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11th Greek Film Festival of Sydney

A FIVE STAR LAUNCH

Thursday 28 August @ 6.30pm, Palace Norton Street Cinemas, Leichhardt

This **Thursday 28 August** the opening screening of the **2003 Greek Film Festival of Sydney** Features **Hard Goodbyes: My Father**, a film that has received **plaudits and awards** from around the globe.

Most notable amongst its many achievements were the **Leopard for Best Actor** at the **Locarno Film festival**, the **FIPRESCI award** from the **International Federation of Film critics**, **Thessaloniki Film Festival** and a **four star** rave review from **The Guardians' Peter Bradshaw** who described **Hard Goodbyes** as "*Beautiful and subtly acted - and a lovely, humane film*".

A fifth star will be added to the mix on Thursday night with **Mary Coustas** on hand to open the festival. Logie award winner Coustas said "Greek cinema has such an important place in mainstream Australian culture and it is a great honour to be asked to open such a prestigious event."

In her debut feature length film, director **Penny Panayotopoulou's**, "**Hard Goodbyes: My Father**", is a moving and poetic portrayal of a young boy living in Athens in the late 60's, whose life is tragically altered when his father suddenly dies. Elias refuses to believe his father is gone, convinced he will return so that they can both watch the Americans land on the moon, as his father had promised. Man takes off into space and Elias must finally accept the departure of his father.

The best actor award at the Locarno Film Festival went to **Hard Goodbyes** child star, 10 year old, **Giorgos Karayannis** who beat off competition from, amongst others, **Robin Williams**, **Gerard Depardieu** and **Matt Damon**. Panayotopoulou's sensitive directorial approach avoids gross sentimentality and effectively tells this poignant story through the child's subjective point of view. "The highlight of this years Festival is undoubtedly this beautiful movie" said Festival Director Manolis Plantzos. The screening will be followed by a launch party at Martini Bar and Restaurant, 99 Norton Street.

The festival, which runs between August 28 and September 9, at **Palace Norton Street Cinemas** will showcase a total of 12 feature films and 4 documentaries (full details available at www.greekfilmfestival.com.au). **Hard Goodbyes** will be screened again on **Saturday 30** and **Sunday 31 August** at **6.30pm**.

As a special closing night event, to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the film's original release, the Festival will present a brand new 35mm print of Michael Cacoyannis' Academy Award winning classic **ZORBA THE GREEK**, featuring striking cinematography, a mesmerising score by Mikis Theodorakis and the tour-de-force performance of Anthony Quinn.

What: 11th Greek Film Festival of Sydney	When: 28 August – 9 September 2003
Where: Palace Norton Street Cinemas, Leichhardt	Info: www.greekfilmfestival.com.au
Tickets: Advance tickets on sale from Monday, 11 August through MCA ticketing: 02 9645 1611 / www.mca-tix.com.au or in person from Palace Norton Street Cinemas.	
Opening Night Film and Party (Aug 28, 6.30pm) – all tickets \$26	
Closing Night (Sep 9, 6.30pm and 9.20pm) – all tickets \$16	
All other sessions – Adults \$14; Concession/Movie Club \$11 (5 or more separate sessions \$55)	

For more 11th Greek Film Festival of Sydney information contact Festival Manager James Owen: P: 9750 0440 / 0415 561 701 E: james.owen@goc.com.au or Dora Georgaklis P: 0415 878 818.

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