



Premiere: Guests and stars at the special showing of *Fifty-Four Days* at the Phoenix Cinema.

## Packed premiere for film about grief and hope

By David Melsome

The Phoenix Cinema hosted a fully packed premiere earlier in the summer for *Fifty-Four Days*, an acclaimed short film about mental health, grief, wild swimming and hope.

Directed by Phoebe Torrance, it stars Celia Imrie, Juliet Cowan and Cat White, who also wrote and produced the film. When tragedy strikes, a spirited young woman turns to wild swimming in search of answers. By swimming each day at dawn and forming an unlikely friendship, she learns to accept her grief and the grief of those around her.

"I created *Fifty-Four Days* as I tried to make sense of the darkest time in my life after losing a loved one to suicide," said Cat. "I was so thrilled to

now see this special film on the big screen at the wonderful Phoenix Cinema, a venue with an ethos of inclusivity, community and supporting under-represented groups. To see this film now inspiring hope, healing and creating change is one of the greatest honours of my life."

Zalan Pall, the cinema's general manager, said the project aligned with the spirit of the Phoenix as it found its own path towards a prosperous independent future. "Phoenix was very proud and honoured to get behind a film like *Fifty-Four Days*, that's not only representational filmmaking at its very best, but also tackles a subject beautifully that we need to have more discussions about," said Zalan.

### Free concert

Free concerts restart at East Finchley Methodist Church at 197 High Road, N2, this month with a performance by the Serafini Baroque Chamber Ensemble, playing musical gems from the French baroque by Lully, Couperin, Leclair, Rameau and Telemann.

The quartet of musicians are Janet Marsh on baroque flute, Elizabeth Dockrell-Tyler on violin, Dinah Beamish on cello and Christopher Rowland on harpsichord. Admission to the concert on Sunday 11 September at 7.30pm is free with a collection in aid of the Friend in Need Community Centre in East Barnet.

## What's On at the Phoenix in September

By Zalan Pall, general manager at the Phoenix Cinema

The next month belongs to the 1950s at the Phoenix! A highly anticipated whodunit, an uplifting crowd pleaser, plenty of live music and theatre among old classics mean there're lots to enjoy.

We are starting the month with *See How They Run*. Set in 1950s London, a world-weary inspector played by Sam Rockwell and an eager rookie constable played by Saoirse Ronan find themselves thrown into a puzzling whodunit within the glamorously sordid world of underground theatre, investigating a mysterious homicide at their own peril. Uncover the mystery at Phoenix from Friday 9 September.

Our beloved classic season brings us two masterpieces from 1957. On Sunday 4 September, we screen Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* and then on Sunday 2 October it's Stanley Kubrick's *Path of Glory*. October starts with *Mrs Harris Goes To Paris* about a widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London, played by Lesley Manville, who falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress, and embarks on an adventure to Paris that will change not only her own outlook but the very future of the House of Dior. Jumping forward in a few decades, Norwegian 80s pop legends a-ha are presenting *True North*, a multimedia experience giving fans a chance to hear songs from their new album first on the big screen. Come along to see it on Thursday 15 September.

On Sunday 18 September, we look forward to hosting the East Finchley Town Team's sustainability event with a screening of the movie *2040*, which explores ways we can all tackle climate change.

We also have a lot to offer theatre and opera lovers with NT Live bringing us *Much Ado About Nothing* on Thursday 8 September and Glyndebourne showcasing *La Boheme* on Sunday 11 September.

The Royal Opera House season kicks off with *Madama Butterfly* on Tuesday 27 September and on the next day, Wednesday 28 September, the RSC presents *Richard III*. Then Wednesday 5 October sees us playing *Mayerling* from the Royal Opera House and NT Live lands again on Thursday 6 October with *Jack Absolute Flies Again*.



## A story about having a stammer

The latest children's book by award-winning East Finchley author Anne-Marie Conway tackles two issues that affect thousands of young people: stammering and cyber-bullying.

*How to be More Hedgehog* is an uplifting story about Lily, who finds friends laughing behind her back when her class presentation is uploaded onto YouTube, but then finds the courage to speak out.

Aimed at nine to 12-year-olds, it has been recommended by Monty Python star Michael Palin, who founded a centre to help people who stammer. He said: "The story of Lily and how she deals with her stammer is touching and inspiring and above all firmly based in real experience. This is a compulsively readable story, full of drama and full of hope."

Anne-Marie, a drama spe-



Author: Anne-Marie Conway

cialist who taught at the Archer Academy and set up the Full Circle Children's theatre group, said she was inspired to write the book after teaching several children with stammers.

"There can be unnecessary pressure put on children to be confident, fluent speakers," she said. "It is so important that we provide an environment where children are given the time and space to express themselves without any sense of urgency or the need to rush."

*How to be More Hedgehog*, published by UCLan, is Anne-Marie's eighth book. Others have included *Butterfly Summer*, *Forbidden Friends* and *Unicorn Girl*. If you would like Anne-Marie to make an author visit at your school you can email her at: [shawconway@btinternet.com](mailto:shawconway@btinternet.com)



Anne-Marie's new book



On stage: Christ's College Finchley's production of *Matilda*

## A musical show to remember

Young actors and singers at Christ's College Finchley received standing ovations from an appreciative audience on the two nights they performed their end-of-term musical *Matilda*, taken from the story by Roald Dahl. Students and staff from the drama and music departments at the secondary school, off East End Road, N2, worked hard behind the scenes and on stage to make it a show to remember.