

THE COLLEGE OF MEDIA AT ILLINOIS PRESENTS

13th Annual
**Roger
Ebert's
Film
Festival
2011**

April 27- May 1

**The Virginia Theatre
203 W. Park, Champaign**



www.ebertfest.com

Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



This year's festival is dedicated to



Claude Chabrol

1930-2010



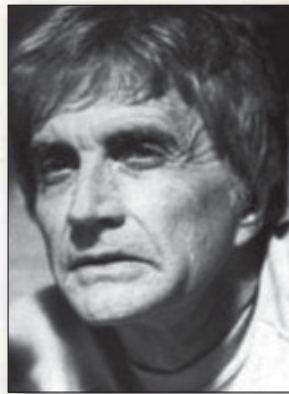
Jill Clayburgh

1944-2010



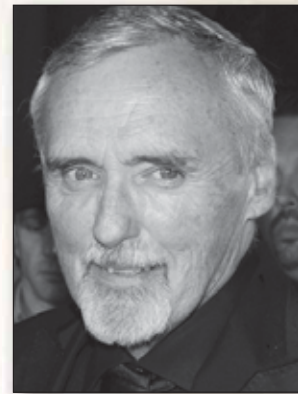
Tony Curtis

1925-2010



Blake Edwards

1922-2010



Dennis Hopper

1936-2010



Sidney Lumet

1924-2011



Arthur Penn

1922-2010



Roger Ebert's Film Festival 2011

schedule of events

FILM SCREENINGS AT THE VIRGINIA THEATRE

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

7:00 pm *Metropolis*
10:30 pm *Natural Selection*

Thursday, April 28, 2011

1:00 pm *Umberto D*
3:30 pm *My Dog Tulip*
8:00 pm *Tiny Furniture*

Friday, April 29, 2011

1:00 pm *45365*
4:00 pm *Me and Orson Welles*
8:30 pm *Only You*

Saturday, April 30, 2011

11:00 am *A Small Act*
2:00 pm *Life, Above All*
6:30 pm *Leaves of Grass*
9:30 pm *I Am Love*

Sunday, May 1, 2011

Noon *Louder Than a Bomb*

SPECIAL POST-FESTIVAL SCREENING

Sunday, May 1, 2011

4:00 pm *Louder Than a Bomb*

The Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance is pleased to announce that they will have a special showing of LOUDER THAN A BOMB immediately following the close of Ebertfest (May 1). The Anti-Stigma Alliance is a community collaboration which works to address and challenge the negative impact of stigma. This screening will be at the Virginia Theatre at 4:00 pm and it will be free to the public.

LIVE WDWS ON-AIR INTERVIEW

Please Tune In to WDWS-AM 1400!

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

9:00 am - 10:00 am
Jim Turpin's (WDWS) Ebertfest Interview

ACADEMIC PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Thursday, April 28, 2011

9:00 am - 10:15 am
Personal Stories in Film
Moderated by **Eric Pierson**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 am - 11:45 am
Far Flung Correspondents: International Perspectives in Film Criticism
Moderated by **Omer Mozaffar**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

Friday, April 29, 2011

9:00 am - 10:15 am
Ebert Presents: Reinventing the TV Show in the Digital Age
Moderated by **Chaz Ebert**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

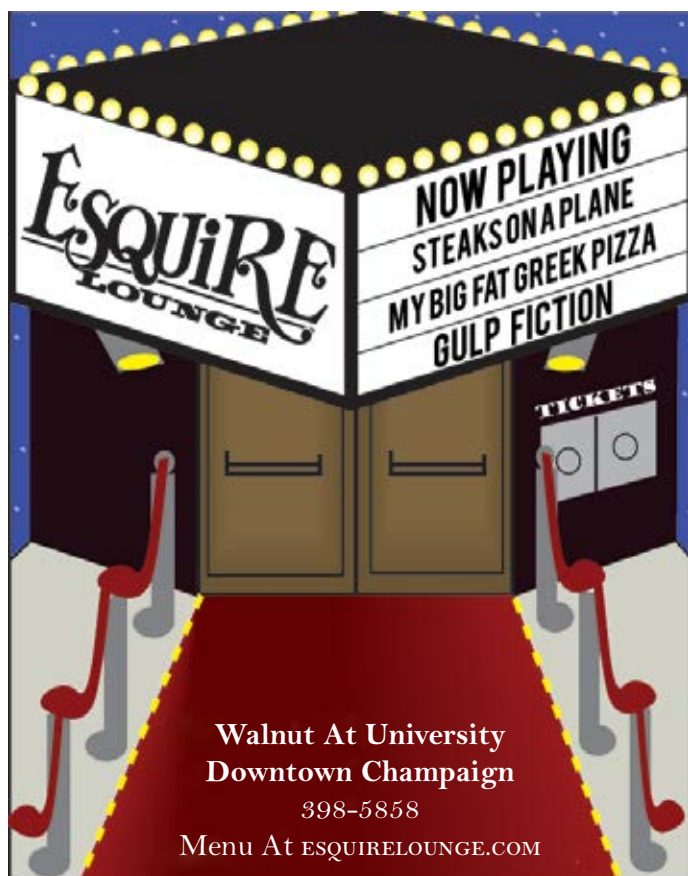
10:30 am - 11:45 am
Choices: The Movies We Make, the Roles We Play
Moderated by **Nate Kohn**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

WORKSHOP

Free and open to the public

Saturday, April 30, 2011

9:00 am - 10:30 am
An Amateur Guide to No-Budget Filmmaking
Filmmaking for the Rest of Us
Moderated by **Don Tingle**
Illini Union/General Lounge, 2nd Floor



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Independent
student news
organization



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University of
Illinois
Yearbook



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engineering
magazine



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entertainment
magazine



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illini**MEDIA**

welcome



to the 13th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival

This year's festival is dedicated to

Claude Chabrol

Jill Clayburgh

Tony Curtis

Blake Edwards

Dennis Hopper

Sidney Lumet

Arthur Penn

From Roger Ebert

The long-term renovation of our treasured Virginia Theatre continues this year with restoration of the lobby, the concession stand and the upstairs lobby. The marquee is a work in progress. The preservation of theaters like this is invaluable; such buildings will never again be constructed, and most of our filmmakers will never have seen their films with such a large audience. In all the moments of Ebertfest, surely one of the most magical was when we showed "Singin' in the Rain" and Donald O'Connor walked onstage and said, "You know, I danced on this stage in vaudeville." Here, too, did the Marx Brothers perform, and Houdini demonstrated his amazing escapes. With the passing in March 2011 of Houdini's last living stage assistant, his secrets have now joined him in his grave.

We have an exceptional schedule this year, and a remarkable group of guests. The festival always threatens to burst out of the time we have available, and again

this year director Nate Kohn and I squeezed in one extra film. I was in Austin to be on the jury of the SXSW® Festival, saw Robbie Pickering's "Natural Selection," and couldn't resist adding it to this year's list.

Our guests this year include old friends like Norman Jewison and the Alloy Orchestra, good friends like Richard Linklater and Tim Blake Nelson, and one who has a special significance for me, Jon Siskel, Gene's nephew. But in terms of evoking the purpose of a festival like this, none is more inspiring than Tilda Swinton.

Yes, we know she is a great actress. But let me tell you the story of Tilda's Magical Perambulating Film Festival. Inspired perhaps by our friend Werner Herzog (who hauled a boat up a hill), in 2009 she took her own film festival on the road, joining 40 other film lovers in physically hauling a 33-ton portable cinema through her Scottish Highlands to show independent films in a different village every night. I now attach a photograph of her in this heroic enterprise.

Let me just briefly tell you about the new discoveries and some old rediscoveries we have for you this year, in the order of their screenings:

Fritz Lang's complete "Metropolis" (1927) was long thought to be lost, but in 2008 a nearly complete 16mm print was miraculously discovered in Buenos Aires, and we will see it this year with a new score created by the Alloy Orchestra. Our good friend David Bordwell calls it "one of the great sacred monsters of the cinema."

Robbie Pickering's "Natural Selection" so impressed our jury at SXSW® that we gave it the Grand Jury Prize--along with prizes for editing, sound, screenplay, and two breakthrough performances. Then it added the festival's Audience Award. No, it's not about Darwin's Theory...or perhaps in a way it is. It's about a dogged, lovable woman who wants her husband's child in one way or another. I met Pickering and his star Rachael Harris in Austin, liked them instantly, and am delighted they'll be joining us in person. Harris is an experienced actress,

but she won a "breakthrough award" because we jurors felt "Natural Selection" displayed a side of her talent we hadn't seen before.

Older films have always had an important role at Ebertfest, and when I saw "My Dog Tulip" by Paul and Sandra Fierlinger I not only fell in love with it but was reminded of Vittorio De Sica's classic "Umberto D." (1952).

When you see the two films you will understand why. "My Dog Tulip" was inspired by a book I have much love for, and the Fierlingers bring it to life with animation of such life and vibrancy it's a reminder of how limited much recent animation has been.

I know what the budget was for Lena Dunham's "Tiny Furniture," but I'm not saying. Films don't get points for being inexpensive, but for being good. In this film, Durham is uncanny in the way she evokes the daily lives of her characters, whose relationships are far too complex to be broken down in simple ways. It has humor that's not made, but found. It includes a sex scene that is



Screen queen Tilda Swinton hauling a 33-ton portable cinema through Scotland for her independent film festival in 2009.

convincing despite taking place in an unutterably depressing venue. It speaks to a common problem: After college – what do you do then? The actors David Call and Alex Karpovsky and producer Kyle Martin will join us.

“45365” is the zip code of Sidney, Ohio, a town that has much to remind me of the Urbana I grew up in. The brothers Turner and Bill Ross grew up in Sidney, and were apparently such familiar faces that they were able to film this documentary over the course of a year while sometimes being all but invisible. There are shots where you feel the camera must not have been present. One of my favorite elements in the show is Sidney’s local radio station, which reminds me of WDWS and our friend Jim Turpin. It is a local station, deeply involved, not a purveyor of mass-marketed formulas. The Ross brothers will be joining us.

Richard Linklater is one of the directors I admire most; I was about to call him a “new director,” and then realized how long he’s been around while always seeming to reinvent himself. His “Me and Orson Welles” is, I think, one of the best films imaginable about the theater and its combination of hard work and ego. Orson Welles has fascinated me from the days when the Urbana High School science-fiction club recreated his “War of the Worlds” broadcast and when I first saw “Citizen Kane” in the Art Theater. Here is the very young Welles, extravagantly gifted, supremely self-confident. Linklater will join us.

I met Norman Jewison very early in my work as a film critic, and he has been a steadfast friend of 40 years. He is also a great director and an exemplary citizen of Movie Nation. The first time I did a stop-action analysis of a film using a LaserDisc, it was at the Canadian Center for Advanced Film Study, which he founded and funded in Toronto. Jewison has made many wonderful movies, but “Only You” holds a special place in my heart. Ebertfest began as the “Overlooked Film Festival,” and it strikes me that “Only You”

is not nearly as well known as it deserves to be. Here is an embracing, joyous story of love and fate, starring Marisa Tomei and Robert Downey Jr. near the dawns of their remarkable careers. It’s a reminder of how much genuine pleasure a movie can provide. Norman has been so kind as to join us. He is one of the best storytellers I know.

I saw “A Small Act” at Sundance 2010, and was powerfully struck by it. This documentary by Jennifer Arnold and Patti Lee begins with a small gesture of kindness on the part of a woman in Sweden, and widens into an incalculable portrait of the happiness she brings about. It shows a community transformed. In a time when goodness seems everywhere under threat, it shines with hope. I met the filmmakers at Sundance, and I was also so lucky as

truly remarkable. Yes, it has a “double role” for Edward Norton, but this isn’t an occasion for special effects; it’s a collaboration by Norton and Nelson to make twins who are distinguishable from the inside out. The movie is funny, heartfelt, surprising, and a virtuoso example of overcoming technical difficulties with its brilliance of vision. Tim Blake Nelson will be with us.

I have been guilty of referring to Tilda Swinton as Saint Tilda, because if there were a movie heaven she is the saint to whom I would direct my prayers. Here is a woman who is fearless, boundlessly talented, and just plain a nice person. There’s no showbiz edge to her. She’s all about the work. Without regard for “career choices,” and no doubt to the despair of her agents, she has steadfastly chosen daring projects

We have an exceptional schedule this year and a remarkable group of guests.

to meet and be overpowered and charmed by the remarkable Hilde Back. I am incredibly honored she will grace us with her presence. Filmmakers Jennifer Arnold and Patti Lee will also be with us.

At Cannes 2010 I saw the world premiere of Oliver Schmitz’s “Life, Above All.” The audience in the Theatre Lumiere rose up as one person to cheer it. Looking across the aisle from my seat, I was struck by the joy of the filmmakers, who had created something so good that was so worth doing. Especially given South Africa’s official approach until recently about AIDS, this film carries an urgent message. We will be joined by its exciting young star Khomotso Manyaka and director Oliver Schmitz at what, it turns out, is the film’s US Premiere!

Tim Blake Nelson is well-known as an actor, but deserves equal fame as a director. I’ve admired every one of his films, particularly the harrowing Holocaust drama “The Grey Zone” (2001). Now comes “Leaves of Grass,” which I saw at Toronto 2009 and found

on the basis of her faith in their directors. As a result, she has the most impressive filmography of her generation. “I Am Love” strikes me as one of the truest films ever made about eroticism and identity. Saint Tilda will be here with us on the stage Donald O’Connor blessed for her.

I met Jon Siskel long ago, when he was one of “Gene’s nephews.” He has grown into a considerable filmmaker. His “Louder Than a Bomb” was a labor of love filmed over some years, challenging many accepted ideas about inner city high schools and the whole half-understood but quickly-growing world of Poetry Slams (which began in Chicago, by the way). Jon and his co-director Greg Jacobs will be with us, and their extraordinary film will be followed by a live performance by a team of poets from Steinmetz High School.

If you’re reading this while in your seat, take a look around. Scattered through the audience (some in the first row every year with our special friends David

Bordwell and Kristin Thompson) are many of the Far-Flung Correspondents who contribute to my website, several of the special contributors to “Ebert Presents” on TV, and a good many film critics and bloggers. Chat them up. They’re interesting.

New to the Far-Flung ranks this year are Pablo Villaca, one of Brazil’s best known critics, Krishna Shenoi from India, Olivia Collette from Canada, and Anath White from Los Angeles. Back again to see old friends are Ali Arikan from Turkey, Michael Mirasol from the Philippines, Gerardo Valero from Mexico and Omer Mozaffar from Chicago, who will moderate the FFC panel discussion. Grace Wang will arrive a little late, having just been at the Hong Kong Film Festival as an Associate Programmer for the Toronto Film Festival. Remember Wael Khairy from Egypt, who outsmarted the volcano and arrived late last year? He was planning to come again, but says Egypt is a little too exciting to leave right now.

Speaking of film festivals, Janet Pierson is returning for her second year. She’s the director of SXSW®, which has exploded on three fronts—movies, music and interactive media.

Chaz is the producer of “Ebert Presents.” She and I will be proudly introducing our co-hosts, Christy Lemire and Ignatiy Vishnevetsky, and several of our contributors: Alison Bailes, Dann Gire, Omar Moore, Kartina Richardson, Matt Zoller Seitz and Matt Singer.

Don’t be a stranger. Tell them they’re going straight to the pool room.

