



Skouras Films Acquires U.S. Rights to Doug Sadler's "SWIMMERS"

An early 2006 launch in major U.S. markets
is planned for the award-winning film

LOS ANGELES – October 19, 2005 – Skouras Films has acquired U.S. rights to Doug Sadler's celebrated new motion picture, "Swimmers," produced by Melanie Backer, David W. Leitner, and Michael Yanko. The company, headed by Tom Skouras, plans to launch the film in major markets in early 2006. The deal was negotiated by John Manulis of VisionBox Media and Skouras. Having premiered Sadler's debut film "Riders" in 2002, the Sundance Channel continues its strong support with "Swimmers," taking pay television rights in a deal negotiated by Cinetic Media.

The recipient of the Grand Jury Prize Award for Best New American Film from the 2005 Seattle International Film Festival, "Swimmers" debuted earlier this year in the Sundance Film Festival. The film has since appeared in the Hamburg, Vancouver, Galway (Ireland), Karlovy Vary (Czech Republic), Festroia (Portugal), Boston, Maryland, Maine, and Sidewalk Film Festivals. Showings are also scheduled for the Hamptons International Film Festival this Friday (10/21) and Sunday (10/23) – as well as the AFI Fest 2005, Denver International and Savannah Film Festivals in November.

An inspiring story of human frailty and individual strength in the face of a fracturing American dream, "Swimmers" stars two-time Tony Award winner Cherry Jones, Shawn Hatosy, Robert Knott, Michael Mosley, Sarah Paulson, and Tara Devon Gallagher in her motion picture debut.

Among the critical praise received to date, Reed Martin of *USA Today* called "Swimmers" "the most poignant and moving film I saw at Sundance 2005." In his *Hollywood Reporter* review, James Greenberg hailed the picture as an example of the best of regional filmmaking, noting its "wonderful performances," "sensitive photography" and "deeply-felt, human-scale

story." And Mike Sragow of the *Baltimore Sun* wrote that "Swimmers" "combines the unexpected humor and intimate emotionality of Carson McCullers with the lived-in working-class detail of director Mike Leigh."

"Every so often a special film comes along, one that grabs you and doesn't let go until the last scene. 'Swimmers' is one of those pictures, and I'm thrilled to be working with Doug Sadler on his original and inspiring film," says Tom Skouras.

"I'm very pleased that 'Swimmers' will be released by a company whose principals have a long history of successfully presenting innovative and thought-provoking films," says director-writer Doug Sadler. "Given the consistently passionate audience reaction to 'Swimmers' at film festivals, the innovative release strategy Skouras has put together and Sundance Channel's support, I find myself a member of a rare breed: the happy independent filmmaker."

"Swimmers" marks **Tara Devon Gallagher's** feature film debut. The young actress has also been featured as one of the contestants in the documentary, "Mad Hot Ballroom," and in the television children's specials, PBS' "Saagwa" and HBO's "My Favorite Book." **Cherry Jones** is the recipient of two Tony Awards for Best Actress ("Doubt" in 2005 and "The Heiress" in 1995), two Tony nominations ("A Moon for the Misbegotten" in 2000 and "Our Country's Good" in 1991), as well as a Drama Desk Award in 2005 for "Doubt." Her motion picture credits include Steven Soderberg's "Ocean's 12" and M. Night Shyamalan's "Signs."

Robert Knott is a third-generation actor who recently co-starred in acclaimed director Robert M. Young's "Human Error," which debuted at Sundance last year. His previous credits include "Pollock" and "Hi-Lo Country." **Shawn Hatosy** has starred in "Soldier's Girl" (which appeared in both the Sundance and Tribeca Film Festivals), "The Cooler" (Sundance 2003) and "Dallas 362." He also co-stars with Emile Hirsch, Sharon Stone and Bruce Willis in Nick Cassavettes' "Alpha Dog," which is set for release in early 2006. Earlier this year, **Sarah Paulson** co-starred with Jessica Lange in the Broadway production of "The Glass Menagerie," and has appeared in a number of films, including "Down with Love" and "What Women Want." **Michael Mosley's** film work includes "Brother to Brother" (Sundance 2004) and the upcoming features "Building Girl" and "Room 314." **Kate Goehring** has worked extensively on stage, particularly in regional theater, and starred in the first national tour of "Angels in America."

"Swimmers" writer and director **Doug Sadler**, who received his MFA from the American Film Institute, was named one of the "25 New Faces" to watch by *Filmmaker* magazine in 2001. The following year, his debut film, "Riders," premiered on the Sundance Channel. In 2002 Sadler was invited to workshop "Swimmers" at the Sundance Institute's Writing and Directing Labs. He lives in Maryland, where "Swimmers" was filmed.

Producer **Melanie Backer** began her career as a story editor for New Line Cinema and has served as Glen Gordon Caron's vice president of development. She previously produced the features, "The Amati Girls" and "Pumpkin" (Sundance 2002), and is currently working on film projects with the Oscar-winning producers Jeremy Thomas and Fred Roos. Producer **D. W. Leitner** has served as a director, cinematographer or producer on over forty documentaries and features – including five films accepted into competition at Sundance. Among them is the Academy Award-nominee "For All Mankind," which also won Sundance's 1989 Jury and Audience Awards for Best Documentary. Producer **Michael Yanko** has produced two successful feature films and helped finance and co-produce two off-Broadway shows.

Veteran independent distributor **Tom Skouras** has been responsible for the release of over 200 motion pictures through his Skouras Films and former Skouras Pictures banners – including Joel and Ethan Coen's "Blood Simple," Lasse Hallstrom's Oscar-nominated "My Life As A Dog," Paul Schrader's "The Comfort of Strangers," Mike Newell's "The Good Father" (starring Anthony Hopkins), and Mike Leigh's "High Hopes."

In collaboration with Skouras, **Kelly Neal** will oversee "Swimmers" distribution and marketing. Neal has served in top level executive positions at Universal Classics, Skouras Pictures, Avco-Embassy and New World Pictures. He began his career as co-founder of Specialty Films, one of the first independent distribution companies on the West Coast.

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