

'The Firefly Girls' Drama Film Is Sonoma-Bound And A 'Therapeutic Process' For Canadian Filmmaker

Short Drama is headed for film festivals

LOS ANGELES, USA, March 8, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The short drama film, "The Firefly Girls," from filmmaker Katie Micay, has been named an Official Selection at the forthcoming Sonoma International Film Festival. The 19th installment of the esteemed festival will be held March 30 – April 3 in Sonoma, Calif.

Micay directed the film and co-wrote the script with her writing partner, Kyle Bown. "The Firefly Girls" tells a story of personal growth and has the ingredients of a classic tale.

It follows Will, a grief-stricken man who confides himself to his house and to alcohol while struggling to recover from the unexpected death of Lily, his young daughter. He is forced to confront reality when an unlikely visitor, Gracie, breaks into his house in a bold attempt to sell Will the last of her Firefly Girl cookies. The chance encounter reveals Will and Gracie have more in common than they'd possibly foreseen.

Micay's original idea was to create a mythological landscape of the "scary" neighborhood home, and explore what happens when a young girl exposes what is behind the walls. The story's meaning deepened over the several months it took Micay and Bown to write it.

"It was a very therapeutic process for me, because I was also coming to grips with my aunt's sudden illness and passing," said Micay. "She was healthy when she visited one Easter and was gone by the next...so her death was such a shock, and having not even seen her when she was sick, created a disconnect that made it really hard for me to process. This script allowed me to explore how confusing grief can be, and how people cope in different ways."

Micay, from Vancouver, found her dream cast for the film. "From the start," she said, "I knew casting would be crucial. I needed actors who could be completely raw and vulnerable."

Will is played by veteran actor Mario Schugel, who starred in the award-winning romantic drama, "Em and Me," and has previously acted in TV series such as "JAG," "The Division" and more.

"Will is a tormented man," Schugel said. "He blames himself for his daughter's fate. Catharsis is a strangely appealing part of acting."



Starring as Gracie is the talented young actress Savannah Paige Rae, who is known for her role as Sydney Graham on NBC's "Parenthood." For the role, she won a shared 2014 Young Artist Award in the Outstanding Young Ensemble category. She also starred in Fox's "Date Night" with Steve Carell and Tina Fey, in director Ramiro Hernandez' "Phoenix Falling" and last year guest starred in one episode of ABC's Golden Globe winning series, "Grey's Anatomy."

"I was binge-watching "Parenthood" while writing, and once we aged up the role (she was originally six years old) we started referencing Savannah Paige Rae when describing the character," said Micay. "Never in a million years did we think we would actually get her! I had worked with children in the past, but never with a script with this intensity."

Rae was hooked in immediately. "There was a line in the original script that said, 'She didn't even get to finish that drawing.' It made me cry, and that's when I decided to do this film," she explained. "After being on a series for six years, I wanted to try something new. This was a new experience for me because I had never done a short film before."

Schugel and Rae provide a dynamic on-screen duo. "Gracie's appearance gives Will permission to release his pent up emotions," Schugel said. "Doing that for three days, though, was exhausting! Katie had a specific vision of what she wanted yet worked with my own creative vision of the character. And I can't effuse enough about Savannah. She was more giving as an actor than most actors two or three times her age."

Rounding out "The Firefly Girls" cast is the child actress Helena Claussen, who plays Lily, and Megen O'Keefe, in the role of Will's wife.

Micay's last three short films all ended up Official Selections in film festivals. She wrote and directed, "Limited Engagement," an Official Selection for the Los Angeles Women's International Film Festival and got an Award of Merit at Women's Independent Film Festival.

Micay directed "My So Called Family," which was an Official Selection for the Bel Air Film festival. She wrote and directed the romantic comedy, "Flirt," that was an Official Selection for the Reality Bytes Film Festival. The latter film was received so well that Micay has begun developing it into a feature.

At the age of 14, Micay made her first film, "For Love," while attending New York Film Academy. Films like "Edward Scissorhands" were a big influence, and even found their way into the heart of "The Firefly Girls."

"In an industry dominated by men, Katie brings a fresh view," said "The Firefly Girls" producer Kim Puleo. "Katie's vision of "The Firefly Girls" was enhanced by her direction of the two actors. The characters were brought to life in a believable, heartfelt story."

"The Firefly Girls" is scheduled to screen at the Sonoma International Film Festival at 9:30 a.m. Thursday March 31 at Vintage House (Celebrity Cruises venue) and at 2:15 p.m. Saturday April 2 at the Veterans Memorial Hall (Vets Hall) #2. The festival, held in the heart of Northern California's Wine Country, will feature more than 90 films. The five-day event has been attended by Hollywood royalty including Bruce Willis, Susan Sarandon, Robin Williams and Danny Glover.

The film will also screen at the Equinox Women's Film Festival March 25-26 at the Glenn Massay Theater in Palmer, Alaska.

For more information, visit <http://www.thefireflygirlsfilm.com>.

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