Chaz has been my right hand in the planning of Ebertfest 2011. Nobody will ever know how hard Nate Kohn and Mary Susan Britt and her staff work on the festival. Nate, an Urbana native, now professor at the University of Georgia and administrator of the Peabody Awards, helps me choose the films. He obtains the prints and permissions. He and Mary Susan work with our guardian angel, Mary Frances Fagan of American

continued on next page

Welcome from Roger Ebert

continued from previous page

Airlines, to arrange transportation here. Mary Frances is another C-U native, so you can see we haven't forgotten our roots.

Steven Bentz and his cheerful staff at the Virginia Theatre put out the welcome mat. The Champaign Park District and the Champaign Police Department are always helpful. Local volunteers act as drivers and guides for our guests. Betsy Hendrick throws her now-legendary Saturday night party. Where would we be without our fabled projectionists James Bond and Steve Kraus, who bring their own digital projectors to complement the theater's vintage 35/70mm projectors? A shout-out to our good friend Bertha Mitchell, who serves her famous downstate barbeque from the tent in front of the theater. Try it! You'll like it! The Illini Union plays host for all of our guests in the heart of the campus.

A friend not with us this year is Professor Edwin Jahiel, whose

Our festival couldn't happen without our dedicated sponsors and volunteers. We thank them all for their loyalty and continuing support.

film courses were so important for many years at the University. I met him many years ago when he reviewed movies for The News-Gazette, and we had long talks over the years. He sponsored a film series at the Library, flying the flag after film societies began to die because of home video. I saw him with Milos Stehlik of "Facets at Cannes" every year. He could always be counted on for pointed and sometimes irascible contributions to the Q&As. I miss him.

I'm very pleased that the noble and nearby Art Theater will be a part of Ebertfest this year. San-


ford Hess will be booking several titles from this and previous festivals, chosen in discussion with Nate and me. These titles were selected for their special appeal, and will extend the range of choices available. At a time when the exhibition of art and independent films is in jeopardy, the Art Theater is an essential resource for Champaign-Urbana.

Our sponsors and volunteers make the festival possible. Many sponsors have been with us all 13 years; some are with us for the first time this year. Volunteers serve in many ways, including

serving as drivers and guides for festival guests. Our festival couldn't happen without our dedicated sponsors and volunteers. We thank them all for their loyalty and continuing support.

The festival is a production of the College of Media of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, whose dean, Jan Slater, has been generous in her support and encouragement. Laurel, Steve, Kacie and Layla at Leone Advertising are webmasters for ebertfest.com; Carlton Bruett is responsible for the posters and the look of the festival; The Daily Illini, my other alma mater, produces this splendid program. A special thank you to our leading sponsor, the Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance.

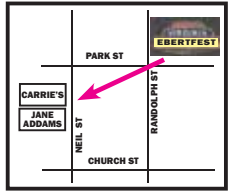
And very special thanks to University President Michael Hogan and his wife, Virginia, and Chancellor Robert Easter and his wife, Cheryl, for their generous support.



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greetings

from President Michael J. Hogan

Welcome to the 13th edition of "Ebertfest"!

Most people probably don't realize it, but the University of Illinois has contributed as much to movies as Spielberg, Pixar and popcorn.

Sound on film revolutionized movie-making, and traces its roots to U of I Engineering Professor Joseph Tykociner, who invented image-and-audio film and unveiled it to the world in 1922. Two-time Oscar winner Gene Hackman and Academy



UI President Michael J. Hogan

Award-winning director Ang Lee are among the movie legends who used the U of I as a springboard to Hollywood.

The university played a sup-

porting role in yet another big-screen splash in 1967, when U of I graduate Roger Ebert launched a film review column in the Chicago Sun-Times that has earned him a Pulitzer Prize, a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame and a long career on television that has made him America's best-known and most beloved movie critic.

Over the last four-plus decades, the Urbana native has never forgotten the town where he grew up or the university where he sharpened the skills that made him a household name.

Thirteen years ago, Roger donated his name and talent to create "Ebertfest," which quick-

ly became Champaign-Urbana's best-known festival and was voted one of the nation's "25 Coolest Film Festivals" in 2009 by MovieMaker, a leading magazine on filmmaking.

Roger and his wife, Chaz, crafted the event to showcase overlooked classics from Roger's personal must-see list. In the process, they also have created a showcase for Roger's alma mater and his hometown, drawing invaluable national attention and thousands of viewers every year.

Welcome to the 13th edition of "Ebertfest," and enjoy the show. And if you see Roger and Chaz, be sure to give them two thumbs up.



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from **The College of Media**

Welcoming Ebert and fans for 5 days of great film appreciation

Jan Slater

Interim Dean, College of Media

Welcome to Ebertfest! What could possibly be better than five days of movies (chosen by your favorite critic), hanging with people who love the movies as you do, engaging with those who direct or write or act in the movies, watching the movies with your favorite critic (and his lovely wife), watching great movies in a great theater, and eating lots and lots of popcorn? The answer: Absolutely nothing.

Ebertfest is a special time here at the University of Illinois and

is one of the most anticipated events in Champaign-Urbana. It's a special time – not because of the incredible movies and the glitz and glamour of the celebrities (although it is pretty cool). It is a special time because we welcome home our native son and alumnus – Roger Ebert. For years, Roger has provided us greater insights and appreciation for movies in general. But with Ebertfest, Roger gives us a very personal experience with each film and exposes us to old releases in a new and magical way. There is just no better way to enjoy the art of film.

We, in College of Media at the University of Illinois, are proud

to be your host for the next few days. Our pride is only intensified by 13 years of success and the far-reaching effects of Ebertfest, which draws people from around the country and around the globe, making Ebertfest a truly international film festival.

Many thanks to Roger and Chaz. Thank you for your loyalty to the college, the university and the city. We are grateful for your dedication and enthusiasm that makes this event possible every year. And thank you for sharing your love of the movies with us. This event is organized and orchestrated by Mary Susan Britt – whose tireless efforts make ev-

everything run smoothly and calmly. Thanks to our own Dr. Nate Kohn, who has been our festival director since the very first Ebertfest. And many thanks to our sponsors who keep coming back each year, and to the hundreds of volunteers who do whatever needs to be done.

Most of all, thanks to you, the moviegoers. Your love of the art of storytelling and filmmaking encourages us to make every Ebertfest bigger and better. Thank you for joining us for this annual tribute to great movies and a great movie critic. Welcome to the 13th Annual Ebertfest.

Enjoy the show!

Embrace the beauty and hard work of 13th Film Festival

Nate Kohn

Festival Director

It is a great privilege to welcome you to the thirteenth Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival, a special event of the University of Illinois' College of Media in partnership with the greater Champaign-Urbana community and lovers of movies everywhere.

Our festival has changed little over the years, remaining true to Roger's original vision: the celebration and shared enjoyment of great movies, as they were meant to be seen by those who made them. Ebertfest is all about the films. We give no prizes, have no categories, and no business is done at our festival. That's how we conceived the festival and that's how it still is today.

In 1997, when Roger hosted a screening of "2001: A Space Odyssey" at the Virginia Theatre as part of the University's birthday

party for HAL the computer, we got to talking about what makes a successful film festival. We agreed that movies are best seen on a really large screen. And watching a movie is not something to be done alone—it is a communal activity, bringing together friends and strangers in a mutual emotional adventure. When we sit in the darkened Virginia, both alone and together, we enter another world, transported for a couple of hours from the routines of our everyday lives into the wondrous dreamscapes of shared imagination.

That is what this festival is all about – about sharing, and community, and Roger Ebert, and the love of great movies.

Together at this festival, we are seeing – and by seeing, we are celebrating – movies that Roger considers worthy of our full attention, films that reveal and reflect the wonder of the human condition. We are honored to bring

these movies to you, to share Roger's choices with you.

And we are seeing them as the women and men who made them intended them to be seen -- with state-of-the-art projection and sound on a screen the full width of the Virginia Theatre. For that, we thank our cinema designer James Bond, projectionist Steve Kraus, and all the people at the Virginia Theatre and the Champaign Park District. We are particularly pleased this year to show off the theatre's restored lobby area in the continuing refurbishing of this magnificent movie palace.

We also thank Michael Barker of Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Pictures, Rialto Pictures, New Yorker Films, Ryan Werner of IFC, 7th Arts Releasing, Alloy Orchestra, Kino International, Siskel/Jacob Productions, Patti Lee and Jennifer Arnold, First Look Pictures, Detour Filmproduction, and Magnolia Pictures for graciously providing

us with their very best 35mm prints and digital masters.

I also want to thank all of our sponsors, volunteers, festival pass holders and individual ticket holders for their welcome participation in this endeavor. We look forward to their unwavering support, and yours, as our festival continues to blossom each year in the Central Illinois spring.

Finally, I want to recognize Associate Festival Director Mary Susan Britt, Dean Jan Slater, and President Michael J. Hogan, without whose hard work and enthusiastic support this festival would not be possible.

This festival is Roger Ebert's gift to his hometown, and for that we thank him and his wife Chaz. They are a remarkable team, and it is an honor to work with them.

So as the lights dim and the curtains open, please sit back and let the festival once again embrace you.

FILM FESTIVAL DEDICATION

It's Roger Ebert's film festival and he chooses everything about it, from the films being shown to who the festival will be dedicated to. Traditionally the festival is dedicated to late members of the world of cinema. Those whom the festival is dedicated to this year range from actors to producers to directors whose work is famous both in America and around the world. The 13th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival is dedicated to *Claude Chabrol, Jill Clayburgh, Tony Curtis, Blake Edwards, Dennis Hopper, Sidney Lumet* and *Arthur Penn*.

JillCLAYBURGH

American actress

April 30, 1944 - November 5, 2010

Breakthrough movie:

"The Wedding Party"
1969

Other popular movies:

"An Unmarried Woman"
1978
"Starting Over" 1979
"First Monday in
October" 1981
"I'm Dancing as Fast as I
Can" 1982

Last movie acted in:

"Bridesmaids" 2011

Awards:

Best Actress at Cannes
Film Festival in 1978 for
"An Unmarried Woman."



Nominated for Best
Actress at the Academy
Awards in 1978 for "An
Unmarried Woman" and
1979 for "Starting Over."

Other facts:

Appeared on several TV
shows and on Broadway.

ClaudeCHABROL

French film director, actor, writer, producer

June 24, 1930 - September 12, 2010

Breakthrough movie:

"Le Beau Serge" 1958

Other popular movies:

"Le Boucher" 1970
"Masques" 1987
"Madame Bovary" 1991
"La Ceremonie" 1996

Last movie directed:

"Bellamy" 2009

Awards:

Priz Rene clair from
the Academie Fracaise
for his body of work in
1995.

Lifetime Achievement
Award in 2003 from the
European Film Awards.



Other facts:

Chabrol made an average
of at least one movie
a year from his debut
in 1958 to his death in
2010.

Was inspired by the
famous work of Alfred
Hitchcock.

TonyCURTIS

American actor

June 3, 1925 - September 29, 2010

Breakthrough movie:

"Sweet Smell of Success"
1957

Other popular movies:

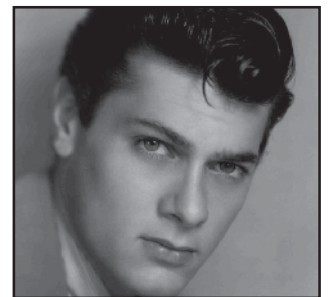
"The Defiant Ones" 1958
"Some Like It Hot" 1959
"Spartacus" 1960
"Sex and the Single Girl"
1964

Last movie directed:

"The Jill and Tony Curtis
Story " 2008

Awards:

Nominated for Best
Actor at the Academy
Awards in 1958 for "The
Defiant Ones."



Other facts:

Born with the name
Bernard Herschel
Schwartz.

Elvis Presley reportedly
copied his duck-tail
hairstyle after seeing it
on screen.

FILM FESTIVAL DEDICATION

Blake EDWARDS

Film director, screenwriter and producer

July 26, 1922 - December 15, 2010

Breakthrough movie:

"Operation Petticoat"
1959

Other popular movies:

"Breakfast at Tiffany's"
1961
"The Pink Panther" 1963
"Darling Lili" 1969
"Victor Victoria" 1982

Last movie directed:

"Son of the Pink
Panther" 1993

Awards:

Laurel Award for Screen
Writing Achievement
from the Writer's Guild
America in 2002.



Life Career Award from
the Academy of Science
Fiction, Fantasy and
Horror in 2004.

Other facts:

Married to Julie Andrews
for more than 40 years.

Dennis HOPPER

Film director and producer

May 17, 1936 - May 29, 2010

Breakthrough movie:

"Rebel Without a Cause"
1955

Other popular movies:

"True Grit" 1969
"Easy Rider" 1969
"Hoosiers" 1986
"Blue Velvet" 1986

Last movie acted:

"Alpha and Omega" 2010

Awards:

Best First Work at
Cannes Film Festival for
"Easy Rider" in 1969.

Best Actor from
Montreal World Film
Festival for "Blue



Velvet" in 1986

Other facts:

Filmed movies in over 22
countries.

Was a prolific
photographer, painter,
poet and collector of
art.

Sidney LUMET

Film director, producer and screenwriter

June 25, 1924 - April 9, 2011

Breakthrough movie:

"12 Angry Men" 1957

Other popular movies:

"The Pawnbroker" 1966
"Serpico" 1973
"Murder on the Orient
Express" 1974
"Dog Day Afternoon"
1975
"The Wiz" 1978

Last movie directed:

"Before the Devil Knows
You're Dead" 2007

Awards:

Academy Award for
Lifetime Achievement in
2005. Nominated for best
director at the Oscars



4 times including "12
Angry Men" 1957, "Dog
Day Afternoon" 1975,
"Network" 1976 and "The
Verdict" 1982.

Other facts:

Began his career as an
off-Broadway and TV
director.

Arthur PENN

Film director and producer

September 27, 1922 - September 28, 2010

Breakthrough movie:

"The Left Handed Gun"
1958

Other popular movies:

"The Miracle Worker" 1962
"Bonnie and Clyde" 1967
"Alice's Restaurant" 1969
"Little Big Man" 1970

Last movie directed:

"Penn & Teller Get Killed"
1989

Awards:

Career Achievement
Award from LA Film
Critics Association in
2002.

Nominated for best



director at the Oscars
3 times: "The Miracle
Worker" 1962; "Bonnie
and Clyde" 1967; "Alice's
Restaurant" 1969.

Other facts:

Later in life became an
executive producer for
"Law & Order."

schedule



of events for **Roger Ebert's Film Festival**

Presented by the College of Media **April 27-May 1, 2011**

FILM SCREENINGS AT THE VIRGINIA THEATRE

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

7:00 pm *Metropolis*
10:30 pm *Natural Selection*

Thursday, April 28, 2011

1:00 pm *Umberto D*
3:30 pm *My Dog Tulip*
8:00 pm *Tiny Furniture*

Friday, April 29, 2011

1:00 pm *45365*
4:00 pm *Me and Orson Welles*
8:30 pm *Only You*

Saturday, April 30, 2011

11:00 am *A Small Act*
2:00 pm *Life, Above All*
6:30 pm *Leaves of Grass*
9:30 pm *I Am Love*

Sunday, May 1, 2011

Noon *Louder Than a Bomb*

All films will be shown at the Historic Virginia Theatre, 203 W. Park Ave., Champaign, IL. Roger and festival guests will appear on stage after each film to join the audience in discussions about the films. Festival passes (\$135), individual tickets (\$13) and student & senior citizen tickets (\$11) are on sale at the Virginia Theatre box office, at 217-356-9063.

For more information contact:

Mary Susan Britt at marsue@illinois.edu or 217-244-0552
College of Media

Go to www.ebertfest.com to read our **Official Festival Blog** by Roger Ebert's Far Flung Correspondents and others.

