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Trans-Tasman collaboration produces success

Sunday, 18 May 2008, 2:12 pm
Press Release: Media Statement

15th of May 2008 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bitter & Twisted –

Trans-Tasman collaboration produces success at Tribeca Film Festival

“It’s a miracle when an untracked English-language film arrives on the scene – and a special joy when said movie is smashing”.

Howard Feinstein, Screen International

BITTER & TWISTED, an independently financed film from first-timers Australian writer/director Christopher Weekes and New Zealand Producer, Bridget Callow premiered last week at the prestigious New York Tribeca Film Festival to rave reviews and accolades.

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By the opening night, four of its five screenings had already sold out and Q&A sessions were packed with audiences curious about this surprise hit from the other side of the world.

According to Weekes, ‘it was nerve-racking seeing it for the first time with an actual audience, before that we’d only ever screened it in my lounge room...We were literally carrying the film with us on the plane, finishing it a day or so before we were on... but the response since we got in New York has been so amazing and overwhelming that I’m still in a state of shock from it all.’ Jane Rosenthal, who co-founded the Tribeca Film Festival with Robert DeNiro, described Weekes as “a unique and distinct voice. Bitter and Twisted is a strong directorial debut and a wonderful film with characters that draw you in.”

BITTER & TWISTED was filmed and financed by Weekes when he was just 24 and features some of Australia’s finest talents including Noni Hazlehurst (‘The Australian Judi Dench – Indiewire), Steve Rodgers, Gary Sweet, Matthew Newton, Leeanna Walsman, Penne Hackforth-Jones and Rhys Muldoon. Producer Bridget Callow only adds to the achievements, being 24 at the time herself. The filmmaking team featured a crew whose upper age limited barely hit 30 yrs. And it also promoted a true cross Tasman pollination including Producer, Bridget Callow, hailing from Blenheim, Editor, Simon Wright from Nelson and 1st Assistant Director, Cairan Fox, from Christchurch working with DOP, Sam Collins, Production Designer Phil Shearer and Composer, Brian Cachia from Sydney. Sales Agent & Executive Producer, Michael Favelle of Odin’s Eye Entertainment is fielding numerous offers for the film and writer/director

Christopher Weekes, who also starred in the film, has stayed on in New York to keep up with the unexpected demand from top US agencies and production companies to direct new projects. Australian audiences will not have to wait too long before they get their first taste of

BITTER & TWISTED. The movie will have its Australian Premiere as the closing night film of the 2nd Annual Dungog Film Festival, with other local and international festivals and distribution soon to be announced which they hope will include plans for a New Zealand release.

BITTER & TWISTED is an intimate story of longing, loss and identity. Three years after the death of a young man we flash forward to see the toll it has taken on his parents (Hazlehurst & Rodgers), brother (Weekes), and ex-girlfriend (Walsman)

“This is a masterpiece...Weekes himself portrays the surviving brother, but it is Aussie icon Noni Hazlehurst...as the mother is at the centre. This is touching and probing, both universal and specifically Australian.” Indiewire.

“Every once in a while a film comes along that not only far surpasses the limitations in budget and scheduling with pure moxy and passion, but crystallizes the fears, longing and listlessness of the human condition with a stellar script and outstanding performances. Bitter and Twisted is such a film. In his first foray into feature films, Christopher Weekes, the director, has exemplified a profound maturity and understanding of his characters that extends far past his tender age.” Brian Hughes, EInsiders.

“Bitter & Twisted is a sensitive and observant drama (with its comic moments) beautifully shot in cool blues...Weekes was visibly nervous as he introduced the film...”Yeah, I hope you enjoy it.” He didn’t have to worry; the audience was attentive and most of the theatre stuck around for the Q&A, a salient sign of a successful film.” Elisabeth Donnelly, Tribeca Film Festival. “It’s a stunning debut from attending writer/director/star Christopher Weekes.” The Wichita Eagle

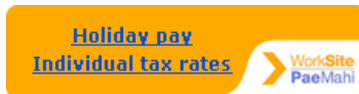
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[Heroes: Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre officially opens](#)

The new Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at Aoraki Mount Cook was today (Thursday 29 May) officially opened by Sir Edmund’s widow, June, Lady Hillary Q.S.M. [More >>](#)

[Classical Grooving: Masters of Baroque sets the seasons alight](#)

For first time ever in New Zealand and for one extraordinary night



virtuosic conductor and violinist Fabio Biondi brings the foremost interpreters of Italian baroque and classical music Europa Galante to the Auckland Town Hall. [More >>](#)



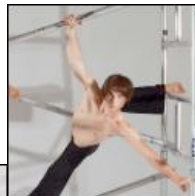
[Military History: Online Memories Of New Zealand And The Vietnam War](#)

A new era in New Zealand's digital history begins today with the launch of [www.VietnamWar.govt.nz](#), asking people to share their stories, experiences and memorabilia of the Vietnam War. [More >>](#)



[Dance: Steel Skeletons Bursting Onto Stage](#)

Homegrown music and dynamic dance await Wellington audiences tomorrow night, when the New Zealand School of Dance Choreographic Season, Steel Skeletons, bursts onto stage. [More >>](#)



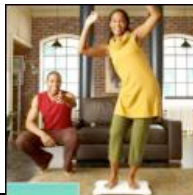
[Media: Wake Up With Wammo](#)

Current Kiwi FM Breakfast host Wallace Chapman will host the Drive show, from 3-6pm weekdays, while Drive host Glenn 'Wammo' Williams moves – you guessed it – to the Breakfast slot, 6-10am weekdays. [More >>](#)



[Gaming: Wii Gets Funner, Even More Dweeby](#)

Wii Fit on Wii™ is a unique and innovative way to help you and your family stay fit in the comfort of your home, through simple daily exercises. More than a gaming experience, Wii Fit is a health and lifestyle product with more than 40 exercises, across four categories. [More >>](#)



[Refugee Day: International Language Of Football](#)

A Wellington Invitational XI will play World Refugee All Stars XI to mark the start of Refugee Awareness Week. This match will be held on Sunday 15th June at Waterside-Karori AFC grounds in Karori, kick off is scheduled for 11am. Rain day postponement is set for the following Sunday 22nd June. [More >>](#)



[Creativity: Ballet Offers Monstrously Good Costumes To Public](#)

For the first time ever, costumes from the Royal New Zealand Ballet's wardrobe department are for sale. this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to view or secure a piece of ballet history. [More >>](#)



[Arts Policy: MPs Get An A+ For NZ Music Month Quiz](#)

This year Luamanuvao Winnie Laban is the winner, scoring 98% in Judith Tizard's annual NZ Music Month quiz. There was only half a point between her and Ron Mark, Jim Anderton and Doug Woolerton. Pita Paraone, Lianne Dalziel, and Winston Peters also deserve a mention for their high scores. [More >>](#)



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