

Synopses - 7th Latin American and Spanish Film Week

Monday Sept 19 - *Ixcanul* by Jayro Bustamante (Guatemala, 2015) – 93 min.

Winner of the Silver Bear at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, *Ixcanul* is Jayro Bustamante debut film. This well-crafted drama revolves around María, a 17-year-old Mayan woman living on the slopes of an active volcano in Guatemala. Maria's parents, struggling to survive, have arranged for their daughter to be married. Although she is betrothed to the manager of the local plantation, Maria harbours feelings for seasonal worker Pepe. The teenager dreams of seeing 'the city', but Maria's status as an indigenous woman does not, traditionally, allow her to go out into the wider world. A deeply thoughtful tale of an ancient civilization living in modern times and the price to be paid when one meets the other.

Tuesday Sept 20 - *Magallanes* by Salvador del Solar (Perú, 2015) - 109 min.

Magallanes, an aged Peruvian taxi driver, formerly an aide to a military officer in the days of the Peruvian government repression against the Shining Path insurgency in the 1980s, unexpectedly re-encounters a young indigenous woman who was victimized by his superior. Set in contemporary Lima, *Magallanes* is the story of a terrible secret and its long-term effects on the lives of two people trapped in their own socio-economic chokeholds. Director Salvador del Solar employs an engaging combination of moody atmospherics and efficient storytelling, supported by some of the most renowned actors hailing from Latin America (Fernando Luppi, Damián Alcázar and Magaly Solier).

Wednesday Sept 21 - *The Club* [El Club] by Pablo Larraín (Chile, 2015) – 98 min.

On a secluded hill in a small seaside town live four unrelated men and the woman who tends to the house and their needs. All former priests, they have been sent to this quiet exile to purge sins of their pasts. Their fragile stability is disrupted by the arrival of a newly-disgraced counterpart who moves into their house, and an emissary of the Church who seeks to understand the effects of their isolation. Both bring with them the outside world from which the men have long been removed, and the secrets they had thought deeply buried. *The Club* is acclaimed director Pablo Larraín's taut commentary on individual responsibility, organized religion and the combustible combination of the two. *The Club* was screened in the main competition of the 65th Berlin International Film Festival where it won the Jury Grand Prix.

Thursday Sept 22 – *The man who saw too much* [El hombre que vio demasiado] by Trisha Ziff (Mexico, 2015) - 89 min.

This documentary by award-winning British-Mexican director Trisha Ziff is about Enrique Metinides, a photo-reporter who worked for many decades for the most important tabloids in Mexico City. Obsessed with photographing accidents and crime scenes, he discovered that the fate of others was his own way of connecting to life. The more we try to understand him and acknowledge our own compelling fascination with his images, the more we realize that we too are being lured into the Metinides Gaze. *The man who saw too much*, winner this year of the Ariel (Mexico's equivalent to the Oscar) for best documentary, is a timely film about photography, violence and ethics in today's mass media.

Friday Sept 23 - *The second mother* [*Que Horas Ela Volta?*] by Anna Muylaert (Brazil, 2015) – 112 min.

After leaving her daughter Jessica in a small town in Pernambuco to be raised by relatives, Val spends the next 13 years working as a nanny to Fabinho in São Paulo. As Fabinho's college entrance exams roll around, her daughter calls and gives her what seems to be a second chance. Jessica wants to come to São Paulo to take her college entrance exams as well. Filled with joy as well as apprehension, Val gets ready, with the wholehearted support of her employers, for the long-dreamed moment of being near her daughter again. But when Jessica arrives, cohabitation is not easy... Set in current Brazil, *The second mother* is an endearing family comedy that reflects on the social and emotional ties that binds us.

Saturday Sept 24 - *The Clan* [El Clan] by Pablo Trapero (Argentina, 2015) – 108 min.

The disappeared —*los desaparecidos*— are words that carry special resonance in Argentina. Long associated with the crimes of the military junta of the late 1970s, the term takes on a different, but no less chilling, meaning in the hands of renowned filmmaker Pablo Trapero in this political and family drama. Based on a true story that rocked Argentina, *The Clan* tells the almost unbelievable tale of the Clan Puccio, a seemingly normal middle-class family who kidnapped wealthy people off the street. *The Clan* was Argentina's submission for the Best Foreign Film at the Oscar competition in 2015.

Sunday Sept 25 - *Truman* by Cesc Gay (Spain, 2015) – 108 min.

When Julián receives an unexpected visit from his childhood friend Tomás, the encounter is bittersweet. This reunion, their first meeting in many years, will also be their last. Diagnosed with cancer, Julián has decided to focus on putting his affairs in order: distributing his possessions, finalizing his funeral arrangements, and finding a home for his beloved dog, Truman. It's this final task that is causing

him the greatest heartbreak. With the collaboration of acting greats Argentine Ricardo Darín and Spanish Javier Cámara, Gay brings humour and sensitivity to this personal story, creating a singular reflection on friendship and acceptance at the end of life.