SPECIAL POST-FESTIVAL SCREENING

Sunday, May 1, 2011

4:00 pm *Louder Than a Bomb*

The Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance is pleased to announce that they will have a special showing of *LOUDER THAN A BOMB* immediately following the close of Ebertfest (May 1). The Anti-Stigma Alliance is a community collaboration which works to address and challenge the negative impact of stigma. This screening will be at the Virginia Theatre at 4:00 pm and it will be free to the public.

LIVE WDWS ON-AIR INTERVIEW

Please Tune In to WDWS-AM 1400!

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

9:00 am - 10:00 am
Jim Turpin's (WDWS) Ebertfest Interview

ACADEMIC PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Illini Union

1401 Green Street, Urbana, IL
Free and open to the public

Thursday, April 28, 2011

9:00 am - 10:15 am

Personal Stories in Film

Moderated by **Eric Pierson**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 am - 11:45 am

Far Flung Correspondents: International Perspectives in Film Criticism

Moderated by **Omer Mozaffar**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

ACADEMIC PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Friday, April 29, 2011

9:00 am – 10:15 am

Ebert Presents: Reinventing the TV Show in the Digital Age

Moderated by **Chaz Ebert**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30am -11:45 am

Choices: The Movies We Make, the Roles We Play

Moderated by **Nate Kohn**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

DIRECTIONS TO THE PANEL DISCUSSIONS:

From the Virginia Theatre to the Illini Union:

- Turn RIGHT onto N. NEIL STREET
- Turn LEFT onto E. SPRINGFIELD AVENUE
- Turn RIGHT onto S. WRIGHT STREET
- Turn LEFT onto W. GREEN STREET
- The Illini Union will be on the right.

WORKSHOP

Free and open to the public

Saturday, April 30, 2011

9:00 am -10:30 am

An Amateur Guide to No-Budget Filmmaking *Filmmaking for the Rest of Us*

Moderated by **Don Tingle**
Illini Union/General Lounge, 2nd Floor

Everyone has a story to tell, but not everyone has the skills to tell it in movie form. You will learn those skills at this workshop. Shooting and editing a short film is within reach of anyone with access to a video camera and a computer. The techniques you will learn apply to both narrative fiction and documentary filmmaking with emphasis on short films. Many film festivals and on-line film communities provide opportunities for amateur and beginning filmmakers to screen their short films. This workshop is open to novice and experienced filmmakers of all ages.

This workshop provides a basic overview of the amateur, no-budget filmmaking process. Filmmaking can be complicated, but you'll learn to break it down into small steps. You'll learn how to organize your story, plan the production, and shoot and edit your film using simple techniques. You'll learn low and no cost ways to give your short film a professional look, and how to overcome many of the technical obstacles to filmmaking.

Mr. Don Tingle is the Workshop Director for the Alabama Filmmakers Co-op. Don has presented over 90 workshops on various aspects of low budget and amateur moviemaking for the North Alabama community and multiple regional film festivals. Don has served as host and moderator for panel discussions at festivals and has interviewed actors, screenwriters and filmmakers. Don created and operates a filmmaking summer day camp for kids and is programmer and host of Huntsville's annual Rocket City Short Film Festival.

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The 1923 local film
"The City Beyond"
co-starred
Frank K. Robeson Jr.
& hundreds of extras
from our area.
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and at Chanute Field,
it was shown at the
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"the coolest spot in
Champaign County."
Ticket prices 13-44¢

Photos from the
Champaign County
Historical Archives

Course in Local Theatrical
Film Picture Made Thriller

Frank K. Robeson Jr.
as Jack Wadell

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Renovations bring local treasure back to life



The Virginia Theatre in downtown Champaign has been a staple of the community for 90 years and has been undergoing renovations over the past few years. The Virginia is home to the 13th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival.

By Melissa Silverberg, Daily Illini Staff Writer

Celebrating 90 years in 2011, the Virginia Theatre has been undergoing another series of renovations to restore the Champaign landmark to its original greatness.

The theater, which hosted its first show in 1921, has housed performers such as Charlie Chaplin, the Marx Brothers and more recently the annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival, which is hosted at the Virginia every year.

"I grew up going to the Virginia, which along with the Rialto always showed the top movies," Ebert said in an e-mail interview. "It was to me a palace — the grandest building in town."

Although the theater first opened as a vaudeville house, it has hosted live performances, newly released movies and even concerts to thousands of patrons over the past 90 years.

"My dad told me he saw Harry Houdini and the Marx Brothers there," Ebert said. "Theaters like that are no longer built. When a community has one, it's a treasure."

Many in the Champaign-Urbana community including local residents and the Champaign Park District have been involved with the updates.

Renovations to the lobby area were paid for by a \$1 million gift from the late Michael Carragher.

The blue and yellow neon sign outside the Virginia Theatre was taken down in November as part of the renovations and there are plans to replace it with a rectangular sign that more closely resembles the marquee above the original theater in the 1920s.

Members of the Champaign Park District said that the change will make the theater look more like it did when

Theaters like that are no longer built. When a community has one, it's a treasure.

- Roger Ebert -

it first opened, but several historic preservation activists in Champaign-Urbana were unhappy with the removal of the sign that had been in place since the 1940s.

Over the next few months there will be renovations to the upstairs bathrooms. Other upgrades in the works include painting for the main auditorium and updating the structure of the stage and dressing rooms.

Down the line the facility's seating may also need to be restored or replaced. The Virginia

Theatre seats a little over 1,500 patrons.

An open house in March gave visitors a first hand look at the most recent renovations, but visitors to the 13th annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival will enjoy the updates during the five days of movie screenings.

"I've been watching the renovations as a work in progress," Ebert said. "Slowly but surely, something wonderful is being restored."



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information



what you need to know about the Festival

TICKET INFORMATION

- A Festival pass to all 13 screenings is \$135.
- Individual tickets are \$13, student and senior citizen tickets are \$11.
- Festival passes and tickets are available at the Virginia Theatre, 217-356-9063 or www.thevirginia.org
- Festival passes can be purchased online at www.ebertfest.com through Ticketweb.
- All the films are screened at the historic Virginia Theatre, 203 W. Park Ave., Champaign, IL.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Panel discussions will be held at the Illini Union, 1401 W. Green St., Urbana, IL in the Pine Lounge on the 1st floor and the General Lounge on the 2nd floor.

- Thursday, April 28
- Friday, April 29
- Saturday, April 30

FESTIVAL UPDATES

Updated schedules and information will be posted on the festival's website: www.ebertfest.com.

THEATRE GUIDELINES

- Theatre doors will open **ONE HOUR** prior to the **FIRST** screening of the day. This applies to everyone (all passholders - VIP and Festival - and individual ticket holders).
- Seating for each film will begin approximately 30 minutes before each screening time. Seating is general admission only. NOTE: Some seats will be reserved for special guests of the festival. Please respect the designated areas.

- Only festival passholders are allowed in the theatre between screenings. Please wear and have your pass visible at all times! Festival staff will be checking for them.

- A festival pass guarantees seating to all 13 screenings. Shortly before each film begins, any empty seats will be sold to individual ticket holders waiting in line. Latecomers cannot be guaranteed admittance. NOTE: Passholders — please arrive 15 minutes before each screening.

- Passes/tickets cannot be refunded or exchanged.

- The Virginia Theatre is equipped with wheelchair-accessible restrooms and adjacent companion seating. The Virginia Theatre has five slots for wheelchair patrons. Please call the theatre 217-356-9063 before the festival begins to arrange seating. NOTE: For every patron in a wheelchair only one companion may accompany a person requiring a wheelchair spot. All other accompanying patrons will need to sit elsewhere.

- Assisted listening devices are available upon request at the Virginia Theatre. A single earpiece bud, ear speaker, or neck loop may be used by a patron to help enhance their enjoyment of the performance. Devices may be obtained at the box office before the show, and a personal credit card or driver's license will be held by the theatre staff until the device is returned at the completion of the performance. For specific questions about the assisted listening devices, please call the box office at 217-356-9063.

- Smoking is prohibited in the Virginia Theatre.

FESTIVAL MERCHANDISE

During the festival, you'll find great merchandise in the east lobby of the Virginia Theatre.

SOLD OUT FILMS

If you want to see a film that is sold out, go to the Virginia Theatre Box Office 30 minutes before the screening time and wait in the rush ticket line. Shortly before the film begins, any empty seats will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. **NOTE:** At every festival since 2002, all patrons waiting in line for tickets for sold out films were able to get in.

TICKET POLICY

The number of festival passes sold is limited to 1000. An additional 500 seats are reserved for individual ticket holders and sponsors. We want to make sure that everyone who wants to attend the festival — be it for one film or all of them — can be accommodated.

NO RECORDING, PLEASE...

Copyright law strictly prohibits the use of any type of unauthorized video or sound recording equipment (including cell phones).

All Q&A sessions and panel discussions will be streamed live on the Internet at www.ebertfest.com

13th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival 2011
April 27-May 1
Virginia Theatre
203 W. Park Ave.
Champaign, Illinois

ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF MEDIA
EBERTFEST PASSES ARE SOLD OUT!
Individual tickets go on sale April 4th

Roger's Welcome Message to the 2011 Festival
The long-term restoration of our beloved Virginia Theatre continues this year with restoration of the lobby, the concession stand and the upstairs lobby. The marquee is a work in progress. The preservation of theaters like this is invaluable, such buildings will never again be constructed, and most of our filmmakers will never have seen their time with such a large audience. Read more...

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www.ebertfest.com

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY **Anti-Stigma**

ALLIANCE

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Anti Stigma Events:

"LOUDER THAN A BOMB"

DURING THE 13TH ANNUAL
ROGER EBERT'S FILM FESTIVAL

"LOUDER THAN A BOMB"

VIRGINIA THEATRE, FREE TO THE PUBLIC
MAY 1, 2011, 4:00PM



**CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS WEEK**
MAY 2-8, 2011

MENTAL HEALTH LOBBY DAY

MAY 12, 2011, RALLY IN SPRINGFIELD 2:00PM

5TH ANNUAL DISABILITY RESOURCE EXPO
LINCOLN SQUARE VILLAGE
OCTOBER 22, 2011 9:00AM - 2:00PM



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Support Funding for Disability Services

The Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance is a community collaboration which works to address and challenge the negative impact of stigma. The Alliance has used films as a way to increase dialogue in our community about stigma and how it affects people with disabilities.

dining tips



Festival restaurant sponsors

If it's mid-afternoon and you're hungry or if it's late night and you need a quick bite to eat ... Champaign-Urbana has dining options for everyone.

We greatly appreciate our generous restaurant sponsors and encourage you to join us in patronizing them, not only during the festival but throughout the year. They are our subjective favorites among the many great restaurants in the Champaign-Urbana area. For a more complete list, check out these websites:

the217.com Restaurant Guide:
the217.com/restaurants

Champaign/Urbana Dining Guide:
visitchampaigncounty.org

Boltini Lounge

<http://www.boltinilounge.com>
Boltini has quickly become de rigueur for downtown folks. Intimate seating and a beautiful interior soothe you as you peruse the best-chosen list of liquor in town. Light fare includes small plates, cheese plates, salad and soup, flat breads, tacos, sandwiches and desserts. Outside seating. 4:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. daily.

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Cowboy Monkey

<http://www.cowboy-monkey.com>
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2 E. Main Street, Champaign, IL
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Located in downtown Champaign, Jupiter's offers the perfect formula for a good time: beer, pizza and billiards! Our pizza was voted, "Best Pizza in Champaign-Urbana" in 2001. We offer traditional thin crust pizza as

well as gourmet specialty pizzas for the more adventurous. Enjoy our fine selection of domestic, imported and microbrewer beers. Open daily until 2:00 am.

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Seven Saints

If you are looking for the complete experience, you'll find it here. Conveniently located on University just east of Walnut Street, Seven Saints offers a great selection of salads, unique sliders, soups, and gourmet sandwiches all day long. But don't forget to check out our specialty entrees available at night. We also have an amazing array of liquors, beers, and wines to complement your meal. Open 11 am-2 am daily.

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Soma Ultra Lounge

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Congratulations Roger!

Thirty-five years ago Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel made history in Chicago with Sneak Previews, later to become Siskel & Ebert, Ebert & Roeper and At The Movies. On January 21, 2011, history was made again by bringing back one of the longest running shows in television history.

Watch it on
WILL-TV

Friday at 8:30 pm
Sunday at 1:00 am



Betsy
from Hendrick House

guests



A warm welcome to our 2011 Special Festival Guests

The following are invited special guests for the festival.

As always, their attendance is contingent on factors over which they have little control, such as unforeseen changes in their work schedule. But we hope that most, if not all, will be with us — plus additional surprise last-minute guests.

Metropolis

Wednesday, April 27, 7:00pm

THE ALLOY ORCHESTRA is a three-man musical ensemble, writing and performing live accompaniment to classic silent films. Working with an outrageous assemblage of peculiar objects, they thrash and grind soulful music from unlikely sources. Performing at prestigious film festivals and cultural centers in the US and abroad (The Telluride Film Festival, The Louvre, Lincoln Center, The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, the National Gallery of Art, and others), the Alloy Orchestra has helped revive some of the great masterpieces of the silent era.

An unusual combination of found percussion and state-of-the-art electronics gives the Orchestra the ability to create

any sound imaginable. Utilizing their famous "rack of junk" and electronic synthesizers, the group generates beautiful music in a spectacular variety of styles. They can conjure up a simple German bar band of the 1920s or a French symphony. The group can make the audience think it is being attacked by tigers, contacted by radio signals from Mars or swept up in the Russian Revolution.

Terry Donahue (junk percussion, accordion, musical saw, banjo), Roger Miller (synthesizer, percussion) and Ken Winokur (director, junk percussion and clarinet).

Natural Selection

Wednesday, April 27, 10:30pm

ROBBIE PICKERING (writer/director) grew up in Jersey Village, Texas, where he spent most Sundays in run-down churches with his mom. He went on to receive his undergraduate degree at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where he wrote and directed two short films, both of which won the Student Film Award at the Hamptons Film Festival. He was also awarded the Lew Wasserman Screenwriting Award at NYU for his work and went on to screen both films at festivals around the world.

After graduation, two of Pickering's commercials were selected to be honored at the annual Association of Independent Commercial Producer's Show in New York. Both spots were shown in gala screenings around the country at such venues as the New York Museum of Modern Art, the Dallas Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, and the LA County Museum of Art. The spots are now part of the MOMA's permanent collection in New York.

Natural Selection is Pickering's feature film directorial debut and went on to win an unprecedented seven awards at the 2011 SXSW® Film Festival, including the Grand Jury Prize for best narrative feature, the Audience Award, two jury prizes for breakthrough performances (for lead actors Rachael Harris and Matt O'Leary), best editing, best score, and best screenplay.

RACHAEL HARRIS (actor) stole her scenes as the pitch-perfect, irritating girlfriend of Ed Helms in the number one R-rated comedy of all time, *The Hangover*. She had previously co-starred with Helms as a correspondent on "The Daily Show." Harris starred opposite Steve Zahn in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* directed by Thor Freudenthal for Fox; and the just-released sequel, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules*. Other film credits include: *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind*, *For Your Consideration*, *Starsky & Hutch*, *Kicking & Screaming* and *Daddy Day Care*.

Her TV credits include CBS' "Gary Unmarried," guest starring on Starz's "Party Down" and playing Gary Cole's wife on "The Good Guys." Previously, Harris appeared on ABC's "Cougar Town" and Showtime's "Fat Actress." Rachael can next be seen on Fox's new comedy pilot "Family Album" with Mike O'Malley and Rob Huebel.

