

Felix selected for BFI London Film Festival

Felix, a feel-good South African family film, has been selected for the 57th BFI London Film Festival, named one of the top 11 film festivals in the world by The Guardian last year.



Felix will screen alongside some of the most eagerly-anticipated films from around the globe, including *Saving Mr Banks*, with Tom Hanks as Walt Disney; *Gravity*, with Sandra Bullock and George Clooney; and new films from the likes of Paul Greengrass (*Captain Phillips*), Stephen Frears (*Philomena*), Steve McQueen (*12 Years a Slave*), Jason Reitman (*Labor Day*), and the Coen Brothers (*Inside Llewyn Davis*).

"The programmer saw Felix at the Durban International Film Festival, where we won the Audience Award for Best Film, and called me about the wonderful audience response," said director Roberta Durrant. "Being selected for Britain's premier film festival is a huge honour and, hopefully, we'll be able to announce a cinema release in London soon."

Going international

Felix has also been selected for three other major international film festivals: Vancouver International Film Festival in Canada, Lucas International Children's Film Festival, and The Hamburg FilmFest in Germany.

Durrant has been invited to all four festivals, which start with Lucas on 22 September and end with London on 20 October.

Durrant, a South African Film and Television Award Lifetime Achievement (SAFTA) winner, was the creative producer on the International Emmy-nominated TV series *Home Affairs*, *Stokvel* and *Sokhulu & Partners*, and Felix is the first feature film script she has chosen to direct.

Shirley Johnston's screenplay won Sithengi's Writer's Forum Award; was a finalist in the US Specscriptacular Competition; and reached the quarter-finals of both Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope Screenplay Contest and the Moondance Screenwriting Competition.

Fourteen-year-old Felix Xaba dreams of becoming a saxophonist like his late father, but his mother Lindiwe thinks jazz is the devil's music.

When Felix leaves his township, friends take up a scholarship for Grade 8 at an elitist private school, he defies his mother and turns to two ageing members of his father's old band to help him prepare for the school jazz concert.

A number of firsts

Felix boasts a number of firsts for the South African film industry.

It's the most female-empowered film since South Africa's democracy, with a female director, writer, editor (Maryke Kruger), cinematographer (Natalie Haarhoff), line producer (Kate Schalk), art director (Surisa Surisa), wardrobe stylist (Ayesha Khatieb) and hair and make-up artist (Islyn Goliath).

It's the first film fully financed by Sabido Productions, the production arm of Sabido Investments, a South African media group with holdings in a variety of broadcasting, content and production businesses, including e.tv, e.Sat, YFM and Cape Town Film Studios.

And it's also the first South African feature film for Joburg-born Oscar nominee Dame Janet Suzman; the first film for South African Film and Television Award (SAFTA) Best Actress winner Linda Sokhulu (Isidingo) and the first lead for Hlayani Junior Mabasa, cast in the title role from over 500 auditions across South Africa. Fleur du Cap winners Andre Jacobs and Nicholas Ellenbogen.

Musical director Murray Anderson, who has recorded Gold and Platinum records for the likes of Abdullah Ibrahim, worked closely on the infectious jazz soundtrack with former Standard Bank Young Artists of The Year Mark Fransman and Bokani Dyer, as well as triple 2012 South African Music Awards nominee Lwandiso Gogwana.

To celebrate the release on Friday, 13 September, four songs from the soundtrack, including a remix by The Kalahari Surfers, are available to download at www.soundcloud.com/felixthemovie.

A Penguin Films production for Sabido Productions, distributed by Crystal Brook Distribution, Felix will be shown in 40 cinemas across southern Africa on 13 September 2013.

For more, go to www.felixthemovie.com.