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# SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

## SONY PICTURES CLASSICS ACQUIRES WADJDA

**NEW YORK (September 15, 2012)** - Sony Pictures Classics announced today that they have acquired all North American rights to WADJDA from Berlin-based Razor Films. Written and Directed by Haifaa Al-Mansour, WADJDA is the first feature film shot entirely in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia--and the first ever by a Saudi female filmmaker. The film had its world premiere at the 2012 Venice Film Festival to standing ovations and rave reviews before making a similarly triumphant North American debut at the Telluride Film Festival where the film was first discovered by Sony Classics. WADJDA will be released in 2013.

Sony Pictures Classics has worked previously with Razor Films and producers Roman Paul and Gerhard Meixner on the Academy Award® nominated film WALTZ WITH BASHIR.

10-year-old Wadjda challenges deep-rooted Saudi traditions in a determined quest to buy a bicycle. When everything goes against her plans, she sees one last chance in her school's Koran recitation competition and the large cash prize for first place. WADJDA is the story of a girl determined to fight for her dreams.

Haifaa Al-Mansour is the first female filmmaker in Saudi Arabia. Through WADJDA, as well as previous media in the Kingdom, Haifaa has gained recognition for penetrating the wall of silence surrounding the sequestered lives of Saudi women and providing a platform for their unheard voices.

“We are extremely happy to work with the Sony Pictures Classics team again since we adore how dedicated and passionately they will release the film. After finishing the film in the way we had hoped for, this is another dream come true,” says Roman Paul of Razor Films.

Haifaa Al-Mansour adds, “I come from a small town in Saudi Arabia, a country where showing movies in public is illegal. To write and direct the first film ever to be shot inside Saudi Arabia, with one of the leading companies in Europe, Razor Films, was beyond my wildest dreams. To

premiere my film at the Venice Film Festival was even more incredible, and now to have Sony Classics bring the film to North America, the place from where I first saw the power and emotional possibilities of film, is beyond anything I ever could have imagined.”

"WADJDA captivated audiences in Telluride in a spectacular, richly rewarding way. For the first time we are seeing a movie from that part of the world and it's a great movie. When we met the director Haifaa and the producers Roman and Gerhard, we knew instantly we were a perfect match all around," says Sony Pictures Classics.

SPC negotiated the deal with Rena Ronson of UTA Independent Film Group, who first discovered filmmaker Haifaa Al-Mansour at the Abu Dhabi Circle Conference in 2009 and helped to arrange financing along with Razor Films. The Match Factory is handling foreign sales.

## **ABOUT SONY PICTURES CLASSICS**

Michael Barker and Tom Bernard serve as co-presidents of Sony Pictures Classics—an autonomous division of Sony Pictures Entertainment they founded with Marcie Bloom in January 1992, which distributes, produces, and acquires independent films from around the world.

Barker and Bernard have released prestigious films that have won 29 Academy Awards® (25 of those at Sony Pictures Classics) and have garnered 127 Academy Award® nominations (101 at Sony Pictures Classics) including Best Picture nominations for MIDNIGHT IN PARIS, AN EDUCATION, CAPOTE, HOWARDS END, and CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON.

## **ABOUT SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT**

Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) is a subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America, a subsidiary of Tokyo-based Sony Corporation. SPE's global operations encompass motion picture production and distribution; television production and distribution; home entertainment acquisition and distribution; a global channel network; digital content creation and distribution; operation of studio facilities; development of new entertainment products, services and technologies; and distribution of entertainment in more than 142 countries. For additional information, go to <http://www.sonypictures.com/>.