

AUSTRALIANS IN FILM 'S (AiF) 2009 BREAKTHROUGH AWARDS HONOR CRAIG GILLESPIE, ANNA TORV & SAM WORTHINGTON

Los Angeles...(April 24, 2009)... Los Angeles-based Australians in Film (AiF), the preeminent organization for expatriate Australians in the entertainment industry, is holding its fifth annual Breakthrough Awards to recognize Australian director Craig Gillespie (*Lars & the Real Girl*, *United States of Tara*), and actors Anna Torv (*Fringe*) and Sam Worthington (*Avatar*, *Terminator Salvation*) on May 8, 2008, it was announced today by Susie Dobson, president of AiF. Dobson also revealed that the event will be held at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel for the first time.

"Australians in Film is proud to honor the work and talent of these three extraordinary Australians who are making their mark internationally," said Dobson. "We are thrilled to be holding the Breakthrough's at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel this year. With its storied past as the birthplace of the Academy Awards it's a fitting place to honor these stars of tomorrow."

The Breakthrough Awards' exclusive invitation-only evening will be held poolside at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood and will be attended by 150 of Hollywood's elite. For the third time, the Master of Ceremonies will be Showtime Australia's award-winning, Hollywood-based entertainment correspondent, Andrew Warne.

Each of the 2008 Breakthrough Award recipients will be presented with AiF's Golden Boomerang award as an acknowledgment of their achievements as Australia's brightest talents emerging in Hollywood.

Craig Gillespie is one of the most honored commercial directors working today. His work has won the highest awards in the industry, including One Shows, Effies, Clios, Addys, Cannes Awards, D&ADs and more. After being nominated twice in 2002 and 2003, Craig won the 2005 DGA award for outstanding commercial direction. He won the Emmy, as well as a slew of additional industry awards, including the Gold Lion at Cannes. Two of his spots are now part of the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). And Boards Magazine declared him one of the top 10 commercial directors worldwide.

As a feature director, Craig's first project was the 2007 comedy "Mr. Woodcock" with Billy Bob Thornton, Seann William Scott, and Susan Sarandon. He immediately followed that with the critically acclaimed "Lars and the Real Girl," starring

Ryan Gosling. Craig's feature projects in development include "Dallas Buyers' Club" and "Pandora".

In 2008, Craig helmed the pilot and three episodes of the highly rated Showtime series, "The United States of Tara", which was executive produced by Steven Spielberg and marked actress Toni Collette's first foray into television.

Anna Torv graduated from Australia's prestigious National Institute Of Dramatic Art (NIDA) with a degree in performing arts (Acting) in 2001. In addition to theatre work, she landed roles in such television drama series as "Young Lions" and "McLeod's Daughters" in and went on to play a series regular "The Secret Life Of Us". Her breakthrough role is undoubtedly as Agent Olivia Dunham in the hit US show "Fringe" on the Fox TV network. Anna's feature film credits include, *Traveling Light* directed by Kathryn Millard and Ana Kokkinos' *The Book Of Revelation* starring opposite Greta Scacchi.

Her recent television credits include the BBC's Television Series, *Mistresses* and the HBO Mini Series, *The Pacific*, produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks.

Sam Worthington, also a NIDA graduate, began his acting career in the theatre. James Cameron handpicked Worthington to star in AVATAR—Cameron's first narrative film since his 1997 Oscar-winning blockbuster TITANIC. The much-anticipated 3-D science fiction film is scheduled for a December 18, 2009 release by Fox.

Building upon his theater background, Worthington has continued to work steadily in both film and television. Australian film credits include "*Dirty Deeds*" with John Goodman, Toni Collette and Sam Neill; "*Gettin' Square*" with David Wenham; and Geoffrey Wright's ("*Romper Stomper*") contemporary adaptation of "*Macbeth*" in which he played the title character. Worthington's layered performance in Cate Shortland's critically-acclaimed and commercially successful "*Somersault*" earned him an AFI Award for "Best Actor in a Leading Role" and a Film Critics Circle of Australia (FCCA) Nomination for "Best Actor – Male" in 2004.

Worthington stars opposite Christian Bale in Warner Brothers' much-anticipated prequel to the Terminator franchise, "*Terminator Salvation*". The film is scheduled for a May 21 release. Coincidentally, James Cameron wrote and directed the first two installments of the Terminator films—"The Terminator" and "*Terminator 2: Judgment Day*".

In addition to two franchise films, Worthington recently completed shooting two character-driven dramas—“*Last Night*” opposite Keira Knightley and “*The Debt*” with Helen Mirren.

About Australians in Film

Founded in May 2001, to celebrate and support the work of Australian film and TV makers, Los Angeles based *Australians in Film* has held over 100 screenings, premieres and special events and currently has over 500 members. *Australians in Film* Ambassadors include Australian Oscar-winning actors Cate Blanchett (*The Aviator* 2005), Nicole Kidman (*The Hours*, 2002), Russell Crowe (*Gladiator*, 2000) and Geoffrey Rush (*Shine*, 1996), Oscar-winning director Mel Gibson (*Braveheart* 1995, *The Passion of the Christ*, 2004) and 30 other internationally known stars and film-makers including Hugh Jackman, Fred Schepisi and Naomi Watts. In 2008 *Australians in Film* established the annual Heath Ledger Scholarship in honor of the late actor who was an ambassador of the group.

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