



**La Biennale di Venezia /  
74<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival**

**English director Stephen Frears  
to receive the 2017 [Jaeger-LeCoultre](#) Glory to the Filmmaker award at  
the Venice International Film Festival**

**His new film *Victoria & Abdul* to be screened Out of Competition**

La **Biennale di Venezia** and **Jaeger-LeCoultre** are pleased to announce that the great English director **Stephen Frears** (*Philomena, The Queen, Dangerous Liaisons*) will receive the **Jaeger-LeCoultre Glory to the Filmmaker** award at the **74<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival** (30<sup>th</sup> August - 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017), dedicated to a personality who has made an original contribution to innovation in contemporary cinema.

**Stephen Frears** will be awarded the prize at a ceremony to be held on Sunday **3<sup>rd</sup> September at 10:00 pm** in the **Sala Grande** (Palazzo del Cinema), before the Out of Competition screening of his new film *Victoria & Abdul*, receiving its world premiere screening in Venice. The film is set in 1887, when Abdul travels from India to present a ceremonial medal as part of the Queen's Golden Jubilee but surprisingly finds favor with the elderly Queen. The unprecedented and unlikely relationship causes a battle royale within the royal household, pitting the Queen against court and family. *Victoria & Abdul* humorously explores questions of race, religion, power, and the farce of Empire through the prism of a highly unusual and deeply moving friendship.

The Director of the Venice Film Festival, **Alberto Barbera**, made the following statement about the award: "Prolific and unpredictable, eclectic and provocative, Stephen Frears seems to challenge the very idea of a monolithic definition of his cinema. Along with Ken Loach and Mike Leigh, he is one of the most vibrant and representative exponents of contemporary British cinema. As opposed to many other directors, he is not afraid of seeming self-contradictory: he nonchalantly passes from the social realism of the 1980s to biographies, from comedies to historical dramas, alternating British and American movies, low-budget and high-budget productions, cinema and television, and each time he is at ease. This evident contrast might be the most interesting aspect of his work, along with his universally recognized qualities: an uncommon sensitivity in the way he directs his actors; the ability to get the most out of his relationship with famous authors (Alan Bennet, Christopher Hampton, Hanif Kureishi, Nick Hornby); his apparent modesty, which consists in subordinating style to the demands of the material. A great narrator of stories with recurring topics, such as his attention to oppressed and marginalized characters, in his best movies Frears has the rare gift of creating a portrait of British society: sharp, caustic, unconventional, and simultaneously disturbing and amusing."

One of the most versatile directors around, moving easily among a wide variety of styles, topics and genres, **Stephen Frears** (Leicester, England, 1941) built a strong reputation for himself in the 1970s directing episodes of television series and TV movies. He debuted in film in 1984 with *The Hit*, which revealed Tim Roth's talent to the world. His next movie, the provocative *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), starring Daniel Day Lewis, was an international success and received an Oscar nomination for Best Original Screenplay, for the first time highlighting his talent for literary adaptations. The movie which made him a household name is *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988), starring John Malkovich, Glenn Close and Michelle Pfeiffer; the movie won three Oscars, including Best Adapted Screenplay, as well as many other international awards. With his next film, *The Grifters* (1990), he received his first Oscar nomination for Best Director, a seal on his definitive fellowship with Hollywood, where he continues to make films which he alternates with English productions. In 1998, he won the Silver Bear for Best Director for *The Hi-Lo Country*, while in 2000 he directed *High Fidelity* and competed for the first time in Venice with *Liam*, for which the actress Megan Burns won the Marcello Mastroianni Award. Two years later, he was back in Venice in Competition with *Dirty Pretty Things* and again in 2006, when he received his second Oscar nomination for Best Director for *The Queen*, the movie about Queen Elizabeth II for which Helen Mirren won the Volpi Cup and the Oscar for Best Actress. *Philomena* (2013) won Best Screenplay in Venice and the movie was nominated for four Oscars.

His new film *Victoria & Abdul*, will receive its world premiere screening in Venice. Academy Award winner Judi Dench (*Shakespeare in Love*) reunites with Academy Award-nominated director Stephen Frears (*The Queen*), and returns to the role of Queen Victoria, in *Victoria & Abdul*. The screenplay of *Victoria & Abdul* is by Academy Award nominee Lee Hall (*Billy Elliot*), based on journalist Shrabani Basu's book *Victoria & Abdul: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant*. A Focus Features presentation in association with Perfect World Pictures and in association with BBC Films of a Working Title production in association with Cross Street Films.

**Jaeger-LeCoultre** has been a sponsor of the Venice International Film Festival for thirteen years in a row, and of the **Glory to the Filmmaker** prize for eleven years. In the past the prize has been awarded to Takeshi Kitano (2007), Abbas Kiarostami (2008), Agnès Varda (2008), Sylvester Stallone (2009), Mani Ratnam (2010), Al Pacino (2011), Spike Lee (2012), Ettore Scola (2013), James Franco (2014), Brian De Palma (2015) and Amir Naderi (2016).

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