RIZ AHMED’S MOGUL MOWGLI DIRECTED BY BASSAM TARIQ ACQUIRED BY BFI DISTRIBUTION FOR THE UK AND IRELAND

Award winning film produced by Pulse Films & Riz Ahmed’s Left Hand ed Films

London – XX July 2020. BFI Distribution proudly announces the acquisition of MOGUL MOWGLI, a film co-written, produced by and starring Emmy award-winning actor Riz Ahmed from Pulse Films & Ahmed’s Left Handed Films banner. It is the debut fiction feature from the award-winning documentary filmmaker Bassam Tariq (These Birds Walk), who co-wrote the screenplay with Ahmed. The film premiered at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival in February 2020 where it won the FIPRESCI International Critics Prize. It will be released in cinemas in the UK and Ireland in Autumn 2020.

MOGUL MOWGLI follows the story of Zed (Riz Ahmed), a British Pakistani rapper, who, on the cusp of his first world tour, is struck down by an illness that threatens to derail his big break and forces him to face his past, his family, and the uncertainty of his legacy.

MOGUL MOWGLI is a Pulse Films & Left Handed production and produced in association with Silvertown Films, backed by BBC Films, Cinereach, SFFILM, Vice Studios and Ryot Films. The producers are Thomas Benks, Bennett McGhee, Riz Ahmed, Michael Peay and the co-producer is Joanne Dixon. Eva Yates is Executive Producer for BBC Films.

Ahmed is a critically acclaimed actor, musician, and activist. He became one of Hollywood’s most sought-after artists following the explosive success of HBO’s THE NIGHT OF, written and created by the legendary Steven Zaillian, for which he won an Emmy Award, and was Golden Globe and SAG nominated. He went on to star in successful feature films including Disney’s ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY, Jacques Audiard’s THE SISTERS BROTHERS and most-recently Sony/ Marvel’s VENOM. Ahmed will be seen next starring in SOUND OF METAL, which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival to career-best performance reviews. Additionally, he was recently announced to star opposite Octavia Spencer in INVASION for Amazon Films. He first garnered industry attention in festival favourites FOUR LIONS and NIGHTCRAWLER. Ahmed’s musical journey has spanned two decades across battle rap, techno, the transatlantic success of Swet Shop Boys, and now his critically acclaimed 2020 release The Long Goodbye. The film’s title is taken from a Swet Shop Boys song and Ahmed’s music from The Long Goodbye features in the film.

Bassam Tariq is a writer and director from New York. He recently won the Short Film Jury Prize at Sundance for Ghosts of Sugar Land (2019) which is distributed by Netflix.

An exciting multi-generational and mixed nationality supporting cast includes Pakistani legend Alyy Khan, British rising star Nabhaan Rizwan (Informant), Sudha Bhuchar (the Tanzanian-born co-founder of Tamasha Theatre Company, which has popularised Asian Art into British mainstream culture), Singapore-born actor and singer-songwriter Anjana Vasan (Spider-Man: Far from Home), British star Alysha Hart (Honour, Line of Duty), and poet and actor Hussain Manawer.

The UK and Ireland deal was negotiated with Jean-Felix Dealberto at international sales company Charades, by BFI Acquisitions Manager Laura Dos Santos.

Stuart Brown, BFI Head of Programme and Acquisitions says: “MOGUL MOWGLI is a rare thing. Every now and then a piece of art will feel like a jolt. Bassam Tariq and Riz Ahmed have achieved that with this film, it’s electrifying. I love how urgent it feels and how layered it is; it’s raw and sophisticated at the same time. Riz’s performance is mesmerising, magnetic, I think it’s his best ever. We can’t wait to bring this film to audiences in the UK.”

“I’m excited to share this deeply personal story with audiences, and for them to see the new cinematic language that Bassam has created to tell it – rich with references from Islamic and South Asian art,” said Ahmed. “The BFI is the perfect home for a film as bold as this.”

Thomas Benks, CEO Pulse Films added: “MOGUL MOWGLI is a true testament to the creative vision of Bassam Tariq and Riz Ahmed, it is a film that is as unique as it is vital. We are thrilled to be
partnering with the BFI, who have a rich history of creating campaigns that connect audiences with ground-breaking films. As partners, they are brilliantly collaborative and are not afraid to take on bold ideas, which was crucial in our decision-making process. We cannot wait for UK audiences to experience the rich tapestry of MOGUL MOWGLI later this year.”

