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TIFF 2014 events: Where the A-list will see and be seen

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In addition to showcasing cinema's best, the Toronto International Film Festival also trails grand parties, A-list-stuffed premieres and glitzy fundraisers in its wake. Given the sheer volume of events, navigating its social schedule can be daunting at best. Here are a few of the upcoming highlights, private and public, that promise to be must-attends.

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Video: Check out the big names scheduled for this year's TIFF

Film and philanthropy

Like the festival itself, the party scene around it has grown exponentially; gatherings with modest beginnings have become much-hyped TIFF festivities. A case in point: the Canadian Film Centre's annual barbecue in support of the institution's programming. Every year, CFC founder Norman Jewison welcomes friends from high places for a laid-back afternoon at CFC headquarters, a sprawling estate near Toronto's Bridle Path. Jason Priestley, Jim Cuddy and Kiefer Sutherland have all made the voyage for burgers and banter in the past. This year's invite-only gathering will be held on Sept. 7.

Meanwhile, Artists for Peace and Justice, a non-profit established by Oscar-winning director Paul Haggis in aid of relief programs in Haiti, is changing things up; last year's relaxed benefit in the backyard of Roots co-founder Michael Budman is being replaced with a swanky black-tie gala at Casa Loma on Sept. 7. *Revenge's* Madeleine Stowe, Canadian filmmaking scion Jason Reitman and the CBC's George Stroumboulopoulos are all expected to attend; socialite Sylvia Mantella is co-chairing, so expect to see Toronto's party-page regulars mixed in with visiting Hollywood heavyweights. To reserve tables and tickets, visit www.apjnow.org/gala.

Fashion falls for film

As it has for the past four years, Holt Renfrew will once again operate Variety Studio at its magenta-wrapped Bloor Street flagship. A-list stars will stop by the retail pop-up throughout the festival to talk shop and break from festival madness for a bit of shopping therapy. Jessica Chastain, Kristen Wiig (who is in town to debut *Welcome to Me*), Olivia Wilde and well-dressed gents Matthew McConaughey, Jude Law and director Steve McQueen have made appearances during festivals past. Potential visitors this year include stylish young thing Eddie Redmayne (in Toronto for his much-talked-about film *The Theory of Everything*) or French-bohemian-royalty Charlotte Gainsbourg (here for her film *Samba*).

The Hugo Boss party is always a hot ticket on the TIFF social calendar. In 2011, the German fashion brand helped Kirsten Dunst and Alexander Skarsgard celebrate *Melancholia*; last year, high up on the patio at The Chase, Jake Gyllenhaal and Isabella Rossellini toasted the premiere of their film *Enemy*. On Sept. 6, this year's HB party will be held in honour of Danish director Lone Scherfig's movie *The Riot Club*, starring Max Irons (son of film and stage star Jeremy) and *The Hunger Games* heartthrob Sam Claflin. Expect these boys to be well attired in their Hugo Boss suits, purchased through www.inktickets.com; doors open at 10 p.m.

Last but not least, Tom Sandler, the celebrity and society lensman with a rock-star attitude (his mother, Ruth Lowe, wrote the 1940 hit *I'll Never Smile Again*, which launched a then-unknown Frank Sinatra into stardom), has opened his archive for a TIFF-themed retrospective packed with snaps of famous faces and cherished festival memories (think Al Pacino, Johnny Depp, Sophia Loren and Robert De Niro). The TIFF Focus Exhibit runs through Sept. 30 at Casa Loma.