

## **VENUS, award-winning feature film opening in Toronto and Vancouver theatres on May 18**

April 30, 2018 (Toronto) – VENUS, Eisha Marjara's comedic, heartwarming drama about a modern family in which genders, generations and cultures collide, will open at the Cineplex Yonge-Dundas Theatre, Toronto and at the Vancity Theatre, Vancouver on May 18, 2018.



VENUS tells the tale of Sid (Debargo Sanyal), a South Asian transitioning woman whose life is turned upside down when Ralph (Jamie Mayers), the “white” 14 year-old biological son she never knew she had, shows up unexpectedly at her door. Shot in Montreal, the upbeat film also deals with the hardship of transition and how it affects family and friends. VENUS has won numerous awards on the international film circuit, including most recently two awards at the 2018 Kiel Transgender Film Festival in Germany for Best Trans Performance (Debargo Sanyal) and Best Actor non-trans role (Jamie Mayers), as well as Best Narrative Feature at the 2018 Cinequest Film Festival in San Jose.

**Link to trailer:** <https://vimeo.com/225779362>

Sid is under pressure to marry a nice Indian girl and raise a family. His East Indian mother (Vancouver’s Zeena Daruwalla) yearns to have grandchildren. Her dreams are about to come true, but not in the way she ever imagined. When Sid comes out as a woman, a 14 year old boy named Ralph shows up at her door announcing that Sid is his parent. Although surprised to discover that his biological dad is now a woman, Ralph thinks having a transgender parent is pretty cool. But he hasn’t told his mother and stepfather that he’s tracked down his biological father. And then there is Sid’s boyfriend Daniel (Pierre-Yves Cardinal), who has yet to tell his family of his relationship with Sid. Daniel is nowhere near ready to accept Ralph as a stepson and complicate his life further. Sid’s coming out creates a snowball effect that forces everyone out of the closet.

VENUS is written and directed by Montreal-based Eisha Marjara, who first drew attention with the witty and satirical *The Incredible Shrinking Woman*. But it was her feature NFB docudrama *Desperately Seeking Helen* (2000), described as “one of the most auspicious film debuts on the Canadian scene,” that established her as a ground-breaking filmmaker. Her German-Canadian *The Tourist* (2006) was nominated as best short at the Female Eye Film Festival and her transgender drama *House For Sale* (2012) received multiple awards at various festivals. VENUS is Marjara’s first fiction feature and her second film featuring a transgender subject.

VENUS boasts an international cast of diverse talent from English and French Canada, the US, UK, and New Zealand: Debargo Sanyal, Jamie Mayers, Pierre-Yves Cardinal, Zena Daruwalla, Gordon Warnecke, Amber Goldfarb, Peter Miller, Judy Virago, and CT Thorne. VENUS is produced by Joe Balass for Compass Productions, with Kevin Tierney as Executive Producer. It was made with the financial support of SODEC, Telefilm Canada, Cr dit d’imp t cin ma et t l vision – Gestion SODEC, Harold Greenberg Fund, Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit and in association with Super Channel. The film was developed through the NSI. Venus is released in Canada by FunFilm Distribution.

The film’s other distinctions include the EDA AWFJ Award for best female-directed feature film at the Whistler Film Festival and the Audience Award for Best Feature film at Reelout LGBT Film Festival. In addition, it was selected for Telefilm’s ‘Canada Now’ series which showcases top Canadian films of the year in the US and the UK.

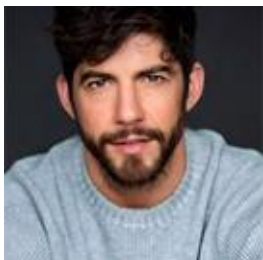
## CAST



**Debargo Sanyal (Sid)** is a New York City-based actor whose extensive acting career includes roles in film, television and stage. Film credits include *The Magic of Belle Isle* (2012) (opposite Morgan Freeman), *Everybody's Fine* (2009) (opposite Robert De Niro), and *Today's Special* (2009) (opposite Aasif Mandvi). Stage credits include New York Times praised performances in *When January Feels Like Summer*, *Telethon*, and *Burnished by Grief*, among others. VENUS is Sanyal’s first leading role in a feature film.



**Jamie Mayers (Ralph)** has been acting since the age of 10. His television credits include *This Life* (CBC), *Game On* (YTV), *19-2* (Bravo), *Being Human* (Syfi) and *LARPS: The Series* (Web). His stage credits include Joseph in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, among others. VENUS is his first leading role in a feature film.



**Pierre-Yves Cardinal (Daniel)** was awarded the Jutra Award for Best Supporting Actor in 2013 for his role as Francis in Xavier Dolan’s film *Tom   la Ferme*. His other film credits include *Polytechnique* by Denis Villeneuve, among others. On television, he is perhaps best known for portraying hockey legend Jean B liveau in the series of the same name. VENUS is Cardinal’s first role in an English language film.



**Zena Daruwalla (Sid's mother)** is from Vancouver and has a career in film, television, and theater spanning thirty years. Some of her credits include *Look Who's Talking* (1989), *Da Vinci's Inquest*, *Murder Unveiled*, *Witness: The Amber Frey Story*, and more recently *The Romeo Section*.



**Gordon Warnecke (Sid's father)** was born in London, England and has worked extensively in theatre, including a season with the Royal Shakespeare Company, as well as in television and film. He is perhaps best known for his role opposite Daniel Day Lewis in Stephen Frear's ground breaking *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), written by Hanif Kureshi. VENUS is his first Canadian production

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Running Time: 95 minutes

Following is a link to Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Venusfeaturefilm/>

film's website:

<https://compassproductions.ca/en/portfolio/venus/>