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**Dungog success launches new distribution company**

[Tue 02/09/2008 01:01:01]  
 [Release by The Lantern Group]

The Dungog Film Festival principals Allannah Zitserman and Stavros Kazantzidis today are launching a new Australian film distribution business, Australian Film Syndicate (AFS).

Following the success of the Dungog Film Festival, AFS has been established to act as the distribution arm for selected Australian films.

The first film to be released by AFS is *Bitter & Twisted*, directed by Christopher Weekes and starring Noni Hazlehurst, Leeanna Walsman and Gary Sweet. It will screen at the Chauvel in Sydney, Brighton Bay in Melbourne and Palace Nova Adelaide from the 18th of September with previews on the 12th and 13th September.

*Bitter & Twisted* made its Australian festival debut at the 2nd Annual Dungog Film Festival in late May and was labeled one of the sleeper hits of this year's Tribeca Film Festival after five sold out screenings. Later in August the film will screen at the Montreal World Film Festival followed by a screening in Sarajevo as part of the Panorama program, which is comprised of only 16 films defined by their "exceptional narrative" and "extraordinary quality" and helmed by a range of geographically diverse "international auteurs".

"Born out of our experiences of the Dungog Film Festival and our desire to see quality Australian films reach Australian audiences, not only in Dungog but across the nation, we have set up the Australian Film Syndicate (AFS) - a distribution company that focuses on local content." says Allannah Zitserman, AFS Managing Director.

"Both the Dungog Film Festival and the Australian Film Syndicate fill a void in Australian film development, exhibition and distribution. To be launching the distribution arm with Chris Weekes' already acclaimed feature debut is a mark of the excellence of all the endeavours and the remarkable scope of the synergies already at play. For me to be involved in such endeavours after 25 years in the industry is both enlivening and exciting," said Peter Castaldi, AFS National Distribution Manager.

Set in suburban Sydney, *Bitter & Twisted* is an ensemble piece about a family's reaction to son Liam's untimely death three years before, and draws powerful performances from a diverse cast including Noni Hazlehurst, Steve Rodgers, Leeanna Walsman, Gary Sweet, and Matt Newton. It was produced by Bridget Callow.

"I'm thrilled Australian audiences will finally get a chance to see *Bitter & Twisted*. It's been a labour of love for everyone involved, working with what little we had, always dreaming it would one day find its way onto the wall of a darkened theatre. The entire cast gave so much of themselves to this film, not the least Noni who virtually transcends any character she's played before with her raw and honest portrayal of Penelope, it would be nothing short of devastating if *Bitter & Twisted* had drifted away with time." Christopher Weekes said.

Tags: [allannah-zitserman](#) [australian-film-syndicate](#) [bitter-and-twisted](#) [christopher-weekes](#) [dungog-film-festival](#) [stavros-kazantzidis](#)

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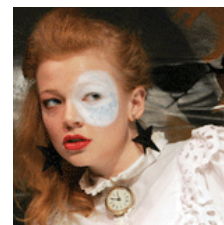
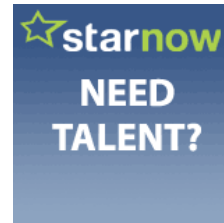
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