

“StreetKids United” To Receive Special Screening in Berlin

Posted by Evrim Ersoy Feb 9, 2011, 12:44 GMT

StreetKids United a feature documentary shot in Durban, South Africa in 2010 by London-based production house Film and Music Entertainment (F&ME) has been selected by the Berlin Film Festival 2011 for a special screening in Generation Extra on 17 February.

The film directed by award winning documentary film maker Tim Pritchard, explores how a simple sporting event can change lives and raise the hopes of an international group of homeless children and show how a soccer tournament can empower people both on and off the field. StreetKids United was produced by F&ME's Sam Taylor, Mike Downey and Sandy Markwick. World Sales are being handled by Robbie and Ellen Little's The Little Film Company. The film was co-produced by Cat Cooper of Welsh-based Elfin Productions and in South Africa by Rachel Young and Tendeka Matatu of Cape Town's Ten10 Films. Post production house Molinare handled the film's post production.

“No game lays claim to being a ‘world game’ more than football,” says F&ME's Mike Downey, “It is truly a globalised phenomenon from the glitter and riches of the European leagues to the dreams of children growing up in third world poverty. Football's appeal extends across nations, cultures, religion and class. We hope this film will do the same. And in doing so, give a voice to street children all over the world.”

Pritchard was embedded with the South African team for four months, getting to know them and understanding their plight and stories. He and his team not only recorded the football tournament, but explored the children's individual stories and staying with them in the run up to and during the FIFA World Cup. The Street Child World Cup, however, is more than a football tournament; it celebrates street children's potential and gives them an opportunity to tell their stories.

“We worked very closely with the South African street children's charity Umthombo, says director Tim Pritchard, “Umthombo is named after a tree which grows in desert areas. It's a symbol of hope - of life sustained despite the harshest conditions. The Umthombo team offer friendship and support to children and young people. By gently gaining their trust, the team has been able to help hundreds of children find a way back to their home communities or to somewhere they can feel safe again. The World Cup project is just one of the key weapons in their armoury. We hope that some of the homeless protagonists in the film can make it to Berlin to draw attention to their plight.”

F&ME are no stranger to working in South Africa having completed the Khayelitsha township-shot Son of Man, which screened in Sundance two years ago, directed by Mark Dornford May. Dornford May's new theatre troupe, Isango have participated in the music soundtrack for the film. Film director and Berlin regular, Stephen Daldry is the chairman of Film and Music Entertainment.

Reverend Desmond Tutu said prior to the event:

“The Street Child World Cup demonstrates the tremendous potential of every single child, and especially street children, who are so often treated as less than human. I am proud that the first ever Street Child World Cup will take place in South Africa – and I urge all governments to guarantee the rights of this most marginalized group of their citizens to lives in which their promise is fulfilled.”

The competition has attracted attention from top sportsmen and politicians. David Beckham, Pele, Gary Lineker and Sir Alex Ferguson have all pledged their support. The then UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown became involved and the event landed prestigious sponsorship from Deloitte.

Film and Music Entertainment has had recent success with their feature documentary Turtle: the Incredible Journey released in German speaking territories on 200 prints before being rolled out across Europe. A US deal is currently in the offering and a 3D version of the film was released in last year to impressive business.

“We always try to have a mixed portfolio of projects,” says Film and Music Entertainment's Samantha Taylor, “and feature documentaries are becoming a key part of our line up. Tim and Sandy are well positioned to show in StreetKids United, not simply an examination of child poverty but a seasoned look at the issues facing South Africa in the run up to and during the 2010 World Cup.”

“Playing football for their countries can give back some innocence to a group of young people deprived of a childhood and help restore pride,” says producer and writer Sandy Markwick. “Meeting other children from different continents and sharing experiences will empower them as they come to understand that they are not alone. StreetKids United will engage and uplift as

the children grow in confidence to express themselves.”

Every four years a collective fever inflicts the planet as it seems that most of the population in every corner of the world follows the FIFA World Cup. In 2010 it was held in South Africa, the first time the tournament has been held on the African continent. The decision to hold the tournament in Africa was a belated reward for the contribution made to the world game by sub-Saharan nations, particularly Cameroon and Nigeria, and by all the teams of North Africa.

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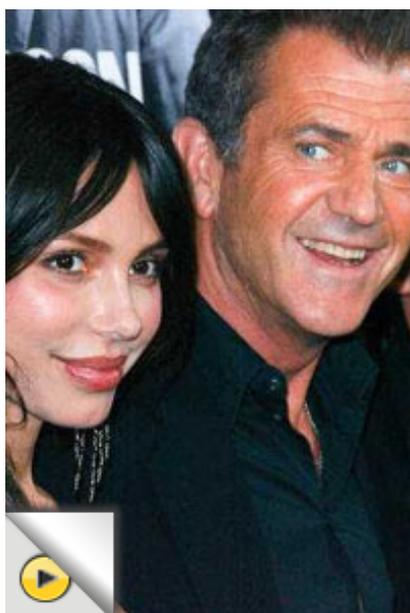
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