Andrea Johnston

The third annual Alice Springs Film Festival gets underway this Friday, with an Alice Springs actor to star in one of the selected films. Aaron Pedersen features in Goldstone, the opener for the Sydney Film Festival. Set in the Queensland outback it involves an indigenous detective on a missing persons inquiry, which reveals a web of crime and corruption. Other highlights, according to Alice Springs Cinema’s general manager Rebecca Lillico, include the "downright ludicrous" comedy Swiss Army Man, and High Rise based on the novel by J.G Ballard.

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USTER rehearsals involving more than 80 children are taking place in Alice Springs and across the bush in the lead-up to the Alice Beat concert in October.

The celebration of talent, co-ordinated by the NT Music Foundation featuring singing, dancing and musical instruments, but perhaps most impressively a bush choir which will double in size by the time the performance takes place at Alice Springs.

“This is the first cluster rehearsal in town and we had an other rehearsal in the bush three weeks ago,” said Markus Kuchenbuch, the choir’s conductor.

Mr Kuchenbuch travels between communities as far apart as Imapa and Epenarrra, Yuendumu and Harts Range.

At each location he teaches small groups of children their part, ready to come together for a cluster rehearsal and eventually for the final performance.

“There are no bigger rehearsals than this because they have to travel too far,” Mr Kuchenbuch said.

At a rehearsal in the large hall at Centralian Middle School on Monday Year 4 and 5 pupils from Larapinta, Sadadeen, Ross Park and Gillen primary schools gathered with their compatriots from Areyonga and Imapa.

“It helps them build confidence and eventually hopefully some friendships,” said Jonathan Fernando, the principal of Areyonga School.

“We haven’t been involved before so this is a first for them, and this is the first rehearsal so now they’ve seen what it’s like with half the choir.”

With limited time and a lot to get through, renditions of Blackbird and Under the Milky Way were enthusiastically practised, but spontaneous talent also had a chance to shine when the day started with a drum solo by a pupil from Imapa.

“We found out on the way out the Areyonga boys are very talented drummers too, so now we’re thinking of running a drumming competition at the Alice Beat,” Mr Kuchenbuch said.

Tickets for Alice Beat will go on sale soon. Save the date for the show at Alice Springs on October 27.

Far-flung rehearsals will join as one to unite choir

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Logie-winning local leads way in opener for Alice Film Festival

Markus Kuchenbuch is working with children such as Imran Boulon, Rachel Nolan and Lisa Tucker from Areyonga School for the Alice Beat concert in October.