Jean-Felix Dealberto at Charades says: “We are excited to be partnering up again with the BFI on a strong British debut. The BFI has been a longstanding supporter of Bassam Tariq’s work. We really admire the way that they bring content to audiences and are looking forward to the upcoming release of MOGUL MOWGLI in its domestic territory.”

-ends-

For more information please contact:
Jill Reading, BFI Press Officer
E-mail: jill.reading@bfi.org.uk
Tel: (020) 7957 4759 / 07795 677333
www.bfi.org.uk
@bfi

About BFI Distribution
BFI Distribution brings a wide range of films into cinemas, taking newly-restored classics, important world cinema titles, past gems worthy of reappraisal and contemporary British arthouse films to audiences UK-wide.

From major movies like A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and SINGIN’ IN THE RAIN, world cinema classics such as LA DOLCE VITA and ORPHEE and British films from the past like DISTANT VOICES, STILL LIVES and MAURICE, to contemporary independent new releases, such as the recent hit BAIT and LITTLE JOE, BFI Distribution regularly provides programmers and audiences with an eclectic and engaging slate of releases.

Our films frequently include restored masterpieces (many by the BFI National Archive) previously unavailable for theatrical screenings, such as THE EPIC OF EVEREST, NAPOLEON and SHIRAZ: A ROMANCE OF INDIA, and touring packages from directors such as Ingmar Bergman and Federico Fellini, enabling regional venues to programme director-focussed seasons themselves.

About the BFI
The BFI is the UK’s lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of world cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

About Pulse Films
Pulse Films is an award-winning, next generation studio encompassing the development, production, financing and distribution of content across all platforms and for audiences worldwide. The studio, founded by Thomas Benski and Marisa Clifford in 2005, is headquartered in London with outposts in Los Angeles, New York, Paris, Berlin and Milan. Dedicated to creating moments of culture through storytelling, Pulse Films operates globally under the following divisions: Scripted, Non-Fiction and Commercials & Music Videos.

In 2019 the studio won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Nature Documentary for its feature doc TROPHY, and in 2018 received two Grierson Awards for documentary KINGDOM OF US.

Pulse Films’ feature film credits include forthcoming feature PIG starring Academy Award winning actor Nicolas Cage, PERFECT directed by Olivia Wilde and Berlin Film Festival audience award winner MOGUL MOWGLI starring Riz Ahmed. The studio was also behind 2018’s SKATE KITCHEN from director Crystal Moselle, Andrea Arnold’s Cannes Jury Prize winner and BAFTA nominated AMERICAN HONEY, and
Sundance Award winners THE WITCH and ALL THESE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS. Other notable releases include 2018’s Emmy Nominated NO GREATER LAW for A+E and the London Film Festival hit RUDEBOY: THE STORY OF TROJAN RECORDS.

The studios TV projects include 2020’s record-breaking and critically acclaimed series GAGNS OF LONDON for Sky Atlantic & AMC, global hits THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MADELEINE MCCANN, AZIZ ANSARI RIGHT NOW, and BIKRAM: YOGI, GURU, PREDATOR for Netflix, and forthcoming Channel 4 documentary series INSIDE MISGUIDED. New drama ATOMIC BAZAAR from Gregory Burke is currently in development. Other credits include BLACK IS THE NEW BLACK (BBC Two) and ROCK AND ROLL, a 10-part series for Sky.

Pulse Film was also behind Beyoncé’s Emmy nominated and Peabody Award winning film LEMONADE, Nick Cave’s BAFTA nominated 20,000 DAYS ON EARTH and 2020’s BEASTIE BOYS STORY directed by Spike Jonze for AppleTV+.

**About Left Handed Films**

Left Handed is the production company started by Riz Ahmed, focused on stretching culture through telling fresh stories in bold ways. MOGUL MOWGLI is the first feature film from Left Handed, and sets out the company's stall with a genre-busting, culturally hybrid, and award-winning debut feature from an exciting new voice in Bassam Tariq. Forthcoming projects in development include the feature film HAMLET.