Heather Taylor returns to E-Town for EIFF

film preview

The films of Heather Taylor
At the Edmonton International Film Festival
The Last Thakur (September 27 at 1:30 p.m.)
With the Dream (September 27 at 7 p.m.)
Empire City Centre (10200-102 Ave.)

AGNIESZKA MAKARSKA
Arts & Entertainment Writer

When the Edmonton International Film Festival begins, Heather Taylor will be returning to her hometown for the screening of her two latest films: With the Dream and The Last Thakur.

"I was so excited," Taylor exclaims, "because it’s the first time that any films that I've made have been shown in Edmonton [...]." When I got the first one, I was like, 'Wow, that’s really amazing!' and then when I got two, I just thought, 'I'll never have this chance to go see two of my films in the same place.'

The short documentary With the Dream is a series of stories of an Irish cowboy who actively participates in rodeos competitions in Europe, and dreams of competing in North America one day. As someone who grew up in Edmonton where rodeos culture has a strong presence, Taylor was still tickled by his idea of a European cowboy.

"We just feel that it’s so exciting that someone in his calibre so removed from this cowboy culture would be so into it — so much so that he’s now competing in rodeos.”

The story of this man trying to live his dream has inspired Taylor in extending this documentary.

"We want to bring him to film festivals, to Alberta, and have him go the cowboy trail and work with cowboys and ranchers, and experience the life [...] and see what he thinks of, if this is really the life he wants.”

Her other film, The Last Thakur, a film collaboration between the UK and Bangladesh, unfurls the tale of a man named Kala, who arrives in Daulatpur, and gets caught in the middle of a quarreling community. Set in Bangladesh, with English as the spoken language, the film is "the first Bengali westerner that’s ever been made," she says.

"I do believe that being from Alberta and having [known] that influence of western culture and working in the community within films [...] really helped me in making it feel authentic," says Taylor, who helped write the film's script.

"What was interesting is that they translated it to Bangladesh and then they translated it back into English subtitles. So the subtitles are not the lines for western, [they] aren’t necessarily there or completely there.”

Despite this being a strange collaboration, Taylor says that the pull of exploring other cultures in annual films, and just to be, a large chase for her.

"I love making films in other place, set in other places," she says.

Taylor also has a few projects planned for the future that she’ll be focusing on once the finishes showing her films at the EIFF.

"My next project is a feature film. It’s about this monster coming back to a small town, and this father and son have to stop it from killing the town.”

It’s a shame-saver and so only they knew who it is. But what’s really cool is that, you see, how it’s really a monster movie but [Taylor’s] difference is that it’s set in the Midwest during the Depression. So it’s that time of depression,” she describes.

Taylor goes on explaining that her grandma lived through the depression and told her about the difficulty of life during that time. For Taylor, this film shares her familiarity with the past.

She has also been discussing with her producer about having the movie set in Saskatchewan, because she wants to bring this new project to her home country.

"I think that a lot of Alberta artists and creators do a lot of work outside of Canada, but it’s never seen outside of Canada.” Taylor says, "I would love to have something that can be seen here, something that actually shows off Alberta [in].”

Celebrating the achievements of University of Alberta alumni

The University of Alberta Alumni Association is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2009 Alumni Recognition Awards. The awards will be presented at a gala ceremony on October 1 at the Winspear Centre for Music.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes the truly outstanding accomplishments of living U of A alumni who have earned national and international prominence as a result of their achievements.

F. Ann Hayes, ’68 EdP (BEdMed), ’68 MEd, is a compassionate physician making significant contributions by providing educational opportunities to vulnerable, marginalized girls in Africa.

Levi E. Kay, ’83 BSc, is internationally recognized as being in the forefront of the development and application of NMR spectroscopic methods for the study of protein structure and dynamics.

Frank T. Macmillan, ’68 BA, ’71 IJBB, chair and CEO of the Fortune 500 company Enmar Group, is a respected business leader with a lengthy record of giving back to the community and his alma mater.

Lawrence A. Mysak, ’60 Cert(Engr), ’63 BSc, is internationally respected for his pioneering research and inspiring teaching as a climatologist, mathematician, and oceanographer.

For tickets to the awards ceremony contact 780-492-2224 by noon, Wednesday, September 30.