



## Press Release

### Mike Leigh: Jury President of the Berlinale 2012

British film director Mike Leigh will be the Jury President of the 62nd Berlin International Film Festival.

Over the course of his nearly 40-year film career, Mike Leigh has distinguished himself as one of the most outstanding filmmakers of auteur cinema and protagonists of New British Cinema. His approach includes giving actors much leeway to improvise in order to develop their characters. Leigh portrays British society in a bluntly realistic but humorous style. His films have received countless international awards and several Oscar nominations.

Leigh has directed more than 20 films, as well as having made a name for himself as theatre director, dramatist and screenwriter. He first studied dramatic arts and then set design. Afterwards he attended the London Film School, of which he is now Chairman.

In 1972 he made his directorial debut with *Bleak Moments*, which went on to win the Golden Leopard at the Locarno Film Festival. In Cannes he won the Best Director Award in 1993 for *Naked*, and the Palme d'Or in 1996 for *Secrets and Lies*, which in itself received a total of five Oscar nominations. In 2004, *Vera Drake*, his highly regarded study of society whose characters display an extraordinary depth, was awarded the Golden Lion in Venice.

Over the years Mike Leigh has been invited to the Berlin International Film Festival to present *Meantime* (Forum 1984), the short film *The Short and Curlies* (Panorama 1988) and *Life is Sweet* (Panorama 1991). His latest contribution was to the *Competition* in 2008: his social comedy *Happy-Go-Lucky* featured Sally Hawkins, who won the Silver Bear for Best Actress. *Another Year* is Leigh's most recent movie. It screened in competition at Cannes in 2010 and went on to be nominated for an Oscar.

Since the 1960s, Leigh has also worked as a theatre director and writer, having staged more than 20 plays. His current play *Grief* is being performed at theatres across Britain until the end of January 2012.

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