



**ORION PICTURES AND SAMUEL GOLDWYN FILMS ACQUIRE  
DIRECTOR FRANCIS LEE'S AWARD-WINNING  
'GOD'S OWN COUNTRY'  
FROM PROTAGONIST PICTURES**

**Los Angeles, CA – May 8, 2017** — Orion Pictures and Samuel Goldwyn Films announced today they have acquired all U.S. rights to Francis Lee's award-winning *GOD'S OWN COUNTRY* starring breakout actors Josh O'Connor and Alec Secareanu, from Protagonist Pictures, who is handling worldwide sales on the film. The feature debut of acclaimed short-film director Lee received its world premiere at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, where the film won the Special Jury Award for Directing in the World Cinema Competition. It went on to screen in the Panorama at the Berlinale where it won the Männer Magazin Readers' Jury Award. The studios are planning an early Fall theatrical release.

The film was produced by Manon Ardisson and Jack Tarling. *GOD'S OWN COUNTRY* is a Shudder Films and Inflammable Films production of a BFI and Creative England presentation in association with Met Film. The deal was negotiated by Peter Goldwyn on behalf of Samuel Goldwyn Films and Vanessa Saal, Protagonist Pictures Head of Worldwide Sales, on behalf of the filmmakers.

Peter Goldwyn, President of Samuel Goldwyn Films said, "*GOD'S OWN COUNTRY* is not only a major discovery of prominent new director, Francis Lee, but also of its two leading actors, Josh O'Connor and Alec Secareanu. We along with our partners at Orion Pictures could not be more excited to work with this trio. They have made an unforgettable romantic film for our times. "

Lee said, "I'm exceptionally proud to have made *GOD'S OWN COUNTRY* with rising stars Josh O'Connor and Alec Secareanu, and am thrilled to be working with Orion Pictures and Samuel Goldwyn Films for the US release. After the phenomenal audience and critical reaction at Sundance this year, we can't wait for a wider audience to see our film and their beautiful performances."

Lee's contemporary tale of self-discovery and emotional-awakening is set on the sheep farming hills of rural England. Johnny Saxby (Josh O'Connor) works long hours in brutal isolation on his family's remote farm in the north of England. He numbs the daily frustration of his lonely existence with nightly binge-drinking at the local pub and casual sex. When a handsome Romanian migrant worker (Alec Secareanu) arrives to take up temporary work on the family farm, Johnny suddenly finds himself having to deal with emotions he has never felt

before. An intense relationship forms between the two which could change Johnny's life forever.

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### **About Orion**

Orion, an arm of MGM, is focused on distributing films across multiple platforms.

### **About Samuel Goldwyn Films**

Samuel Goldwyn Films is a major, independently owned and operated motion-picture company that develops, produces and distributes innovative feature films and documentaries.

The company is dedicated to working with both world-renowned and emerging writers/filmmakers and committed to filmed entertainment that offers original voices in uniquely told stories. This is best exemplified by the Academy Award® nominated THE SQUID AND THE WHALE, SUPER SIZE ME, AMAZING GRACE and Julie Delpy's hit comedy 2 DAYS IN PARIS. Past Goldwyn titles include: HARRY BROWN starring Michael Caine, the box office smash FIREPROOF and the 2010 independent hit MAO'S LAST DANCER. Samuel Goldwyn Films also released THE WHISTLEBLOWER, a powerful, ripped-from-the-headlines thriller starring Academy Award® winner Rachel Weisz, and the 2012 critics' darling ROBOT & FRANK, starring Academy Award® nominee Frank Langella and Academy Award® winner Susan Sarandon.

Additional Samuel Goldwyn Films releases include: Gilles Bourdos' RENOIR, the lush film about the famous painter's later years and France's official submission for the 2014 Academy Awards®; Jason Wise's films SOMM & SOMM: Into the Bottle; 2015 Academy Foreign Language Film Award® nominee TANGERINES; the Sundance cult-hit LILA AND EVE starring Academy Award® winner Viola Davis and Jennifer Lopez; and Morgan Matthews compelling drama A BRILLIANT YOUNG MIND. Current Samuel Goldwyn Films releases include: festival favorite CHICKEN PEOPLE, directed by Nicole Lucas Haines about three show chicken competitors; TRANSPICOS, the directorial debut and 2016 SXSW Audience Award Winner by Greg Kwedar; Ian Old's award-winning BURN COUNTRY with Academy Award® winner Melissa Leo, James Franco and breakout lead Dominic Rains; Carles Torrens' physiological thriller PET starring Dominic Monaghan; YOUTH IN OREGON, the dramatic comedy of a 3,000 mile journey about life with Academy Award® nominated Frank Langella, Billy Crudup, Christina Applegate, Mary Kay Place, and Josh Lucas; and the contemporary fairy tale THIS BEAUTIFUL FANTASTIC starring Jessica Brown Findlay, Academy Award® nominated Tom Wilkinson, Andrew Scott, and Jeremy Irvine. Upcoming films include Avi Neshet's Israeli box office hit PAST LIFE; Justin Chon's racially charged GOOK; and the British children's classic SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS.  
[www.samuelgoldwynfilms.com](http://www.samuelgoldwynfilms.com)

### **About Protagonist Pictures**

Protagonist Pictures is an international finance, production and sales company which has a proven track record in outstanding films and commercial successes. Based in the UK, the company handles films from around the world, always maintaining a strong focus on filmmakers with exceptional vision and storytelling skills.

Protagonist's current successes on release around the world include Ben Wheatley's *Free Fire* with its ensemble cast of Brie Larson, Armie Hammer, Cillian Murphy, Sharlto Copley and Jack Reynor; Adam Smith's *Trespass Against Us* starring Michael Fassbender and Brendan Gleeson, Charlie McDowell's *The Discovery* with Rooney Mara, Jason Segel and Robert Redford, William Oldroyd's TIFF 2016 buzz feature *Lady Macbeth* and the 2017 Directors' Fortnight selections *The Florida Project* from Sean Baker and *The Rider* from Chloé Zhao. Currently in post-production are Clio Barnard's *Dark River*, Richard Loncraine's *Finding Your Feet* and Amma Asante's *Where Hands Touch*, whilst Pawel Pawilkowski's *Cold War* and Kristoffer Nyholm's *Keepers* are currently shooting.

[www.protagonistpictures.com](http://www.protagonistpictures.com)

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