



NEWS RELEASE

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MPAA CHAIRMAN & CEO CHRIS DODD & LORD DAVID PUTTNAM HEADLINE MPA-DHU FILM WORKSHOP AT 27TH TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Feature film pitch competition winner heads to Los Angeles for film immersion course

TOKYO/SINGAPORE – Renowned film producer and educator Lord David Puttnam, and Chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) Christopher Dodd headlined the MPA-DHU Film Workshop held during the 27th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF).

On October 26, the MPA partnered with Digital Hollywood University (DHU) once again, conducting a popular one-day intensive masterclass, mentoring and film pitching competition for emerging Japanese writer/directors. Awards were presented to filmmakers competing in the feature film pitch competition in recognition of the high quality of the film projects and presentation skills of the participants.

Following a passionate debate by the judging panel, Hayato SAKUTA was awarded first place for *Virgin Mafia Boss*, a comedy about a gang leader whose every attempt to end his virginity is sabotaged. Mr. Sakuta wins a trip to Los Angeles to participate in a comprehensive five-day film immersion program that takes place in early November in the lead up to the American Film Market (AFM).

In recognition of the depth of talent revealed during the competition, Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director Asia Pacific, Motion Picture Association (MPA), awarded a President's Special Recognition Prize to Eriko KYOSO, writer of *Exchange Mothers*, the story of two women who exchange lives, husbands and families to discover what they really want in life. Eriko will attend the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSAs) in Brisbane, Australia, to engage with some of the most talented filmmakers from across the Asia Pacific.

Opening the film workshop, Chris Dodd, said, "The MPA-DHU Film Workshop is designed to provide an intensive masterclass and mentorship program for a new generation of Japanese filmmakers. I understand that there was heavy competition for the limited places on this course, which indicates the depth of passion and talent at film schools and universities in Tokyo. I congratulate all of the participants who took the brave step of presenting their projects to our distinguished panel of judges and wish you all the best for your future careers."

Commenting on the film workshop, special guest speaker and jury member, Academy Award-winning producer and longtime education advocate Lord David Puttnam (*Chariots of Fire*, *The Killing Fields*, *Local Hero*, *Melody*), said, "I am delighted to participate in the MPA-DHU Film Workshop in Tokyo. I have a passion for both film and for education so this initiative is close to my heart. It was a delight to share my experiences with the young Japanese filmmakers and to hear about their new film projects. The MPA is

playing an important role in contributing to the development of screen communities across Asia and this will pay dividends in the future, not only for the talented filmmakers attending the event, but also for our increasingly internationalized film industry. Congratulations to all of the filmmakers who presented their projects and to the winners, who have a wonderful experience ahead of them.”

The opening sessions of the film workshop involved a masterclass by Lord Puttnam and composer Sacha Puttnam on the special contribution music composition makes to cinematic story telling. “Cinema is about identity”, said Lord Puttnam. “Your generation of filmmakers is fantastically important to how we develop as a society in the next fifty or sixty years. The stories you tell have the potential to reach audiences and influence the big decisions we make.” To memorable scenes and images from Lord Puttnam’s well-known films, Sacha Puttnam played the music from *Midnight Express*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Local Hero* and *The Mission*.

The masterclass was followed by a forum on “story” led by Japanese resident producer and lawyer Lucas Oliver-Frost (who worked with director Peter Chan on *Comrades* and *Perhaps Love*, and director Stanley Tong on *Jackie Chan: Supercop*), and featuring film industry consultant Marc Fuoti (Big Picture International), Japanese film director Ryo Nakajima (*Oretachi-no-sekai* ‘*This World of Ours*’, *Rise Up*, *Shizukana-hito* ‘*Sleeping Beauty*’ – writer), and writer Takaya Okamoto (NHK drama *Gin-ni-kan*, movies *Oretachi-no-ashita* ‘*Our Tomorrow*’ and *Omoi-nokoshi* ‘*Lingering Spirits*’. Puttnam said that story ideas first need to affect you as a filmmaker: “I used to ask young filmmakers to read The Observer newspaper on Sunday and to find the story from the pages by Monday. Find the story that moves you.”

Another guest speaker Tetsuya Bessho, Actor and President of Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia, presented on the construction of storytelling in the afternoon. This was followed by a comprehensive analysis of the students’ new feature film treatments, where the established film practitioners worked closely with the student participants, who were selected from a number of film courses and universities across Tokyo.

The expert mentors assessed 19 presented projects and selected a final eight for the pitching competition. Each presenting student was given up to five minutes to pitch their film project, and engaged in a Q&A with the judges. The filmmakers were judged on both the quality of the feature film script and their pitching skills.

Acknowledging the work of the filmmakers, Mike Ellis said, “This year’s participants have done well to secure a place for this special workshop, a golden opportunity to listen and learn from Lord David Puttnam. The students were extremely receptive to the advice offered during the mentoring sessions, and demonstrated their skills and adaptability in the pitching competition. We thank the Tokyo International Film Festival for their partnership in running the film workshop, Digital Hollywood University for working so closely with us to raise the standard of the event on all levels, our exceptional speakers and judges for their valuable time and energy, and we look forward to seeing these young filmmakers go on to produce some great stories for the screen.”

The MPA Asia Pacific has hosted film workshops since 2006, providing stepping-stones for emerging filmmakers to develop their careers. In the last 12 months, the MPA has been involved in conducting film workshops in Bangkok, Busan, Beijing, Chengdu, Shenzhen and Shanghai. Winners of the feature film project pitching competitions spend five days in Los Angeles on an intensive film immersion course, meeting agents, management, production and distribution companies, unions and guilds, and attending the American Film Market (AFM).

Images from the workshop are available [here](#).

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About the MPA:

Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPA-I, please visit www.mpa-i.org.

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