Harris also recently appeared in the Hollywood Bowl production of *Rent* in Los Angeles. She was born in Worthington, Ohio and currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

Umberto D

Thursday, April 28, 1:00pm

My Dog Tulip

Thursday, April 28, 3:30pm

PAUL FIERLINGER (director / animator / writer) was born in Ashiya, Japan in 1936 to Czechoslovakian diplomats, and spent his childhood years in New Hampshire and Vermont. From 1947-67, he lived in Communist Czechoslovakia, where he graduated from the Industrial School of Arts in Bechyne in 1955, after which he was conscripted into the People's Army of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic as a private in the 2nd Tank Division, Chemical Warfare Unit (1956-58). Fierlinger defected to the West in 1967, reached the US again in 1968, and settled in Philadelphia, where he has lived ever since. He became a naturalized US citizen in 1973.

He has been an independent animator and cartoonist of cultural periodicals since 1958, producing short films for Prague TV and Kratky Film. In the West, he continued to work as an independent animator in Paris, Hilversum, Munich, New York and Philadelphia. He has received numerous awards, including an Oscar® nomination, two Peabody awards, a Pew Fellowship in the Arts (PFA) grant for body of work, and over 100 major Animation Festival awards and honors internationally.

Fierlinger has produced over 800 films, including TV commercials and industrial films, educational and children's films, and films for ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, HBO, Showtime, "Sesame Street," Oxygen, Nickelodeon, MTV, Comcast and European networks.

His feature films include *Drawn From Memory* (1994) for PBS' American Playhouse, which received best TV feature award at Annecy, France, and *My Dog Tulip*, based on the book by J.R.

continued on next page

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Ackerley, and featuring the voices of Christopher Plummer, Lynne Redgrave, Isabella Rossellini and others. *My Dog Tulip* is currently in US distribution by New Yorker Films, will open in the UK in April, and will be released on DVD and VOD in May. Currently in production is *Slocum at Sea with Himself*, based on the book *Sailing Alone Around the World* by Joshua Slocum (1899), his first independent i-film production slated for self-published serialization installments in 2012. He also teaches two classes; Hand Drawn Computer Animation and In Pursuit of Originality, and provides private lessons for exceptionally gifted individuals.

SANDRA SCHUETTE FIERLINGER (director / color designer / paint animator) grew up in Wayne, Pennsylvania and graduated in 1978 from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with their highest awards. Since 1989 and her marriage to Paul, she has collaborated with him in many capacities – foremost as co-director, art director, background and color designer – on several dozen films for “Sesame Street,” Nickelodeon, “American Playhouse,” the Children’s Book of the Month Club, ITVS/PBS specials, and TV commercials.

Fierlinger’s most recent films include *Still Life with Animated Dogs*, which won the 2001 Peabody Award; *A Room Nearby*, which won the 2005 Peabody Award; and *My Dog Tulip*.

Currently in production is *Slocum at Sea with Himself*, a self published i-film slated for Internet release in 2012.

Tiny Furniture

Thursday, April 28, 8:00pm

KYLE MARTIN (producer) was recently named the 2010 Sundance Institute Mark Silverman Producing Fellow. He is currently working with director Matt Wolf on the feature *Teenage*, a stylized meditation on early 20th century youth cultures, and is developing the Sundance Institute-supported projects *Bluebird* (with writer/director Lance Edmands) and *Confederacy* (written by Jody Lee Lipes and Jeff Peixoto).

His previous credits include the SXSW® 2010 Audience Award winner *NY Export: Opus Jazz* (PBS, BBC, Factory 25), Matt Wolf’s *Wild Combination: A Portrait Of Arthur Russell* (Sundance Channel, Plexifilm) and Jody Lipes’s *Brock Enright: Good Times Will Never Be The Same* (Factory 25).

DAVID CALL (actor) is a native of Washington state and a graduate of NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Call is one of the rising actors of the American independent film scene. He most recently starred in Alistair Banks Griffin’s *Two Gates of Sleep* (Cannes 2010) and Lena Dunham’s *Tiny Furniture* (IFC Films) and can be seen in the upcoming films *Nor’easter* (Andrew Brotzman) and Ry Russo-Young’s *Nobody Walks*.

Call’s past film credits include *Did You Hear About the Morgans?* with Hugh Grant, as well as *Evening*, *Beautiful Ohio* and *The Notorious Bettie Page*. He has also worked extensively in TV, with recurring roles on “Gossip Girl,” “Rescue Me” and “Fringe and Mercy,” as well as past appearances on “Numb3rs,” “Army Wives” and “Law & Order: Criminal Intent.” He recently directed, co-wrote and produced the short film *B.U.S.T.*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the Dallas Film Festival.

RYAN WERNER (distributor) is Senior Vice President of Marketing & Publicity at Sundance Selects/ IFC Entertainment. Among the films he’s worked on are Abbas Kiarostami’s *Certified Copy*; Ricki Stern’s *Joan Rivers: A Piece Of Work*; Cristian Mungiu’s *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*; Olivier Assayas’ *Carlos* and *Summer Hours*; Gus Van Sant’s *Paranoid Park*; Matteo Garrone’s *Gomorra*; Steven Soderbergh’s *Che*; and Lena Dunham’s *Tiny Furniture*. He also worked at Magnolia Pictures, Shooting Gallery, Wellspring, Sundance Channel and IFP. He lives in NYC.

45365

Friday, April 29, 1:00pm

TURNER ROSS (director/producer/editor/DP) & **BILL ROSS** (director/producer/DP) won the 2009 SXSW® Grand Jury Award for best documentary feature and the Independent Spirit Truer Than Fiction Award with their first feature-length film, *45365*. They have gone on to receive numerous awards and nominations, including nominations for editing, cinematography, and debut feature at the Cinema Eye Honors and the BFI London Film Festival's Grierson Award.

Their documentary, fiction, and multi-media short films have been featured at museums and film festivals throughout the world. 2011 will see the release of another feature, *Tchoupitoulas*, a document from the New Orleans night. They are currently filming on the Texas border.

Me and Orson Welles

Friday, April 29, 4:00pm

RICHARD LINKLATER (director) serves as the Artistic Director for the Austin Film Society, which he founded in 1985 to showcase films from around the world that were not typically shown in Austin. The Austin Film Society has given out over \$1,000,000 in grants to Texas filmmakers and, in 1999, received the Directors Guild of America's DGA Honor in recognition of its support of the arts.

Writer/director Linklater's credits are: *It's Impossible To Learn To Plow By Reading Books* (1988); *Slacker* (1991); *Dazed And Confused* (1993); *Before Sunrise* (1995); *Suburbia* (1997); *The Newton Boys* (1998); *Waking Life* (2001); *Tape* (2001); *Live From Shiva's Dance Floor* (2003); *School Of Rock* (2003); *Before Sunset* (2004); *\$5.15/Hr.* (2004, TV); *Bad News Bears* (2005); *A Scanner Darkly* (2006); *Fast Food Nation* (2006); *Inning By Inning: A Portrait Of A Coach* (2008); *Me And Orson Welles* (2009); and *Bernie* (2011).

Only You

Friday, April 29, 8:30pm

NORMAN JEWISON (director) has been a vibrant force in the motion picture industry for five decades, nominated for four Oscars®, including three Best Director awards. His films have received 46 nominations and 12 Oscars®. In 1999, Jewison received the prestigious Irving Thalberg Award at the Academy Awards®, and in 2010, he received the Directors Guild of America's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1986, Jewison established the Canadian Film Centre, akin to the AFI in the US.

Born and raised in Toronto, Jewison graduated from the University of Toronto in 1949. After two years with the BBC in London, he returned to Canada to write, direct and produce some of Canada's most popular musicals, dramas, comedy-variety shows and specials for the CBC.

In 1958, he moved to CBS New York, where he directed a string of landmark TV series, including "Your Hit Parade," "The Andy Williams Show," and specials featuring Harry Belafonte, Danny Kaye and Judy Garland, collectively earning three Emmys®.

His directorial debut film was the 1962 Tony Curtis comedy, *40 Pounds of Trouble*. After *The Thrill of it All*, *Send Me No Flowers*, and *The Art Of Love*--all for Universal--Jewison became an independent filmmaker. His successful first effort, *The Cincinnati Kid*, which he co-wrote and directed, is now considered a classic. Since then, his films have covered a wide range of subjects and styles, from the political satire of *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming* and the stylish gamesmanship of *The Thomas Crown Affair* to the angry irony of *...And Justice For All* and the sultry mystery of *In The Heat of the Night*, winner of five Oscars® including Best Picture for 1967.

Jewison directed the hit screen versions of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the futuristic *Rollerball* and the political drama *F.I.S.T.* He directed and co-produced *A Soldier's Story* (1984), which was nominated for three Oscars®. He

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produced *Iceman* (1984), and directed *Agnes of God* (1985), which was honored with three Oscar® nominations. Jewison directed *Moonstruck* (1987), another multiple Oscar® winner, produced *The January Man* (1988), and directed *In Country* (1989). *Other People's Money* (1991) became Jewison's 25th film in 28 years.

In 1994, Jewison directed Marisa Tomei and Robert Downey Jr. in *Only You*, a romantic comedy about a woman who travels to Italy in search of her one true love. He executive-produced "Geronimo," one in the TNT series of original dramas portraying historical events in Native American history. Jewison produced and directed "Funny is Money" (1998), a two-hour Showtime documentary on the importance of humor and entertainment in America in the 20th century.

In 1995, Jewison executive-produced the Sundance favorite *Dance Me Outside* and the Showtime series "Picture Windows;" directors included him, John Boorman and Peter Bogdanovich. Universal Pictures released Jewison's film *The Hurricane* (1999) starring Denzel Washington. Jewison directed and produced *Bogus* (1996). He executive produced "Walter & Henry" (2000, Showtime) and directed the Emmy®-nominated "Dinner with Friends" (2001, HBO).

Jewison produced and directed *The Statement* (2003), starring Michael Caine and Tilda Swinton. His current project is a screenplay by Oscar® winner John Patrick Shanley, based on the Italian film *Bread and Tulips*.

A Small Act

Saturday, April 30, 11:00am

PATTI LEE (producer / DP) graduated from UCLA's film school, and began her career lighting feature films, commercials and television shows, working with notable cinematographers such as Newton Thomas Sigel and Guillermo Navarro. Her cinematography credits include "Awkward Situations for Men" (Warner Brothers), "The Bernie Mac Show"

(Fox) and *Bunny*, which was nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards. Lee has also shot several documentary projects, including the Sundance Channel's "Big Ideas for a Small Planet" and *American Mullet*. Being well-versed in shooting a wide range of formats and genres proved helpful to Lee with *A Small Act*, her first project as producer.

JENNIFER ARNOLD (writer / director / producer) graduated from UCLA and the University of Nairobi with a BA in African History and returned to UCLA for an MFA in film. Her award-winning film, *Maid Of Honor*, screened at Sundance before airing on HBO/Cinemax and Film 4. Arnold returned to Sundance with her Internet series, "The Mullet Chronicles," which was developed into the documentary *American Mullet* and released by Palm Pictures and Lionsgate. Arnold also co-directed a documentary for Ethan Coen and wrote a motocross script, *Speedway*, which was selected for the Berlin Talent Campus' script clinic, IFFP's No Borders and FIND's Directors Lab/Fast Track Program. Her most recent project, *A Small Act*, a documentary feature, premiered in competition at Sundance 2010 and was awarded the Adrienne Shelly Foundation Excellence in Filmmaking Award and the Humanitas Prize. *A Small Act* is currently being broadcast on HBO and is a top documentary pick by Roger Ebert and a *New York Times* Critic's Pick for 2010.

HILDE BACK (film subject)

Life, Above All

Saturday, April 30, 2:00pm

OLIVER SCHMITZ (director), the child of German immigrants, was born in 1960 in Cape Town, South Africa. He attended the Michaelis School of Fine Arts in Cape Town, graduating with a BA in Fine Arts. During his college years he worked as a co-manager and DJ at Scratch, the legendary nightclub he co-founded in the early 1980s. In 1983 Schmitz began an editorial apprenticeship in Johannesburg, and in 1985-86 worked in Dortmund as an editor for the WDR, one of Germany's

largest public broadcasters.

He returned to South Africa, still under apartheid, to direct his first feature film. Without the permission of local authorities, he shot the gangster drama *Mapantsula* in the Soweto township. The film debuted at Cannes (1988), went on to receive awards for best film, best director and best editing at the AA Vita Awards, and numerous international distinctions, including the Interchurch Film Award at the Munich Filmfest and the Australian Human Rights Award. Its highest honor was being named the best South African film of the decade at the 2006 South African Film & Television Awards. The film was also well received by South Africa's black population, attaining cult status.

In the late 1980s Schmitz teamed with other documentary filmmakers to direct nine documentaries, including *Jo'burg Stories*, commissioned by Arté in 1997. In 2000 he shot his second feature film, *Hijack Stories*, another gangster drama, which he also wrote and directed. With increasingly longer waiting periods between projects, he moved back to Germany in 2000, making a name for himself as a successful TV director.

Cinema remained in his heart and, in 2005, he was one of the directors in the collaborative feature film *Paris je t'aime* (2006), which premiered at Cannes. Throughout his career, Schmitz received numerous awards, among them the German Television Award in 2008 for "Doctor's Diary," the Adolf Grimme Award in 2007 for best director, and the Cinéma Tout Ecran for best TV series at the Geneva Film Festival for the critically acclaimed, "Turkish for Beginners." Schmitz' next film will be an adaptation of Wladimir Kammer's *Russendisco*. Schmitz lives in Berlin with his family.

KHOMOTSO MANYAKA (actor) comes from Elandsdoorn, South Africa, where she was born in 1996. She attended the local high school and caught the eyes of talent scouts during a choir performance. She was excited when she was asked to participate in the casting for *Life, Above All* and has turned out to be a natural as an actress. To play the

heroine Chanda, she stepped in front of the camera for the first time.

MICHAEL BARKER (distributor) has been the Co-President of Sony Pictures Classics since its inception over 19 years ago. Sony Pictures Classics produces, distributes, and acquires independent films from all over the world.

Films currently playing include the Academy Award® winning documentary *Inside Job* (Charles Ferguson), *Another Year* (Mike Leigh), *Barney's Version* (Richard J. Lewis), *Of Gods And Men* (Xavier Beauvois), *Winter in Wartime* (Martin Koolhoven) and *The Illusionist* (Sylvain Chomet). Sony Pictures Classics earned seven 2010 Academy Award® nominations and four 2010 Golden Globe® nominations.

Upcoming pictures include the Academy Award®-winning foreign feature *In A Better World* (Susanne Bier), *Incendies* (Denis Villeneuve), *POM Wonderful Presents: The Greatest Movie Ever Sold* (Morgan Spurlock), and *Midnight in Paris* (Woody Allen).

Over the years Michael has worked with some of the world's finest filmmakers, including Akira Kurosawa, Louis Malle, Pedro Almodóvar, Yimou Zhang, Ingmar Bergman, Guillermo del Toro, and Robert Altman. Past successes include *Capote*; *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; and *Howards End*, all nominated for the Best Picture Academy Award®.

Leaves of Grass

Saturday, April 30, 6:30pm

TIM BLAKE NELSON (director) most recently wrote, directed and produced *Leaves of Grass*, a dark comedy starring Edward Norton, Keri Russell, Susan Sarandon and Richard Dreyfuss. The film premiered at the 2009 Toronto Film Festival and was released in August 2010. Nelson also plays a supporting role in the film.

