

# VARIETY



## Rachel Griffiths Pokes Fun at Trump, Mariah Carey and Nicole Richie Rally for G'Day USA Gala



JANUARY 29, 2016 | 04:37PM PT

PHOTO BY BUCKNERVARIETY/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

### Alyssa Sage

G'Day USA hosted its annual Los Angeles Gala on Thursday night at Vibiana in Downtown L.A., where distinguished Australian guests and celebrities including **Hugh Jackman**, **Mariah Carey**, **Nicole Richie**, **Joel Madden**, **Brett Ratner** and **5 Seconds of Summer** gathered to honor key Australian figures in entertainment and celebrate the relationship between the U.S. and Australia.

The diplomatic networking event, which was hosted by Australian actresses and previous Oscar nominees, **Rachel Griffiths** and **Toni Collette**, kicked off with a duet performance of "My Romance" by **Seal** and "The Voice" Australia winner **Harrison Craig**.

"I would like to take a moment to express our great gratitude to this great nation for welcoming all of us Australians and giving us the opportunity to share our passions on the world stage, to take over your casinos, to steal your Oscars," said Griffiths. "I just really hope that Donald Trump doesn't build a wall between Australia and America," joked the actress. Griffiths, along with co-host Collette, also couldn't help but comment about the size of Carey's engagement ring from **James Packer**.

"Zero Dark Thirty's" **Jason Clarke** graced Vibiana's grand stage to introduce **Joel Edgerton**, the recipient of G'Day USA's excellence in film award. Also an Australia native, Clarke recalled when Sydney's theater community was abuzz with excitement about Edgerton's debut in a David Berthold-directed play at the Sydney Theatre Company.

"In a world of hyperbole, I don't think it's too much to say that a 'Joel Edgerton' does not come along very often," said Clarke. "The one thing that always rings true in anything that he's involved in is that it's worth watching."

During his award acceptance, Edgerton attributed his acting success to Blue-Tongue Films, a film production collective he created with brother Nash Edgerton and other filmmakers.

"A lot of the reason I'm even here is the company we created and the fact that the company kept us engaged and in love with creating our own stuff. I owe a lot of why I'm an actor and the things that I do as an actor to [this]," Edgerton said.

He also addressed "**Mad Max**" director and the night's other honoree, **George Miller**, joking that the director was referring to Edgerton when he sought out "that guy from 'Warrior'" to star in "**Mad Max: Fury Road**."

"You did the right thing," Edgerton joked about Miller's casting selection. "Tom [Hardy] is Mad Max. I would have been a slightly miffed Max," he added.

Miller was recognized with G'Day USA's lifetime achievement award for his contribution to the Australian arts sector. The Oscar-nominated director was introduced by Village Roadshow co-CEO **Robert Kirby**.

Kirby—whose Australian media company co-produced both "Mad Max" and "Mad Max: Fury Road"—shared his account of how 1979's "Mad Max" came to fruition nearly 40 years prior. After reviewing an early version of "Mad Max," Kirby recalled thinking, "This is extraordinary. This what we've been searching for."

Once onstage, Miller also recollected memories from "Mad Max," citing the challenges of releasing the film to American audiences.

"When it was released in America, the distributor said, 'We have to dub it with American accents, because, apart from Los Angeles and New York, people really don't know much about Australia and might not understand the accents.' So, everybody in the film was dubbed into American accents, including Mel Gibson," explained the "Mad Max: Fury Road" director, whose film is nominated for 10 Oscars. Miller continued, "The interesting thing was, it was only a handful of years before Australian cinema impacted enough on the world culture. That was the last time that would happen to an Australian film."

Following the award presentations, an energetic Jackman took to the stage to perform Lucky Starr's "I've Been Everywhere" and Peter Allen's "I Still Call Australia Home." He also pulled Ratner up on stage to assist him in singing a little tune about the hardest-to-pronounce cities in Australia. "Australian Idol" singer **Hayley Warner** performed throughout the night as well.

The dinner menu featured a food selection curated by Australian chef Neil Perry and American chef Neal Fraser, and wines from Wine Australia. The gala event concluded with the late David Bowie's "Let's Dance" music video, which was filmed in an Australian pub and remembered for bringing awareness to the struggles of the country's indigenous population.