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Lumiere rolls with strong star, biz presence

European indie distribs gather for annual confab

By JOHN HOPEWELL, LEO BARRACLOUGH

LYON, France -- Celebrating movie classics, restorations and re-issues, France's 4th Lumiere-Grand Lyon Film Festival kicks off Monday with Jerry Schatzberg's 1973 Palme d'Or winner "The Scarecrow," presented by Guillaume Canet, and a star and industry presence most fests would kill for.

Tim Roth will talk about director James Gray's 1994 debut "Little Odessa," which earned Roth an Independent Spirit Award nom.

With "Drive" follow-up "Only God Forgives" in post, Nicolas Winding Refn will explain his obsession for U.S. exploitation helmer Andy Milligan, presenting his 1970's Nouvelle Vague-influenced "Nightbirds," which Winding Refn restored.

Max von Sydow will receive France's Legion d'honneur, deliver a master-class, and present his acting debut -- Ingmar Bergman's "The Seventh Seal" (1957).

Jacqueline Bisset will introduce Philippe de Broca's spy movie parody "Le magnifique" (1973) in which she starred and Russian director Andrei Konchalovsky will field questions on his 1985 movie, "Runaway Train."

Many of France's most powerful film execs will attend the event: Pathe's Jerome Seydoux, for a presentation of Raymond Bernard's 1934 near five-hour "Les Miserables," still widely regarded as the novel's best film adaptation; Nicolas Seydoux and Sidonie Dumas for a Gaumont homage, including 11 minutes of shorts by Alice Guy, thought to be the world's first woman filmmaker; Vincent Maraval at Wild Bunch, which previews Gilles Bourdos' "Renoir" and Gyorgy Palfi's "Final Cut."

A wide-ranging U.S. presence includes a tribute to Criterion Collection with founder Peter Becker in attendance; a Universal at 100 Tribute, featuring restored prints of "Jaws" and "E.T."; a "Frankenweenie" preview; plus a tribute to the once highly-regarded and now largely forgotten 1920s Hollywood director Charles Brabin.

Adding further industry heft, Lumiere 2012 will host the annual conference of Europa Distribution -- an org repping 125 independent European distributors -- from Oct. 18 to 20.

The confab will open with a look at the distribution of classic movies, with discussion kicked off by Cannes fest topper Thierry Fremaux, who is also director of the Institut Lumiere, which organizes the fest.

Panelists include Elke Bludau, head of cinema distribution at classic movie label Europe's Finest, Jean-Fabrice Janaudy of French distrib Les Acacias, Fabien Rigall of the U.K.'s Secret Cinema, which stages special event screenings, and Loic Magneron at sales company Wide Management.

Other sessions focus on European politics, attended by the EU Media Program's head of film distribution John Dick, and on new business model opportunities.

Distribution case studies on European films will examine the release strategies of Michael Haneke's "Love," Ken Loach's "Angel's Share," Jacques Audiard's "Rust and Bone," Tudor Giurgiu's "Of Snails and Men," Leos Carax's "Holy Motors" and Matteo Garrone's "Reality."

A restored print screening of "Heaven's Gate," presented by Isabelle Huppert, closes the fest on Sunday. Ken Loach will pick up Lumiere Prize.

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