In October 2002, Nelson released *The Grey Zone*, which he wrote and directed based on his award-winning play. It is the dramatic story of the Sonderkommandos, a special

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squad of Jews who processed corpses in the crematoria at Birkenau. Harvey Keitel, Steve Buscemi, and Mira Sorvino star in the film, which premiered at the 2001 Toronto Film Festival. The National Board of Review honored the film with a "special recognition of films that reflect the freedom of expression" award in 2002.

In 2001, Nelson directed *O*, a contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, which starred Martin Sheen, Julia Stiles, and Josh Hartnett, and won the best director award at the 2001 Seattle Film Festival.

In 1997, Nelson made his directorial debut with the film *Eye of God*, which he also wrote. The film appeared at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival and was released theatrically the same year. It won the top award at the 1997 Seattle Film Festival, as well as the Bronze Prize at the Tokyo Film Festival.

His acting credits include the upcoming *Everybody Loves Whales*, starring Drew Barrymore and John Krasinski; David Frankel's *The Big Year* with Owen Wilson and Steve Martin; *Flypaper* with Ashley Judd and Patrick Dempsey; *Sin Bin*; *Yelling To The Sky*; *American Violet*; *The Incredible Hulk* with Edward Norton and Liv Tyler; *The Astronaut Farmer*; *Fido*; *Warm Springs*; *Meet the Fockers*; *Syriana*; *Holes*; *The Good Girl*; *Wonderland*; *Minority Report*; and *O Brother Where Art Thou?*. He has also acted extensively in New York theater, appearing in *The Beard of Avon*, *Mad Forest*, *Oedipus*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Richard III*, and *Twelfth Night*.

His playwriting credits include *Eye of God*, *Anadarko*, and *The Grey Zone*, which won him *Newsday's* Oppenheimer Prize, as well as *Encore* magazine's "Taking Off" Award,

Company, and then with other theaters in England and around the world.

In 1985 she began her long collaboration with English director Derek Jarman. Soon she became Jarman's close friend and regular talent, appearing in each one of his movies, including *Caravaggio* (1986), *The Last of England* (1987), *War Requiem* (1988), *The Garden* (1990), and *Edward II* (1992), until his death from AIDS in 1994.

Swinton continued to showcase her talent in independent films, and built a small but solid fan base. In 1992 she completed what later became one of her best-known projects, her galvanizing portrayal of the androgynous character Orlando in the film adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. But despite the film's popularity, she continued to focus her work on independent films, staying out of the limelight. After a break in the mid 1990s for the pregnancy and the birth of her twins, Xavier and Honor, she returned to the screen, working with Tim Roth in *The War Zone* (1999), Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Beach* (2000), *The Deep End* (2001) and *Adaptation* (2002). She received a British Independent Film Award nomination for her role in *Young Adam* (2004).

She was recognized as Best Supporting Actress at both the BAFTA Film Awards and the Academy Awards® for her performance in *Michael Clayton* (2007). Swinton also won a Saturn Award as Best Supporting Actress for her performance in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008) and a 2010 Dublin Film Critics Award for her work in *I Am Love*.

Louder Than a Bomb

Sunday, May 1, Noon

JON SISKEL (director/producer), co-founder of Siskel/Jacobs Productions, was executive producer and co-creator of the series "Fake Out", which ran for two seasons on Court TV. He has also produced shows for the A&E series "American Justice," "Investigative Reports" and "Biography," and his work has been shown on The Travel

I Am Love

Saturday, April 30, 9:30pm

TILDA SWINTON (actor) was born in London to an upper-class Scottish family and was educated at Cambridge University, where she graduated with a degree in Social & Political Science/English Literature before she started acting with the Royal Shakespeare

Channel, Discovery, and History. Siskel serves on the board of directors of Free Spirit Media, a Chicago-based youth media organization, as well as the Gene Siskel Film Center.

GREG JACOBS (director/producer), co-founder of Siskel/Jacobs Productions, served as VP/Chief Creative Officer at Towers Productions, where he oversaw the content of more than 200 documentaries on five different networks, including award-winning shows and series for A&E, History, Discovery, The Weather Channel, and CNN. A graduate of Yale University, Greg has a master's degree in history from Ohio State, and is the author of *Getting Around Brown: Desegregation, Development, and the Columbus Public Schools*.

KEVIN COVAL (founder & artistic director of *Louder Than a Bomb*)

LAMAR JORDEN (Steinmetz High School Poet)

CHARLES SMITH (Steinmetz High School Poet)

SHE'KIRA MCNIGHT (Steinmetz High School Poet)

KEVIN HARRIS (Steinmetz High School Poet)

JÉSUS LARK (Steinmetz High School Poet)

2011 Panelists & Special Guests

ALI ARIKAN is the chief film critic of *Dipnot TV*, a Turkish news portal and iPad magazine, and one of Roger's Far-Flung Correspondents. Ali's also a regular contributor to *The House Next Door*, *Slant Magazine's* official blog. Occasionally, he updates his personal blog, *Cerebral Mastication*. In addition, his writing appears on various film and pop-culture sites on the blogosphere. He also believes in the transformative potential of Twitter.

Ali's first encounter with the awesome power of cinema was when he saw Ray Harryhausen's *The Clash of the Titans* at the now-defunct Akün Sineması in

Kavaklıdere, Ankara. This led to an interest in both cinema and Greek Mythology, eventually paving the way for a lifelong immersion in the arts. His eclectic, and somewhat idiosyncratic, cinematic interests include the films of the 'movie brats,' Alfred Hitchcock, Jewish comedy, film noir, biographies, and movies about contemporary British history (that don't involve stammering monarchs).

Originally from Ankara, Turkey, Ali has lived in Cologne, Germany; Durham and London, UK. He currently resides in Istanbul, Turkey.

ALISON BAILES is the film critic for *More Magazine* and a contributing critic for "Ebert Presents" on PBS. She appears on NBC's "Today Show" as a film critic and industry reporter. She also guest hosts the New York Film Critics Series and maintains her own film website. From 2005-2009 Alison co-hosted the NBCUniversal weekly movie review show "Lyons & Bailes Reel Talk." She and Jeffrey Lyons shared their different perspectives on the latest film and DVD releases, gave viewers the latest news from the box office and reported on industry trends. "Reel Talk" also featured celebrity interviews.

Prior to joining WNBC, Alison created "At The Angelika" for the IFC. She wrote, produced and hosted this monthly look at the independent film scene, which later became known as "At The IFC Center." Previously, Alison was a senior producer of the weekly film magazine show "Flix" on VH1. She began her career at CNN, working for their daily entertainment news show "Showbiz Today."


A UK native, Alison has lived in the US since 1989. She graduated from Oxford University, with a BA in French and German Literature. An avid athlete, she also earned a varsity award in rowing.

OLIVIA COLLETTE has been deconstructing movies since she realized some of her friends were willing to humor her. She has a thing for Laxmi Chhaya dance routines, a crush on Fellini, and a non-negotiable fear of zombie flicks. Based in Montreal, Olivia works at Spacial Audio as a com-


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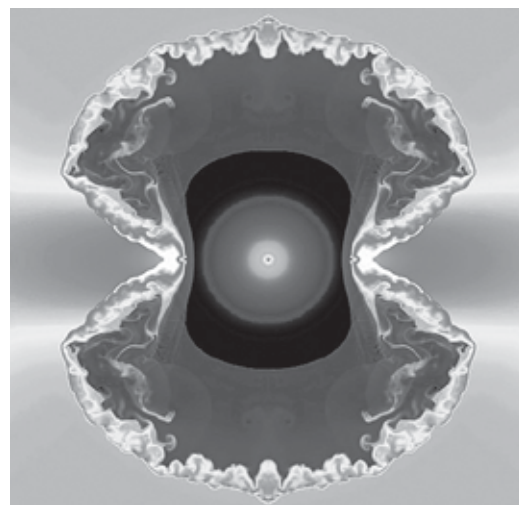
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munications strategist. In her spare time, she likes to find any reason to host a dinner party. No, really. Any reason at all.

TOM DARK is a literary agent for the Heacock Hill Literary Agency. Certain of his clients, if they are correct, may point the way toward faster-than-light technology, or present classically empirical evidence that suggests consciousness forms biological matter, not the other way around. If they are wrong, no harm done. In any case, it is time for new ideas. The more basic, cheaper and the more accessible to individual experimentation, the better.

Tom has worked as an editor, writer, copywriter, promoter, producer, sound engineer, musician, actor, scriptwriter, political organizer, public speaker and a host of other occupations, forgotten but for the philosophical experiment they represented. This experiment began in adolescence, owing to independent reading, wondering what philosophy ever had to do with anything. Forty years into this experiment, the question has become "what makes people keep dismissing their own philosophies?"

Tom estimates he has watched about 20,000 movies in his life so far, but almost never meets anyone who recommends a film he has already seen.

C.O. "DOC" ERICKSON, an executive producer, has over 50 years' experience as a producer and production manager on many of Hollywood's biggest films. He began his career at Paramount Pictures, serving as production manager on five Alfred Hitchcock films: *Rear Window*, *To Catch A Thief*, *The Trouble with Harry*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *Vertigo*. He left Paramount to become John Huston's associate producer on *The Misfits*, *Freud and Reflections in a Golden Eye*. He was production manager on Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*. He also spent three years supervising film production for Brut Productions and later became associated with Robert Evans on *Chinatown*, *Players*, *Urban Cowboy* and *Popeye*. Other producer/production credits include *55 Days at Peking*, *Blade Runner*, *Groundhog Day*, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Magic* and *The Lonely Guy*.

DANN GIRE, *Daily Herald* film critic, serves as president and founding director of the Chicago Film Critics Association. When he was a student at Eastern Illinois University in 1974, he saw *The Exorcist* at the Orpheum Theater in Champaign, and his life was never the same. Dann has been named a contributing critic/correspondent for "Ebert Presents."

CHRISTY LEMIRE, co-host of "Ebert Presents," is the film critic for *The Associated Press*, based in Los Angeles. She has been writing reviews for the *AP* for 12 years and in 2004 was named the first full-time film critic in the news organization's history.

Christy filled in for Roger several times on "At the Movies" in 2007 and has appeared on "The Charlie Rose Show," "Good Morning America" and "The View," to name a few. She also covers the Oscars®, Golden Globes® and many other awards shows each year.

A third-generation LA native, Christy is a member of the LA Film Critics Association.

MICHAEL MIRASOL is a Filipino independent film critic who has been writing about films for the past eleven years. He briefly served as film critic for the *Manila Times* and now writes occasionally for *Uno Magazine* and his blog *The Flipcritic*. Last year, he was named by Roger as one of his Far-Flung Correspondents, and continues to contribute written and video essays on film.

OMAR MOORE is an attorney and a film critic. He is the founder and editor of *The Popcorn Reel*, a movie review, film essay, video and celebrity interview website. A member of the San Francisco Film Critics Circle, Omar is a contributing critic to the PBS TV program "Ebert Presents" as well as a Far-Flung Correspondent for Roger's blog at the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Omar is the San Francisco Indie Movie Examiner, and he has appeared on American Public Radio and other radio programs talking about film. Omar is a regular contributor to "The Movie Mob", part of a radio show hosted by DC film critic Tim Gordon. His letters on film and legal issues have been published in *The New York Times*. Omar can

be found on Twitter. If he could tweet a 120-page script in 140 characters, he would. Omar continues to be spellbound by the brilliance of *Vertigo* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

OMER MOZAFFAR is a part-time instructor at various colleges throughout the Chicago area, including the University of Chicago and Loyola University. He usually lectures on Theology, Mysticism, History, and Literature. He works extensively in children's curriculum development. He is one of Roger's Far-Flung Correspondents. He is a nice boy.

MICHAEL PHILLIPS is the film critic of the *Chicago Tribune*, and can be seen regularly on CLTV as well as heard regularly on WGN-AM. Opposite Richard Roeper and, subsequently, A.O. Scott, he had the pleasure of co-hosting nearly 100 episodes of the Disney/ABC version of "At the Movies." Phillips covered film for the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and the Twin Cities weekly *City Pages*, where he served as arts editor. He was also the film critic for Minnesota Public Radio. Across the last 20 years, he has been the drama critic of the *Dallas Times Herald*, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Chicago Tribune*. He has taught at the University of Chicago Graham School, and the annual USC/NEA arts journalism workshop in Los Angeles. Most recently, on a Hearst fellowship, he conveyed what passes for his knowledge at the University of Georgia in Athens. He has served on juries and panels on everything from the Pulitzer Prizes to the Cinema For Peace Foundation in Berlin and the Rome Film Festival. He lives on Chicago's northwest side with his wife and their 10-year-old son, who considers hot buttered popcorn "the ace of snacks," one step above "king." Michael is proud to call Roger, Chaz, Nate Kohn and the rest of the folks who bring us Ebertfest his colleagues and his friends.

ERIC PIERSON is a film/television teacher and scholar, with a strong interest in the ways that film and TV shape popular culture. He teaches in the Communication Studies Department at the University of San Diego, where

he also serves as department chair. Eric has written on a variety of topics ranging from film distribution in the 1970s to hate group recruiting via the Internet. Among the journals in which his work has appeared are *Screening Noir* and *The Journal of Mass Media Ethics*. His most recent work, "The Promise of Roots," is part of a forthcoming book on the African-American TV audience. Currently he is appearing in the documentary, "Infiltrating Hollywood: The Rise and Fall of the Spook Who Sat By The Door." Eric is a graduate of the University of Illinois with degrees in Theater and Communications.

JANET PIERSON, the producer of the South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Film Conference and Festival since April 2008, has spent over 25 years championing independent films and filmmakers, in a variety of roles including distributor, exhibitor, producer's rep, investor, workshop producer, executive producer, documentary subject, and as co-creator and segment director of the IFC cable TV series "Split Screen." Much of this work was in partnership with her husband, the author/producer/professor John Pierson. Janet just completed a six-year term on the Austin Film Society Board, and is now on the advisory board.

DAVID POLAND is the creator and publisher of *Movie City News*, host of the half-hour online interview series DP/30, and he still finds time to stir it up daily on *The Hot Blog*.

KARTINA RICHARDSON is a writer and filmmaker. She is the author of the critically-acclaimed film commentary and video essay site *Mirror*. Kartina is one of Roger's Far-Flung Correspondents and a contributing critic to "Ebert Presents." In addition to writing on film, Kartina explores race, gender, and culture on her blog *This Moi*.

MATT ZOLLER SEITZ, a staff critic for *Salon.com* and Pulitzer Prize finalist in criticism, is a Brooklyn-based journalist and film editor. His articles about movies, TV and popular culture have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Slate*, *New York Press*, *The Star-Ledger*, *Newsday* and other publications. He writes and edits

video essays analyzing the styles of Oliver Stone, Wes Anderson, Budd Boetticher, Bill Melendez, Joseph Losey, Kathryn Bigelow, Michael Mann and other directors. His pieces can be viewed online at *Salon.com*, *The Museum of the Moving Image*, *The L Magazine*, and on YouTube. Seitz is also the founder of *The House Next Door*, a website devoted to critical writing about film and TV.

KRISHNA SHENOI is a 17-year-old Indian boy who has been obsessed with movies for as long as he can remember. He's a lover of Steven Spielberg, Ray Harryhausen, Robert Zemeckis, movie soundtracks, superhero films, *The Eels*, and his mother's food. His passion for films and making them began early on. When he was seven or eight, he used to make home movies with an old Sony camcorder, building blocks and clay models, employing very rough stop-motion animation techniques. Today, he still creates and edits short films, which you can see on his YouTube channel.

Apart from filmmaking, Krishna paints quite a bit. You can see

some of his art on his website, *Artistic Scrapyard*, and some of his writing on his blog, *Cinematic Jackass*.

