



Failed Rockers, Beat-Up Beetles and Islamic Homosexuals to Feature at Documentary Festival

From in-the-moment footage of the civil war in Nepal, to the plight of being gay and Muslim, to the discovery of a dreadlocked comedy sensation, world-class documentaries will hit Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin with the 4th DOCNZ Festival starting February 25. Previous festivals have screened future Oscar-nominee and winners and this year's lineup looks set to continue the tradition of putting the best of reality onto our big screens. While the final programme of more than 50 films will be released in late January, the following five documentaries have already been confirmed:

Rock'n'Roll Nerd Melbourne 2005: Tim Minchin, a failed musician decides on last ditch attempt to kick start his career by reinventing himself and giving musical comedy a go. Filmed over 3 years, director Rhian Skirving, follows Minchin's rags to riches journey to become the most talked about comedian in Edinburgh with his wordy songs, deft piano-playing and wild hair, winning the Perrier Newcomer Award. Minchin, now a regular on television and in talks with HBO about his own series, visits Auckland in March to perform in the Auckland Festival 2009.

The Beetle traces Israeli director Yishai Orian's love for his beat-up Volkswagen Beetle. With his pride and joy on its last legs, and a heavily-pregnant wife asking for a more family-friendly vehicle, Orian embarks on a road trip to interview former owners of the car before deciding the fate of his true love? *The Beetle* played at opening night of the 2008 DocAviv Festival. A joy for all Beetle lovers and collectors.

El Olvido is Netherlands-based director Heddy Honigmann's ode to the city of her birth: Lima, Peru. Eschewing a focus on political upheaval or dirty wars or disasters that seem to be the staple of coverage of South America, Honigmann instead talks to street-children, bartenders and street performers who either view history with a rueful eye or instead choose to forget entirely.

A Jihad for Love explores the clash between religion and homosexuality in the Muslim world. Parvez Sharma directs this US production that covers a lesbian couple caught between love and their lives in Cairo and Paris to a gay South African iman who hopes to reform Islam. The *New York Times* said the film "develops something of a nail-biting narrative as it follows a clique of Iranian men who flee to central Turkey in hopes of applying for political asylum in Canada." Producer Sandy DuBowski, who also directed award winning *Trembling before God*, will be attending DOCNZ Festival.

All White in Barking looks at racism through the eyes of the residents of the working class borough of Barking, where immigration had brought a more rapid change in demographics than any other part of the United Kingdom. Commissioned as part of the BBC's critically acclaimed *White* series of documentaries looking at the white working class, director Marc Isaacs interviews a range of old and new residents. Jeff and Susan prefers to live near "their own kind", but after having dinner with the Nigerians next door, find both the company and cuisine "pleasant". Despite the controversial subject matter *Variety* wrote that the film was a "communal portrait infused with compassion". The film deals with the universality of racism and applicability to all parts of the world.

The 2009 DOCNZ Festival takes place in Auckland (February 26 – March 8), Wellington (March 12 – 22) and Christchurch/Dunedin (March 26 – April 5).

NB: An early version of this release flagged ***Burma VJ*** as a title of the 2009 DOCNZ Festival. Regrettably, DOCNZ 2009 has pulled the film out due to programming considerations.

For further information, phoners and screeners please contact Matt Nippert, Elephant Publicity, elephant83@paradise.net.nz or 09 368 4180/ 021 193 1011