

# Movie made in city for £8,000 set for TV debut



Film-maker Mark Stirton wrote and directed *The Planet*. PICTURE BY PETER ANDERSON

## by Susan Nicholson

A SCI-FI movie made in Aberdeen for just £8,000 could be about to attract an international audience.

The makers of *The Planet* – a tale of survival in an alien world largely filmed at Balmedie Beach – have just signed a deal with Sky television for the broadcast rights to the feature-length movie.

The film is most likely to be screened on a channel dedicated to independent and new media productions some time over the next three years.

“We’re extremely pleased as the film was only finished a month or so ago and good things started to happen almost immediately,” said director Mark Stirton, of city-based Stirton Productions.

“The Propeller Channel, where it could be screened, are

looking for new British films to show and build up a reputation for that kind of material and we were lucky enough to get on the list.

“The channel is watched by a lot of TV and cinema executives so there is the hope that it will attract more attention.”

*The Planet* has also received a rave review on a leading sci-fi movie website and more than 500 copies of the DVD sold within four weeks of being advertised online. Orders have come from as far afield as New Zealand, Russia and Germany, and these, combined with the broadcast rights, have already returned a profit.

“The most you can hope for with a film like this is a cult following and that’s what is happening, and happening quickly,” said Mr Stirton.

*The Planet* tells the story of a group of shipwrecked mercenaries and their struggle for survival on an alien planet.

It stars former Mr Universe Mike Mitchell and Aberdeen comedian and presenter Patrick Wright.

It took two years to complete and features more than 300 visual effects over 75 minutes.

The production team have hailed it “the most ambitious science-fiction film produced in Scotland”.

“The good thing about *The Planet* it is that it’s a Scottish film that’s not about gangsters, junkies or alcoholics,” said Mr Stirton, 36, of Cadenhead Place.

“It’s about sci-fi, which is quite different, and I think that’s the reason it is selling well and getting noticed.”

The contract with Sky does not prevent the movie being

screened at film festivals and later this year it is bound for a festival in Indiana in America, and Cannes in 2007.

But before then it will make its world cinema debut in Aberdeen. The premiere is scheduled for September 6 at the city’s Belmont Cinema.

“I’m really pleased the premiere is taking place in Aberdeen and the cast will be getting together to see how it goes down with the public,” added Mr Stirton.

Pam Green, general manager at the Belmont, said “It will be shown as a one-off initially, but if there is enough demand then we will bring it back for further screenings.”

Stirton Productions has made several short films since 1995, including *Removals* – a 30-minute comedy drama about removal men set in and around Aberdeen.