He is proud to be Roger's youngest Far-Flung Correspondent, and even more so to have been invited to Ebertfest. He will be coming to Illinois from Sharjah, along with his mother and 15-year old sister.

MATT SINGER is the on-air host of the Independent Film Channel's "IFC News" and a regular contributor to its website. His criticism has also appeared in print in *The Village Voice*, *Spin Magazine*, and on NPR, MTV, E!, and "Ebert Presents." Matt lives in Brooklyn with his wife, dog, and a prop sword from the film *Gymkata*.

GERARDO VALERO is Roger's Mexico City Far-Flung Correspondent, where he lives with his wife Monica. Even though he's been going to the movies since the days when double and triple features of re-released films opened in his neighborhood theater on almost

continued on next page

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a daily basis, he started taking film seriously when he discovered "Siskel and Ebert and The Movies" in the mid 1980s and became an avid watcher. This period coincided with the two years he spent getting his MBA, during which he spent much time debating films with friends, especially with fellow S&E fans.

Aside from having his eyes opened by the show about the right films to see, he learned there about the beauty of black and white, the facts behind 'pan & scan' and cropping (which rendered his previously treasured Beta movie collection unwatchable) and, most importantly, the predictability of certain cliché-filled movies. Since Roger published his first entry in his *Little Movie Glossary*, Gerardo could no longer watch any film, TV show or commercial without searching for new suggestions, at least some of which have been published by Roger in every one of his last ten Movie Yearbooks.

Gerardo has been published four times in *Time Magazine's* "10 Questions" segment (the most recent being with James Cameron). He has won several

movie-related contests, including an Omega Watch from Mexico's *Cine-Premiere Magazine* in 1995. *Cine-Premiere*, coincidentally, has recently contacted him to blog in upcoming issues.

His favorite films are Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975) and Francis Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Godfather II* (1974)—their ranking depending on which one he's seen more recently. Gerardo enjoys playing tennis, watching DVDs and writing about movies.

PABLO VILLACA, a film critic since 1994, has written for many Brazilian movie magazines. In 2002, he became the first Latin-American critic to be part of the Online Film Critics Society, and he is still its only Brazilian member. He has published columns on websites such as *Hollywood Elsewhere* and eventually became a collaborator on the acclaimed site *Movie City News*. In 2005, he published his first book, *O Cinema Além das Montanhas* (*Cinema Beyond the Mountains*), a biography of film director Helvécio Ratton, and in 2001, he won a theater award for adapting an old

children's fairytale for the stage.

Pablo is currently the editor and film critic for *Cinema em Cena*, the oldest Brazilian movie website, which he created back in 1997, and also teaches courses in film theory and film criticism all over Brazil. In 2007, he was the only non-US film critic to be invited by the Museum of the Moving Image and *The New York Times* to participate in a week-long seminar on film criticism. In 2008, he directed his first short film, *Ethics*, and in 2009, upon special invitation, he acted temporarily as the director of the International Film Institute in Los Angeles. In 2011, he will direct his second short film, which is currently in pre-production.

IGNATIY VISHNEVETSKY is a critic and essayist for *MUBI.com*, co-founder of the acclaimed *Cine-File.info*, and a contributor to the *Chicago Reader*. Prior to becoming a film critic, Ignatiy worked as a translator for Novoe Literaturnoe *Obozrenie*, Russia's premier literary journal. Born in the Soviet Union, Ignatiy moved to America when he was eight and soon moved to Chicago because he "could find more films to see here." Ignatiy helps program the current Cine-File Selects series at the University of Chicago's Doc Films, the nation's oldest film society. He also co-manages the Odd Obsession underground and alternative video store.

GRACE WANG has a deep passion for cinema and writes related musings alongside poetry, short stories, and photography on her website, *Etheriel Musings*. She is one of Roger's Far-Flung Correspondents and a regular contributor to *RogerEbert.com*, *The Spectators Arts Blog*, and various online publications. She is also a contributing author to the forthcoming book *World Film Locations: New York*. Grace acted as Social Media Coordinator for the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival, and is returning as a TIFF Programming Associate for the 2011 Festival. She recently embarked on a two-month trip to China and will be reporting her observations of both life and the state of cinema in China, as well as special reports from 35th Hong Kong International Film Festival, 1st Beijing International Film Festival, and Ebertfest 2011, in a

column on *Rogerebert.com*.

Grace is fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese and a beginner in Japanese and Spanish. In her spare time, she practices as a lawyer, daydreams on public transport, and has a weakness for red shoes and good people. She currently resides in Toronto.

ANATH WHITE, an Illinois native, was a committed movie goer in her early teens. By college, the International Film Series at the University of Colorado turned her on to film. Following a back-to-nature stint in the mountains above Boulder (no running water, plumbing nor electricity, no neighbors for miles), she moved to Denver and gave ten years to radio. Five were at public station KCFR-FM, when it was still "free form." As a deejay, local host for "Morning Edition," and producer of dozens of arts/film-related segments, including for NPR, she was awarded a national Grant for Women in Public Broadcasting. She segued into (pre-Limbaugh) talk when she began producing shows for Alan Berg, the top talk host at the venerable 50,000-watt KOA-AM. Nine months later, Berg was murdered in a political assassination by a neo-Nazi cadre. Fast forward five years. When Oliver Stone directed *Talk Radio*, the script for which combined a play by Eric Bogosian with elements of the Alan Berg story, Anath was Stone's technical advisor on the Dallas shoot, and had a cameo in the film. This experience gave her the gumption to relocate to Los Angeles. Since 1990, after holding distribution and special projects coordinating positions at the AFI, she's done everything from script coverage for The Sundance Institute to researcher/creative consultant on numerous Showtime films to associate producing/coordinating British TV shoots in the US and, most recently, associate producing three documentaries.

Now a Far-Flung Correspondent, she also writes poetry and literary non-fiction, and is currently completing a memoir of the four and a half years following Alan Berg's murder.

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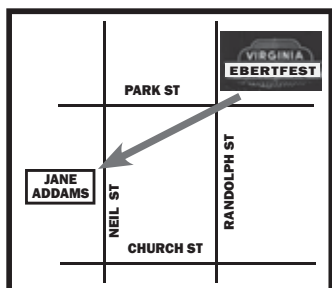
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Urban renewal on a very large scale



A scene from "Metropolis."

By Roger Ebert

The opening shots of the restored "Metropolis" are so crisp and clear they come as a jolt. This mistreated masterpiece has been seen until now mostly in battered prints missing footage that was, we now learn, essential. Because of a 16mm print discovered in 2008 in Buenos Aires, it stands before us as more or less the film that Fritz Lang originally made in 1927. It is, says expert David Bordwell, "one of the great sacred monsters of the cinema."

Lang tells of a towering city of the future. Above ground, it has spires and towers, elevated highways, an Olympian stadium and Pleasure Gardens. Below the surface is a workers' city where the clocks show 10 hours to squeeze out more work time, the workers live in tenement housing and work consists of unrelenting service to a machine. This vision of plutocracy vs. labor would have been powerful in an era when the assembly line had been introduced on a large scale and Marx had encouraged class warfare.

Lang created one of the un-

forgettable original places in the cinema. "Metropolis" fixed for countless later films the image of a futuristic city as a hell of material progress and human despair. From this film, in various ways, descended not only "Dark City" but "Blade Runner," "The Fifth Element," "Alphaville," "Escape From L.A.," "Gattaca" and Batman's Gotham City. The laboratory of its evil genius, Rotwang, created the visual look of mad scientists for decades to come, especially after it was so closely mirrored in "Bride of Frankenstein" (1935). The device of the "false Maria," the robot who looks like a human being, inspired the Replicants of "Blade Run-

ner." Even Rotwang's artificial hand was given homage in "Dr. Strangelove."

The missing footage restored in this version comes to about 30 minutes, bringing the total running time to about 150 minutes. Bordwell, informed by the chief restorer, Martin Koerber of the German Cinematheque, observes that while the cuts simplified "Metropolis" into a science-fiction film, the restoration emphasizes subplots involving mistaken identities. We all remember the "two Marias": the good, saintly human and her malevolent robot copy, both played by Brigitte Helm. We now learn that the hero, Freder, also changes places with the

Lang tells of a towering city of the future ... Lang created one of the unforgettable original places in the cinema. "Metropolis" fixed for countless later films the image of a futuristic city as a hell of material progress and human despair.



WEDNESDAY 7pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

METROPOLIS

(1927) No MPAA rating

Written and Directed by
Fritz Lang

Cast:

Alfred Abel as **Fredersen**
Gustav Frohlich as **Freder**
Rudolf Klein-Rogge as **Rotwang**
Fritz Rasp as **The Thin Man**
Erwin Biswanger as **Georgy**
Brigitte Helm as **Maria/Robot**

Running time: 153 minutes
Release date: March 13, 1927

Trivia:

The film included more than 37,000 extras

Adjusting for inflation, the film cost more than \$200 million to make.

Print Courtesy: **Kino International**

worker Georgy, in an attempt to identify with the working class. Freder's father, Fredersen, is the ruler of Metropolis.

The purpose of the tall, cadaverous Thin Man, assigned by Freder's father to follow him, is also made more clear. And we learn more about the relationship between Fredersen and the mad scientist Rotwang, and Rotwang's love for the ruler's late wife. This woman, named Hel, was lost in the shorter version for the simplistic reason that her name on the pedestal of a sculpture resembled "Hell," and distributors feared audiences would misunderstand.

"Metropolis" employed vast sets, thousands of extras and astonishing special effects to create its two worlds. Lang's film is the summit of German Expressionism, with its combination of stylized sets, dramatic camera angles, bold shadows and frankly artificial theatrics.

The production itself made

even Stanley Kubrick's mania for control look benign. According to Patrick McGilligan's book *Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast*, the extras were hurled into violent mob scenes, made to stand for hours in cold water and handled more like props than human beings. The heroine was made to jump from high places, and when she was burned at a stake, Lang used real flames. The irony was that Lang's directorial style was not unlike the approach of the villain in his film.

The good Maria, always bathed in light, seems to be the caretaker of the worker's children — all of them, it sometimes appears. After Maria glimpses the idyllic life of the surface, she becomes a revolutionary firebrand and stirs up the workers. Rotwang, instructed by Fredersen, captures this Maria, and transfers her face to the robot. Now the workers, still following Maria, can be fooled and controlled by the false Maria.

Lang's story is broad, to put it mildly. Do not seek here for psychological insights. The storytelling is mostly visual. Lang avoided as many intertitles as possible, and depends on images of startling originality. Consider the first glimpse of the underground power plant, with workers straining to move heavy dial hands back and forth. What they're doing makes no logical sense, but visually the connection is obvious: They are controlled like hands on a clock. When the machinery explodes, Freder has a vision in which the machinery turns into an obscene, devouring monster.

Other dramatic visual sequences: a chase scene in the darkened catacombs, with the real Maria pursued by Rotwang (the beam of his light acts like a club to bludgeon her). The image of the Tower of Babel as Maria addresses the workers. Their faces, arrayed in darkness from the top to the

continued on next page

The Alloy Orchestra



TERRY DONAHUE (junk percussion, accordion, musical saw, banjo), **KEN WINOKUR** (director, junk percussion and clarinet) and **ROGER MILLER** (synthesizer, percussion).

Alloy Orchestra is a three-man musical ensemble, writing and performing live accompaniment to classic silent films. Working with an outrageous assemblage of peculiar objects, they thrash and grind soulful music from unlikely sources.

Performing at prestigious film festivals and cultural centers in the U.S. and abroad (The Telluride Film Festival, The Louvre, Lincoln Center, The Academy of Motion Pictures, the National Gallery of Art), Alloy has helped revive some of the great masterpieces of the silent era.

An unusual combination of found percussion and state-of-the-art electronics gives the Orchestra the ability to create any sound imaginable. Utilizing their famous "rack of junk" and electronic synthesizers, the group generates beautiful music in a spectacular variety of styles. They can conjure up a French symphony or a simple German bar band of the '20s. The group can make the audience think it is being attacked by tigers, contacted by radio signals from Mars or swept up in the Russian Revolution.

Metropolis

continued from previous page

bottom of the screen. The doors in Rotwang's house, opening and closing on their own. The lascivious dance of the false Maria, as the workers look on, the screen filled with large, wet, staring eyeballs. The flood of the lower city and the undulating arms of the children flocking to Maria to be saved.

Much of what we see in "Metropolis" doesn't exist, except in visual trickery. The special effects were the work of Eugene Schufftan, who later worked in Hollywood as the cinematographer of "Lilith" and "The Hustler." According to Magill's Survey of Cinema, his photographic system "allowed people and miniature sets to be combined in a single shot, through the use of mirrors, rather than laboratory work." Other effects were created in the camera by cinematographer Karl Freund.

The result was astonishing for its time. Without all of the digital

tricks of today, "Metropolis" fills the imagination. Today, the effects look like effects, but that's their appeal. Looking at the original "King Kong," I find that its effects, primitive by modern standards, gain a certain weird effectiveness. Because they look odd and unworldly compared to the slick, utterly convincing effects that are now possible, they're more evocative: The effects in modern movies are done so well that we seem to be looking at real things, which is not quite the same kind of fun.

The restoration is not pristine. Some shots retain the scratches picked up by the original 35mm print from which the 16mm Buenos Aires copy was made; these are insignificant compared to the rediscovered footage they represent. There are still a few gaps, but because the original screenplay exists, they're filled in by title cards. In general, this is a "Metropolis" we have never seen,

"Metropolis" does what many great films do, creating a time, place and characters so striking that they become part of our arsenal of images for imagining the world.

both in length and quality.

Although Lang saw his movie as anti-authoritarian, the Nazis liked it enough to offer him control of their film industry (he fled to the United States instead).

Some of the visual ideas in "Metropolis" seem echoed in Leni Riefenstahl's pro-Hitler "Triumph of the Will" (1935) — where, of course, they have lost their irony.

"Metropolis" does what many great films do, creating a time, place and characters so striking that they become part of our arsenal of images for imagining the world. Lang filmed for nearly a year, driven by obsession, often

cruel to his colleagues, a perfectionist madman, and the result is one of those films without which many others cannot be fully appreciated.

Note: Some of the restored footage shows small black bands at the top and left side, marking missing real estate. Expert projectionist Steve Kraus says this image area was lost due to shortcuts taken either in making the 16mm negative or quite possibly years earlier when the 35mm print they worked from was made.

This article is based in part on my 1998 Great Movies essay.



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*Debbie and Lauren
Hartman*



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Expanding the boundaries of family love



Still of Rachael Harris and Matt O'Leary in "Natural Selection."

By Logan Hill, SXSW Film Juror

In Austin, the breakfast tacos are incredible, the two-stepping is sweaty, and the streets are swarming with thousands of powerful nerds (here for the Interactive festival) and amazing beards (here for the music). This week, I've had the thrill of serving on the SXSW Film Festival's narrative feature jury with two heavy-hitters: the discerning force of nature that is Roger Ebert, and Michelle Satter, a leather-jacketed deity of the Sundance Film Institute. Last night, all three of us unanimously awarded the Grand Jury Prize — along with prizes for editing, sound, screenplay, and two breakthrough performances — to Robbie Pickering's spectacular debut, *Natural Selection*, a multifaceted comedy about a woman who tracks down the drugged-out escaped convict who she believes was the result of her husband's long-ago sperm donation. Then we found out the film won the Audience Award, too. It is hard not to love this film.

