



Go ahead  
quote me

'I don't want everything in 3-D because I don't want to be in the middle of everything. Sometimes I want to be distant from it'  
Film-maker Judd Apatow (right)



'This is going to baffle some people, but I was so proud of myself that night. I didn't fall down or anything'  
Actress Kristen Stewart (right) on fumbling through her speech at the Oscars



'We're like Tiger Airways. How can we compare with Singapore Airlines?'

Film-maker Harry Yap (right) on Happy Go Lucky dropping behind Jack Neo's Being Human at the box office



# Less is more at film fest

New fest director Kirpal Singh is more selective and emphasises 'classical' values in choice of films

john lui

**T**his year's Singapore International Film Festival will see an emphasis on "classical" values of film-making in its programming, says first-time festival director, academic and poet Kirpal Singh, 61.

The festival's board is trying to win untapped audiences, especially among teens and tertiary students.

"We have something for the young and the old, something for someone who wants more familiarity. We want to make sure we don't just cover extremes," says Dr Singh.

He preferred to call the inclusion of more tried-and-tested fare an "evolution" in programming, rather a departure from past practice.

Last year, for example, six films were withdrawn from the festival over film classification issues relating to religious and homosexual themes, language and images. Roughly the same number have been withdrawn in previous years.

Films which provoke for provocation's sake have been excluded from this year's programme, in favour of films which deal with sensitive issues in a "powerful, compelling mode", he says.

Dr Singh says he does not expect films on the list this year to run afoul of the Board of Film Censors, Media Development Authority.

The festival will be organising a retrospective of the work of established Australian film-maker Bruce Beresford. The 69-year-old is best known as the director of the Best Picture Oscar-winning drama Driving Miss Daisy (1989), and the war

drama Paradise Road (1997).

He was also nominated for the Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay) Oscar for co-writing the war-crime period drama, Breaker Morant (1980).

Driving Miss Daisy and Breaker Morant will be screened at the festival. Beresford's latest film, Mao's Last Dancer (2009), will have its Singapore premiere as the opening film on April 15.

Beresford will give a free public talk at the Singapore Management University on April 14 on the making of Dancer, a drama based on the 2003 biography of Li Cunxin, a dancer from China who defected to the United States in 1979 and later moved to Australia, where he got married and had three children.

Beijing-trained dancer Chi Chao, who plays Li Cunxin in the film, will also attend the festival.

Other VIPs at this year's festival, now in its 23rd edition, include Japanese director Miwa Nishikawa, director of the closing film, the drama Dear Doctor, about a small-town doctor with a secret.

There will be fewer films this year - about 150, including short films - compared with last year's 200 because of the increased selectivity, says Dr Singh.

The associate professor at the Singapore Management University adds that avant-garde works will not be forgotten. For example, there is the critically acclaimed and obscure male-bonding movie Spring Forward (1999), starring Liev Schreiber and Ned Beatty and directed by American indie director Tom Gilroy.

The teaching element will be emphasised as part of the festival's goal of reaching out to tertiary students.

A new special programme, Women In Film, will feature To Whom It May Concern: Kashen's Journey, a biography of Eurasian actress Nancy Kwan. She played the title role in the classic The World Of Suzie Wong (1960).

There will be discussions on gender issues based on ideas raised in the film.



Movie buffs can look forward to a retrospective of the works of Australian film-maker Bruce Beresford (above), including his latest film, Mao's Last Dancer, which stars Chi Chao (left). Beresford will be attending the festival and giving a talk on the making of this film.  
PHOTOS: SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Sri Lankan director Bennett Rathnayake's Ira Handa Yaya (Under The Sun And Moon, right), which has been selected for the Asian Feature Film Competition section, will be screened.



Also attending the festival is acclaimed Sri Lankan director Bennett Rathnayake.

His film Ira Handa Yaya (Under The Sun And Moon), about the civil war in his homeland, has been selected for the Asian Feature Film Competition section.  
johnlui@sph.com.sg

The full programme of the 23rd Singapore International Film Festival, which runs from April 15 to 24, will be unveiled online at [www.filmfest.org.sg](http://www.filmfest.org.sg) on March 25. Ticket prices are \$20 for the opening and closing films and \$10 for others.

## top 10 movies

### SINGAPORE

- (1) Alice In Wonderland
- (-) Green Zone
- (2) Being Human
- (-) Cop Out
- (3) Up In The Air
- (-) Kaji: The Ultimate Gambler
- (-) Nodame Cantabile The Movie
- (5) Happy Go Lucky
- (4) Dear John
- (6) Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief

Information from Cinematograph Film Exhibitors Association

### UNITED STATES

- (1) Alice In Wonderland
- (-) Green Zone
- (-) She's Out Of My League
- (-) Remember Me
- (3) Shutter Island
- (-) Our Family Wedding
- (5) Avatar
- (2) Brooklyn's Finest
- (4) Cop Out
- (6) The Crazies