

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS PICKS-UP SUGAR, THE SECOND FEATURE FROM WRITING, DIRECTING TEAM RYAN FLECK AND ANNA BODEN

New York. July 7, 2008. Following the success of their freshman film, “Half Nelson,” the second feature from Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden, SUGAR has been acquired by Sony Pictures Classics for North American and Latin American Distribution rights from HBO Films.

Written and directed by Fleck and Boden, SUGAR follows the story of Miguel Santos, a.k.a. Azúcar, a Dominican pitcher from San Pedro de Macorís, struggling to make it to the big leagues and pull himself and his family out of poverty. Playing professionally at the Kansas City Knights baseball academy, Miguel finally gets his break at age 19 when he advances to the United States' minor league system. Miguel travels from his tight knit community in the Dominican Republic to a small town in Iowa, corn country, where he and a couple of other Latin American teammates are the only Spanish-speaking people in the vicinity. As Miguel struggles with the new language and culture, despite the welcoming efforts of his host family, he is faced with an isolation he never before experienced. When his play on the mound falters, he begins examining more closely the world around him and his place within it, and ultimately questions the single-mindedness of his life's ambition.

The film received much critical praise when it screened in competition at Sundance underscoring the performance of newcomer Algenis Pérez Soto.

Producers Paul Mezey, Jamie Patricof, and Jeremy Kipp Walker had this to say, “We are very pleased to have the opportunity to work with Tom Bernard and Michael Barker and the whole Sony Pictures Classics team on SUGAR. Time and again they have proven their unique ability to reach broad audiences, championing exciting and original voices and bringing surprising stories to the big screen. We couldn't ask for a better home.”

Directors Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden added, “We couldn't be more thrilled that Sony Pictures Classics will be releasing SUGAR—they are the perfect people to be putting it out there. They've been doing this for a long time and doing it extremely well. We're just excited to be working with people who genuinely love movies—good movies.”

Comments HBO Films president Colin Callender, “We were thrilled when Ryan and Anna came to us with the idea for this unique and timely look at the game of

baseball. SUGAR is one of several Sundance success stories that HBO Films has been proud to produce, and we are delighted that the final home of the film is in the very capable and talented hands of Michael Barker, Tom Bernard and their team at Sony Pictures Classics.”

Sony Pictures Classics released the following statement, "SUGAR is a wonderful movie. From the filmmakers Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden to the producers Paul Mezey, Jamie Patricof, and Jeremy Kipp Walker to our friends at HBO, Colin Callender and Maud Nadler, these are the most talented people in the independent film world. It is a pleasure to be in business with them. This is going to be a very popular film with American audiences."

The deal was completed with Rena Ronson at William Morris and HBO.

HBO Films presents a Journeyman Pictures/Hunting Lane Films production in association with Gowanus Projections. SUGAR *is* written and directed by Anna Boden & Ryan Fleck, and produced by Paul Mezey, Jamie Patricof and Jeremy Kipp Walker. Anna Boden executive produces. Starring Algenis Pérez Soto, Rayniel Rufino, Andre Holland, Michael Gaston, Jaime Tirelli, José Rijo, Ann Whitney, Richard Bull, Ellary Porterfield, Alina Vargas, Kelvin Leonardo García and Joendy Peña Brown. The cinematographer is Andrij Parekh, the production designer is Elizabeth Mickle, the editor is Anna Boden, and the costume designer is Erin Benach. Music Supervisor is Lynn Fainchtein and the music is by Michael Brook. Casting is by Cindy Tolan, CSA.