Natural Selection is a film that gives the emerging sperm-

donor-comedy genre a dramatic new twist (dozens of twists, actually). Gifted, journeywoman comic actress Rachael Harris gets her first plum starring role as Linda White, a startling departure from the snippy, ballbusting roles she's usually recruited for (*The Hangover*, *Modern Family*). Linda is a good Christian gal who is barren, and whose devout husband, Abe (John Diehl), refuses to sully her body with impure sex that's not in the service of baby-making. But when Abe passes out at a fertility clinic and falls into a coma, Linda discovers that her saintly hubby has been masturbating to porn and donating his sperm for more than two decades. His dying wish is for Linda to seek out his son. She finds Raymond (Matt O'Leary), that self-destructive, drug-addled, charming freak force of nature. And they hit the road, busting out of genres and expected tropes as they drive along.

The competition lineup this year was admirably crowded with fresh faces and new talent, but when the jury sat down to

deliberate, we instantly started talking about *Natural Selection*'s opening sequence: A giant lawnmower slowly crosses a thick grassy field from one side of the screen to the other, back and forth. The lawnmower stops. And then the camera zooms in on the huge canvas clippings back, which bears the name of a local prison. Then the bag rips open and you see Raymond's deranged face, slathered in grass clippings and grinning madly as he busts out of prison. Talk about an entrance.

We also talked about the poignantly beautiful visuals in the Josh Lucas grief drama *A Year in Mooring* and awarded cinematographer Elliot Davis honors; we also agreed that Evan Ross's taut, vital performance as a teenage kid caught up in gang violence in Aimee Lagos's *96 Minutes* deserved a special breakthrough performance prize. But we kept returning to *Natural Selection*. At one point, Roger, whose thyroid cancer has barely slowed him down, typed on his computer — and pressed enter. A digital voice



WEDNESDAY 10:30pm

announced that he felt that one film most fully delivered on everything it aspired to be, and we all agreed. What makes that statement so impressive is that "Natural Selection" aspired to so very much. It's a wild road-trip odd-couple romp, a pitch-perfect satire of marriage and morality, a perversely satisfying romance, an oddly empowering women's anthem, and, above all, the best sort of comedy — one that's absolutely grounded in messy human drama, and given life by Harris and O'Leary, two actors who deliver career-changing performances that demanded we give both of them breakthrough performance awards along with Ross. (The festival begged to give just one award — an engraved belt buckle — but we couldn't bear the thought of passing any of them over).

We admired other films, too,

but I'm happy that we unanimously decided to give so many awards to "Natural Selection." I'm still reeling at how high a level of difficulty this film worked at, with its bold tonal shifts, meshing of truly dark material and spastic physical comedy; it seems like an absurdly difficult movie for a first-time filmmaker to even attempt. That Pickering pulled it off is terribly exciting. Last year, the festival premiered *Tiny Furniture* and launched the hot career of Lena Dunham. It's been a thrill to watch her career take off. This year, don't be surprised if you hear a whole lot more about Robbie Pickering.



Robbie Pickering, writer and director of "Natural Selection."

This year, don't be surprised if you hear a whole lot more about Robbie Pickering.

BEHIND THE SCENES

NATURAL SELECTION
(2011) No MPAA rating

Written and Directed by
Robbie Pickering

Cast:
Rachael Harris
as Linda
Jon Gries
as Peter
Matt O'Leary
as Raymond

Running time: 89 minutes

Trivia:
Winner of both the jury and audience awards for narrative feature at the SXSW Film Festival

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Ingmar Bergman

A deep thanks to Roger and Chaz for bringing such love and appreciation of great cinema to Champaign-Urbana year after year. Congratulations on number 13!

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Umberto D

A story of struggle, pride and determination

By Roger Ebert

Umberto is upright, neat, exact, and the cut of his clothes shows that he was once respectable. Now he is a retired civil servant on a fixed income that is not enough to support him, not even in his simple furnished room, not even if he skips meals. He and his dog are faced with eviction by a greedy landlady who would rather rent his room by the afternoon to shame-faced couples.

Vittorio De Sica's "Umberto D" (1952) is the story of the old man's struggle to keep from falling from poverty into shame. It may be the best of the Italian neorealist films--the one that is most simply itself, and does not reach for its effects or strain to make its message clear. Even its scenes involving Umberto's little dog are told without the sentimentality that pets often bring into stories. Umberto loves the dog and the dog loves him because that is the nature of the bond between dogs and men, and both try to live up to their side of the contract.

The film is told without false drama. Even when Umberto calls the ambulance and has himself taken to the hospital, there is no false crisis, no manufactured fear that he will die. Later, when Umberto considers suicide, he goes about it in such a calm and logical way that we follow his reasoning and weigh the alternatives along with him, instead of being manipulated into dread. "Umberto D" avoids all temptations to turn its hero into one of those lovable Hollywood oldsters played by Matthau or Lemmon. Umberto Domenico Ferrari is not the life of any party but a man who wants to be left alone to get on with his business.



Carlo Battisti as Umberto Domenico Ferrari in "Umberto D."

In his shoes we might hope to behave as he does, with bravery and resourcefulness.

The movie follows its hero as he faces the possibility that he may lose his room and be turned into the streets to beg. He has always paid his bills and this prospect horrifies him. The opening shot shows him joining a street demonstration in Rome, as old men seek an increase in their meager state pensions. Umberto marches in the protest, but is not a joiner, and indeed when the police disperse the crowd he is angry not at the cops, but at the organizers: "They didn't even get a permit!" He smuggles his little dog Flag into a dining hall where the old are given free lunches, and slips his food under the table for the dog, while tricking the stern welfare workers with some quick plate-switching. He tries to sell his watch, but everyone has a watch they want to sell.

We gradually learn the outlines of his life. He lives in a room infested with ants, which the landlady will do nothing about. Adulterous couples leave his room just as he is returning to it. His friend in the rooming house is Maria the

maid, who is pregnant. She isn't sure if the father is the boy from Florence, or the one from Naples. Umberto is not offended that she sleeps with more than one man. He is beyond being surprised by the trouble sex can bring, cares about her as she cares about him, because they are both good people in a bad place.

Because his dog has needs, Umberto has needs. He must care for Flag. He is truthfully sick when he arranges to go to the hospital, but not that sick, and the trip is mostly to get a few days of clean sheets and good meals. He arranges for the maid to take care of the dog while he's gone, and even stages a pantomime with a stick and a ball to distract the dog from following him.

Later he finds that the dog ran out the apartment door, maybe to look for him, and is lost. There is a scene of documentary simplicity, in which Umberto seeks Flag at the dog pound, and learns how unwanted dogs are put to death. He peers helplessly into a cage so filled with barking, scrambling dogs that he cannot see for sure if Flag is even there. When he finds

Umberto doesn't care if we love him or not. That is why we love him.



THURSDAY 1pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

UMBERTO D

(1952) No MPAA rating

Written by
Cesare Zavattini
Directed by
Vittorio De Sica

Carlo Battisti
as Umberto Domenico Ferrari
Maria-Pia Casilio
as Maria

Running time: 89 minutes

Trivia:
Many actors in the film, including the two leads, were new to acting, while those playing smaller parts were more established actors.

Two different dogs were used to play Flag in the film.

Print Courtesy: **Rialto Pictures**

the dog, note how De Sica shows them greeting one another. This whole passage is all the more affecting because the movie doesn't milk it for tears, but simply shows it happening.

Neorealism was an Italian movement, born in wartime, continuing through the 1950s, which believed that films should be made close to the surface of everyday life and played by non-professionals who embodied their characters. "Umberto D" is one of the most successful demonstrations of that theory. The old man is played by Carlo Battisti, then 70, a university lecturer who had not acted before.

De Sica (1901-1974) said his method was to form a mental image of a character while working on the screenplay with his long-time collaborator Cesare Zavattini. "Until I can find the man, woman or child who fits the figure I see in my mind's eye," he wrote, "I do not begin." With "Umberto D," "before fortune smiled on me once again, I had searched Rome, Naples, and other cities and had lingered for hours, for days even, in those places where I was most likely to find the kind of old-age pensioner who was the hero of my film...but I had not yet met the person who from the first had smiled at me with sorrowful dignity from the pages of the script."

Sorrowful dignity is exactly what Battisti embodies for Umberto. He is observant, understanding, sympathetic. He doesn't rail against the injustice of the world, but is simply determined to defend the corner he occupies with his dog.

Because Umberto doesn't talk much with other characters, we have to determine his thoughts by how he looks and what he does, and there is a masterful scene in which he considers begging in the street, and decides against it. Note the timing of this sequence. With a slightly different twist, it could shot-by-shot be a comic bit for Chaplin's Little Tramp, but De Sica

holds it to understated pathos. Umberto watches a successful beggar. He puts out his own palm, halfway, not really committing himself. As a man is about to give him money, he turns the hand over, as if testing for rain. He cannot beg. He thinks. He gives his hat to his dog, which sits up and holds it in its mouth, while Umberto hides nearby. No, this will not work either: He will not demean his dog by making it do something he would not do.

The stages by which Umberto arrives at the idea of suicide and then is drawn away from it are among the best in the film. His dog is central to the action--both because he will not abandon it by his own death, and because the dog refuses to leave his side. It is the fact of the dog's love that saves him, because he cannot ignore it. One great scene takes place when Umberto takes the dog to a couple that boards unwanted dogs. It's clear they're in it only

for the money, and that many of their pets don't have long to live. Umberto offers them money to take Flag, but their eyes tell him it is not enough to support the dog for long. Leaving, he hides under a bridge, but the dog finds him, and again we're reminded of a sequence that could be in a Chaplin film, but has been toned down to quiet sadness.

"Umberto D" tells what could be a formula story, but not in a formula way: Its moments seem generated by what might really happen. A formula film would find a way to manufacture a happy ending, but good fortune will not fall from the sky for Umberto. Perhaps his best luck is simply that he has the inner strength to endure misfortune without losing self-respect. It is said that at one level or another, Chaplin's characters were always asking that we love them. Umberto doesn't care if we love him or not. That is why we love him.



A scene from "Umberto D."

My Dog Tulip

Sometimes love is all you need

By Roger Ebert

My Dog Tulip" is the story of a man who finds love only once in his life, for 15 perfect years. It is the love of a dog. It may be the only love he is capable of experiencing. As other men write books about a woman in their life, J.R. Ackerley wrote a book about a German shepherd he rescued from a cruel home. My Dog Tulip has been a private discovery by many readers for years, and now it becomes an animated film that combines elating visuals with a virtuoso voice performance by Christopher Plummer.

The film is animated, but not intended for children. It is told from and by an adult sensibility that understands loneliness, gratitude and the intense curiosity we feel for other lives, man and beast. The story is narrated by Plummer, in the voice of a man in his 60s who works for the BBC and lives in London near Putney Common. We know from the book that Ackerley was homosexual, and that is implied without the film making anything of it. For our purposes he is a soloist, cantankerous, crabby, lonely.



A scene from the animated movie "My Dog Tulip."

Tulip gives him unconditional love. Evolution, which produced humans who could think and were self-aware and knew loneliness, also in an act of serendipity produced dogs who could know us and love us. How strange that an animal could evolve as a wolf, self-select as a wolf who sought human company, and become an animal that values human company and considers its owners to be wonderful gods. People who do not like dogs do not know dogs. It

is very difficult to dislike a being who worships you and would gladly die for you — especially when it is handsome and frisky and empathetic, and a good, good doggie, yes it is.

In a sense, "My Dog Tulip" is a natural history. Ackerley is educated by Tulip in the needs and ways of domesticated dogs. He attends to the feeding of Tulip, the training, the grooming, the walking, the territorial marking behavior, the sexual needs, the illnesses, the personality, the life and death. No parents of a child have never been more observant or taken better care of their charge.

To this story, directed and animated by Paul and Sandra Fierlinger, "My Dog Tulip" brings Sandra's watercolors. Fierlinger is the sort of watercolorist one would collect. Her colors, her line, her ability to saturate or wash, are well-suited to the story. She makes a London in which its black cabs and red buses come alive, and then turns pastoral on Putney Common. Her animated paintings have life and impact. She is an original, but if you know of an artist named David Gentleman,



A scene from the animated movie "My Dog Tulip."



THURSDAY 3:30pm

you'll get the idea.

Given Ackerley's apparent celibacy, it becomes the source of some humor when he struggles to find Tulip a suitable mate.

It isn't clear that Tulip much wants to become pregnant, but Ackerley is determined that she be impregnated. Perhaps she is a surrogate through which he achieves fertility. Lord knows they struggle together, J.R. and Tulip, through the travails of courtship.

"My Dog Tulip" has no stupid plot, no contrived suspense. Tulip grows old and dies, as must we all. J.R. Ackerley misses her and writes a book about his loss. Through this dog, he knew love.



Paul and Sandra Fierlinger, directors of "My Dog Tulip."

BEHIND THE SCENES

MY DOG TULIP

(2009) No MPAA rating

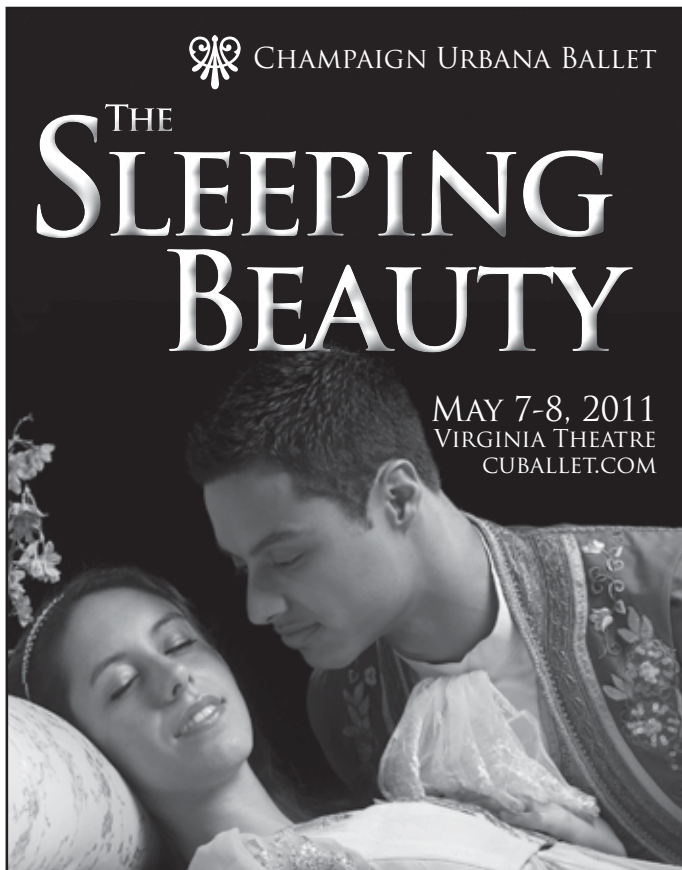
Directed by
Paul and Sandra Fierlinger

Written by
J.R. Ackerley

Cast:
Christopher Plummer
voice of J.R. Ackerley
Lynn Redgrave
voice of Nancy/Greengrocer's wife
Isabella Rossellini
voice of Ms. Canvenini
Peter Gerety
voice of Mr. Plum/Pugilist
Brian Murray
voice of Captain Pugh/Mr. Blandish

Running time: 83 minutes
Print Courtesy: New Yorker Films

"My Dog Tulip" is the story of a man who finds love only once in his life, for 15 perfect years. It is the love of a dog.



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Tiny Furniture

Growing up can be hard to do, even together

By Roger Ebert

There is a strange space between when you leave school and when you begin work. You are idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean. You grow restless. You cannot go back and are uncertain how to proceed. "Tiny Furniture" is about Aura, who is becalmed on that sea.

