officials of the National Film And Video Foundation, Geoff Qhena and the Media And Motion Pictures Business Unit of the Industrial Development Corporation and other filmmakers. One of the highlights for South African this year is the student short film, Ongeriewe which is in competition in the Best Short Film category of the Cannes Film Festival.

"Cannes is undoubtedly the most significant film festival in the world," said Anant Singh. "One can accomplish what would normally take many months in the 7 or 8 days that one spends here. Having been attending for 25 years, it is also amazing to see the growth of the festival, and more importantly the large contingent of South Africans at the festival. It is a symbol of the growth in our industry and the recognition that the industry has received, not only in South Africa but internationally as well," added Singh.