

Movies uncover the world for viewers at San Diego Film Festival

BY JEANNE FERRIS

Globetrotting is easy-peasy for those with wanderlust at the San Diego Film Festival, which runs till Sunday, Oct. 4. Forget luggage fees, expired passports and a house sitter for the dog. The only thing you need to attend an international film is a printed ticket or scanned on your cellphone.

"Kidnap Capital" is the only film in the festival placed in two categories, Social Justice and Foreign Films, said Stephanie Insoe, festival producer.

"Technically, it isn't foreign, but the language is primarily Spanish (and) this film is so timely and so relevant to what is happening in border cities, not to mention the refugee crisis in Europe, I wanted it to be considered."

"Kidnap Capital" (North American premiere) is based on real events about a "drop house" of kidnapped illegal Central American migrants in Phoenix (a documented hub for illicit activity) and the survival of its captives. It's a film with outstanding photography, acting and editing — "a little film that could," said Felipe Rodriguez, director, writer and producer.

"It (has) always appealed to me to tell stories that plant a seed of good in people. Film as a medium has the power to instill ideas and suggest action. It makes people go home and replay events and situations in their heads. Scenes are repeated and lines quoted for years to come," said Rodriguez, a French Canadian of Spanish descent and a well-respected documentarian. "That's why telling a dramatic story with the real backdrop of human kidnapping rings, as it happens on a daily basis and maybe right next door, appealed to me."

"Dark Horse" is from New Zealand (U.S. premiere). Oxford's definition of a dark horse is: little-known person who is unexpectedly prominent.

"While the main storyline is around chess, the underlying theme is really about a man who searches for the courage to lead," said Insoe. "It's a great story about purpose and hope. It's inspiring for everyone."

Chris Curtis, "Dark Horse" lead actor ("Fear the Walking Dead," "Whale Rider") is of Maori descent, with tribal affiliations of Te Arawa and Ng-ati Hauiti. He will be in attendance for the screening.

"The Cut" is from Armenia (world premiere): This epic drama traces one man's journey through the Ottoman Empire after surviving the 1915 Armenian genocide. He moves on as a forced laborer from the Mesopotamian deserts in Mardin and Nazareth; and when he learns that his twin daughters might still be alive, travels to America via Havana to the deso-



"Seashore" (Brazil) is a coming of age drama.



"Dark Horse" (New Zealand) is framed by chess, but is about a man who searches for the courage to lead. Courtesy photos

late prairies of North Dakota.

"Labyrinth of Lies" is a political thriller from Germany (U.S. premiere): In 1958, a public prosecutor discovers that a teacher has been identified as a former Auschwitz guard — but no one is prosecuting him.

"The Ambassador to Bern" is from Hungary (West Coast premiere). Based on true events, this political thriller chronicles the day of Aug. 16, 1958, when two Hungarian immigrants break into the Hungarian embassy in Bern, Switzerland.

"Seashore" from Brazil (San Diego premiere) is an intimate coming-of-age drama where two friends find themselves on the cusp of adulthood where a brief excursion to the coastal town is a journey into themselves.

"Victoria" is from Germany (West Coast premiere): This is an award-winning (Silver Berlin Bear) film shot entirely in one take and in one night about one girl; it's action-packed, and filled with intensity and intrigue.

Now, how simple was that? No jet lag and no language barrier! Tickets can be purchased at sdfilmfest.com.