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Mighty:Pictures Follows Up Their 2004 & 2005 Golden Trailer Award Nods With Another Two Nominations This Year

Nominated for 'Alexandra's Project'/Best Foreign Dramatic Trailer, and Best Trailer-Fundraiser for 'War Dance'

By Guy Wright

Mighty:Pictures, the New York-based creative boutique specializing in movie trailers, documentaries, promos and programming, has once again been acknowledged by the Golden Trailer Awards, with nominations for Best Foreign Film Trailer for the psychological thriller, 'Alexandra's Project,' and Best Trailer-Fundraiser for the compelling documentary, 'War Dance.'

The four-year old company, headed up by partners Charlie Sadoff and Mary Matyas, has built a reputation for producing film trailers that not only convey the essence of a movie's storyline, but also give viewers a taste of the cinematic experience that is unique to that movie.

Mighty:Pictures took home Golden Trailer Award Nominations for Best Foreign Independent Film for 'The Man of The Year' in 2005, and 'El Bola' in 2004, which, along with 'Alexandra's Project,' was produced for longtime client, New York-based Film Movement. The steady stream of accolades for their work in the movie trailer arena have reinforced Mighty:Pictures' position as a premiere one-stop resource for a skilled collaborative creative team of writers, producers, editors, effects artists, composers and audio talent, adept at every phase of production - from concept through completion. The accolades received for this year's Golden Trailer Awards continue to recognize Mighty:Pictures as a top-caliber creative problem-solver, and build upon its already considerable reputation with independent film companies and film studio distributors.

Each of this year's nominated trailers presented Mighty:Pictures producer Charlie Sadoff and his team with a unique set of challenges. For 'War Dance,' they had to create a captivating HD trailer for a movie that didn't even exist yet. After screening footage shot by Shine Global's Emmy Award-winning Co-Directors, Sean Fine and Andrea Nix, Sadoff's glimpse of this compelling story of a war-torn nation's children triumphing over incomprehensible tragedy, inspired him to meet the challenge.

The complement of skills and experience Sadoff brings to the Mighty:Pictures banner as producer, editor and writer of a long roster of award-winning promos and trailers, as well as a diverse mix of documentary films and episodic television projects, proved to be the ideal preparation for creating this project, as it required both the traditional editorial approach employed for long-form films and TV programming, as well as the fast-paced cutting style he uses for short-form trailers and promos.

'War Dance' is a documentary set against the backdrop of Uganda's 20-year civil war, during which over 30,000 children have been abducted into military servitude. It tells the story of how a group of children from the Patongo Internally Displaced Persons Camp are transformed by a life-altering, historic journey when their school qualifies for Uganda's national music and dance competition, making them the first children from a war zone to ever participate in the event.

The power of the event somehow transcends the reality of these young people's world, where they live in constant fear of being snatched during night raids, and forced at gunpoint to beat and murder the neighbors, and sometimes even their own parents. After their hellish initiation, the boys become soldiers, filling 80% of the army's ranks, and the girls are forced into sexual slavery. And, even though they had to travel through hostile territory with armed escorts to attend the music festival, the children did not hesitate to make the journey.

Producer Albie Hecht and Shine Global's Executive Director/Executive Producer Susan Maclaury Hecht presented Mighty:Pictures with the challenge of creating a rather unconventional trailer that could initially be used as a vehicle for raising funds to complete their documentary. And, as there was no movie to emulate, it was left to Mighty:Pictures to create the pacing, mood and feel of the piece.

Helping the client develop that vision utilized the entire roster of Mighty:Pictures' capabilities. The full-service company collaborated on the concept, developed the approach, wrote the script and edited the trailer, as well as created the sound design and supervised the mix. Mighty:Pictures, which has the kind of award-winning talent that can take a high-end project from concept to completion, also provided the client with an output to DVD, after cutting down the original 10:35 trailer to a 5:30 High Definition version for the web and a 4:30 HD trailer, for submission to the Golden Trailer Awards.

"Initially, no one was sure how the story could best be told," noted Sadoff. "We had to decide if it should reflect the point of view of the school's teachers or the perspective of the kids. Then there was the question of how much of Uganda's politics we should use as back-story. The atrocities that these children endure are a big part of their story, but too much emphasis on this ongoing tragedy could overshadow the triumph that is the documentary's empowering message."

This was not a traditional trailer. Its tone and structure also had to work as a presentation piece that would attract backers to the project. So, once again, Mighty:Pictures had to find a balance.
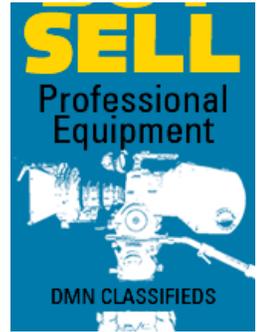
"If we cut the piece like a trailer, viewers would only see short snippets of scenes and there'd be no time to develop individual characters," noted Josh Glaser, who edited the project for Mighty:Pictures. "But if we let things play out too long we risk making it seem like we were cutting the actual film." Once these issues were resolved, Mighty:Pictures still had to deal with all of the questions that come up when producing and editing a traditional trailer, such as whether or not to use voiceover and what music would best support the storyline.

Much of the dialogue is in an African dialect and a lot of the English spoken was difficult to understand. Sadoff and Glaser had to refer to transcripts to understand what was being said, and figure out how the limited dialogue could be utilized to add yet another layer to the project.

The creative process first began in early November of last year when Mighty:Pictures' creative team – Executive Producer/Writer/Editor Charlie Sadoff and Editor Josh Glaser - screened selected footage with Producer, Albie Hecht, Shine Global's Executive Director/Executive Producer, Sue Maclaury Hecht, and Co-Directors, Sean Fine and Andrea Nix.

"The HD footage, shot by Fine on Panasonic's HD Varicam, was spectacular," noted Sadoff. "It became obvious that the best thing we could do was stay out of its way. Contrived structure, tricky editing or overly dramatic writing would only detract from the impact of the story."

Using Andrea's brief outline as a jumping off point, M:P's team tossed around some general structural ideas. Then Glaser and Sadoff were set free to begin shaping a concept.

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