She has graduated from college in Ohio, and returned home to live in her mother's loft in Tribeca. Her boyfriend called it quits; he had to return home to Colorado and see about the spirits of his ancestors, or something. Four years of education have left her with one video on YouTube and the ability to show approval when a guy says he's reading *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy. Her mother is a famous artist who makes a lot of money selling photographs of tiny furniture, sometimes in the same frame as the feet and legs of Nadine, Aura's sister, who is taller, thinner and younger than Aura.

Aura (Lena Dunham) is discontented. She hates living at home but has no money to move out. She wants a good job but takes one taking reservations at a restaurant. She wants love and acceptance, and finds it much diluted by her distracted mother (Laurie Simmons) and her competitive sister (Grace Dunham).

Of possible boyfriends there are: (1) Jed (Alex Karpovsky), a "big deal on YouTube," who rides a mechanical pony while reciting Nietzsche, and (2) Keith (David Call), who works at the restaurant and has a girlfriend but asks Aura out and then stands her up.

Aura's life unfolds without plot because there is none. The film seems deliberately motionless, although deep currents are stirring. We see Aura at home, with Jed and



Lena Dunham in a scene from "Tiny Furniture."

Keith, and with her new friend, Charlotte (Jemima Kirke), who has a British accent, lends her clothes and otherwise seems firmly one-up. None of these characters have what you might call chemistry, and that seems deliberate. This is a movie about people who are all passive-aggressive, including Aura. Nobody laughs or tries to say anything funny, and when Aura is happy sometimes, she doesn't trust it.

Aura is played by Lena Dunham, who wrote and directed the film. Her mother and her sister are played by her real mother and sister. The loft in Tribeca is where her family lives. I have no idea if they're playing themselves, but they're certainly convincing. Dunham, indeed, plays one of the most real people I've seen outside of a documentary. She and the others are unaffected, behave as people we know actually do, live in familiar rhythms.

Visually, the film is simple and direct, as unadorned as the white cabinets that cover a wall of the loft. Dunham's cin-

ematographer, Jody Lee Lipes, doesn't move the camera. It's locked down for a steady, flat gaze. This is correct. It sees like Aura sees. She regards with detached fascination as people behave as people will. Her personality doesn't suggest tracking shots.

Why do I feel such affection for "Tiny Furniture"? It's a well-crafted film, for one thing. For a first picture, it shows a command of style and purpose; Dunham knows what she wants and how she needs to get it, and succeeds. Her character Aura is not charismatic or glowing or mercurial or seductive or any of those advertising adjectives, but she believes she deserves to be happy, and we do, too.

The movie has a scene in which sex is enacted. It isn't great sex. It calls into question Woody Allen's statement that the worst sex he'd had wasn't that bad. It happens unexpectedly between two people. It happens in the most depressing place for sex I can imagine.



Kyle Martin, producer of "Tiny Furniture."



THURSDAY 8pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

TINY FURNITURE
(2010) No MPAA rating

Written and Directed by
Lena Dunham

Cast:
Lena Dunham
as Aura
Laurie Simmons
as Siri
Grace Dunham
as Nadine
Jemima Kirke
as Charlotte
Alex Karpovski
as Jed
David Call
as Keith

Running time: 93 minutes
Print Courtesy: IFC Films

No, worse than whatever you're thinking. It is so desperately dutiful. Two people become seized with the urgent need to create an orgasm together and succeed, and that exhausts the subject. The scene and what leads up to it define Aura and her partner in terms of what they will settle for. Sometimes that's better than nothing.

I know what the budget of this movie was, but never mind. Lena Dunham had every penny she required. She also had all the talent she needed, and I look forward to her work. It's hard enough for a director to work with actors, but if you're working with your own family in your own house and depicting passive aggression, selfishness and discontent and you produce a film this good, you can direct just about anybody in just about anything.

There is a strange place between when you leave school and when you begin work. You are idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean. You grow restless. You cannot go back and are uncertain how to proceed.



A still image from "Tiny Furniture."

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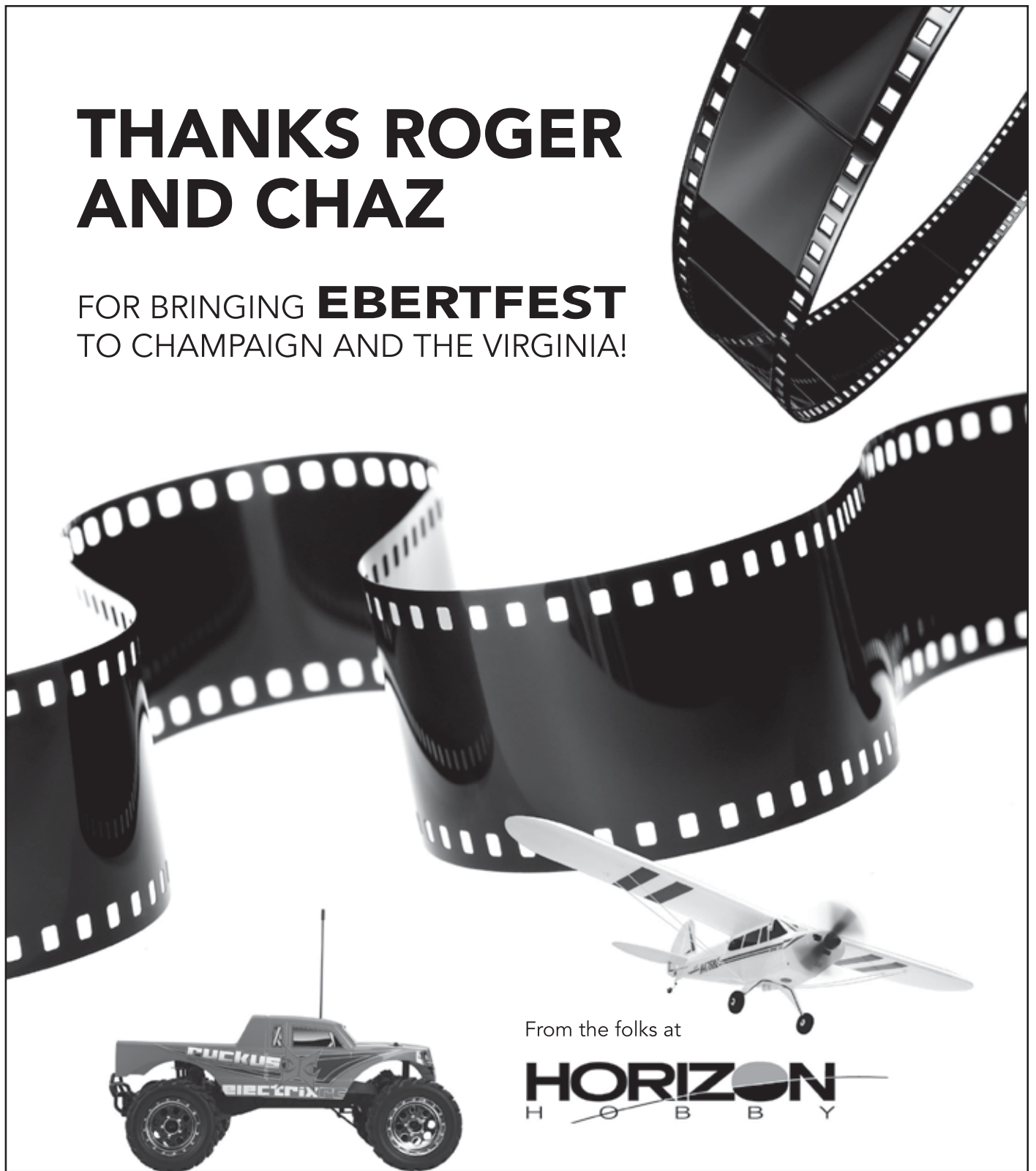
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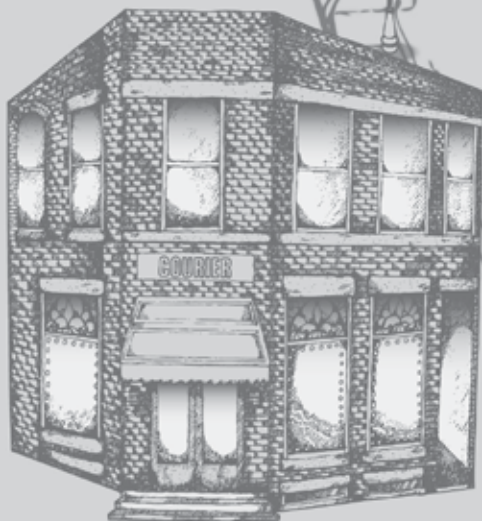
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A beautiful portrait of small town America



A scene from "45365."

By Roger Ebert

The first shot tells us "45365 is the zip code of the town." In this achingly beautiful film, that zip code belongs to Sidney, Ohio, a handsome town of about 20,000 residents. The brothers Bill and Turner Ross were born there perhaps 30 years ago. Of course they knew everybody in town, and when they spent seven months of 2007 filming its daily life, their presence must have eventually become commonplace. Their film

evokes what Winesburg, Ohio might have looked like as a documentary.

Take me for an example. I knew everyone in the film. I grew up there. Well, actually in area code 61820, which is Urbana, Illinois. My home town was close to Sidney, Illinois, just as 45365 is not far from Urbana, Ohio. There are also towns named Homer and Philo near both towns named Urbana. East central Illinois was settled by people from Ohio.

In my midwestern town, I knew these people, their homes, their friendliness, the trouble some of them got into, and I knew why after the high school football game some of the kids hung out under the arc lamps and others were in the shade of the bleachers with the hoods pulled up on their sweatshirts. I even recognized, because I once covered the police beat, exactly the tone of voice a policeman will use after stopping a drunk driver he's known for ten years.

The film is privileged. No one is filmed with a hidden camera. The camera must have been right there, in the living room, the river bank, the barber

shop, the back seat, the football practice, the front lawn when a man agrees to put up a sign supporting a judge running for reelection. The Rosses must have filmed so much they became both trusted and invisible. They know this town without even thinking about it.

There is a beautiful shot during a church service which pans slowly to the right over the congregation and pauses looking into a door to a stairwell. A woman and small girl come up the stairs. The camera follows them back to the left until the girl is deposited back in her pew, having obviously just been taken to the potty. Were those two people cued? Obviously not. I suggest the cameraman, Bill or Turner, observed them getting up, intuited where they were going and why, and composed the camera movement instinctively. A brief shot you may not even consciously notice, but a perfect shot, reading the room as our minds do. All human life is in it.

I've never seen a barber shop like the one in the film. All three barbers are surprisingly young; one seems to be a teenager. Yet



Directors Bill Ross and Turner Ross accept an award at the 2010 Independent Spirit Awards.



FRIDAY 1pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

45365

(2009) No MPA rating

Directed by
Bill Ross and Turner Ross

Awards:
Bill and Turner Ross' first feature length film, 45365, was the winner of 2009's SXSW Grand Jury Award for Best Documentary Feature and the Independent Spirit Truer Than Fiction Award. They have gone on to receive numerous awards and nominations, including nominations for Editing, Cinematography, and Debut Feature at the Cinema Eye Honors and the London BFI Grierson Award.

Running time: 90 minutes
Print Courtesy: **7th Arts Releasing**

there is the order and routine of a small-town barber shop with barbers as old as Moses. Do these kids own the shop? Well, why not? It would cost less than a Supercuts franchise. What do they talk about? What all barbers talk about, the Friday night football game.

Sidney has what can only be described as a great radio station. Local human beings sit before the mikes and run the boards. This station isn't a robot from Los Angeles. They play hits of the 80s and 90s, they make announcements, they have a sports talk show about the Sidney Yellow-jackets. The team has a chicken dinner benefit coming up. Adults \$7, kids \$3.

It looks like rain on the day of the parade, but the station's reporter is on the spot. He's hooked up via his cell phone, and interviews a woman on the street with

a tiny mike he holds up to his mouth, and then to hers. He tells everyone to come on downtown, the skies are clearing. At the carnival, Elvis Junior is onstage. It's pouring rain. A guy uses a broom to push up the canvas roof of the tent and spill out the rainwater. A mobile home has been painted up as an exhibit for LIVE! The World's Smallest Woman!

Trains rumble through Sidney on business of their own. The radio station is used for the judicial candidate to record "...and I approve of this message." A man goes to court for sentencing.

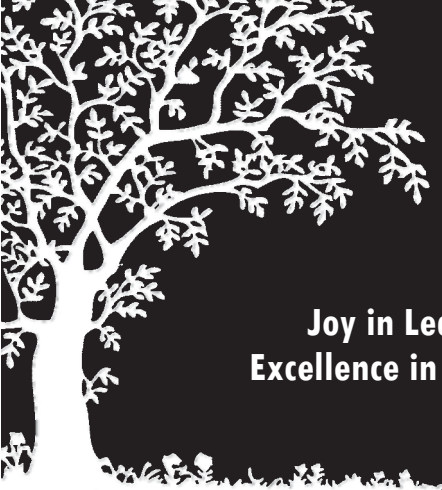
Drunk.

We've seen two of his former wives agreeing that he needs to get his act together. They argue over whether he left the one for the other, or left the one and then married the other. They don't exactly seem to be fighting over him.

Spring, summer, autumn, winter. Summer showers. The first snow falling out at the abandoned drive-in theater. Music on Radio 105.5 Lawns. Good looking old buildings. Sidney still looks like a town, not a squatter's camp of fast food outlets. One extraordinarily stupid review of the film complains "all of these situations are filmed as if we already know the story of who these people are. We don't even learn anyone's names."

This isn't that kind of a documentary. If you need to know everybody's name, you'll never, ever understand this film. Hell, I could go to Sidney, Ohio tomorrow and feel right at home.

"45365" won the \$25,000 Roger and Chaz Ebert Truer than Fiction Award at the 2010 Independent Spirits. The contest was independently judged.



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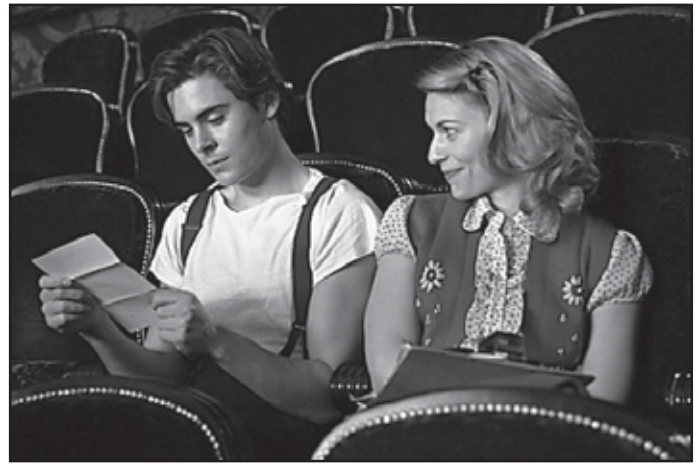
Orson Welles, 'Great Man,' as a young ego

By Roger Ebert

Remember that Orson Welles himself didn't always look like Orson Welles. He was a master of makeup and disguise, and even when appearing in the first person, liked to use a little putty to build up a nose he considered a tad too snubbed. The impersonation of Welles by Christian McKay in "Me and Orson Welles" is the centerpiece of the film, and from it, all else flows. We can almost accept that this is the Great Man.

Twenty-four years after his death at 70, Welles is more than ever a Great Man. There is something about his manner, his voice and the way he carries himself that evokes greatness, even if it is only his own conviction of it. He is widely thought of as having made one masterpiece, "Citizen Kane" (1941) and several other considerable films, but flaming out into uncompleted projects and failed promise. Yet today even such a film as "The Magnificent Ambersons" (1942), with its ending destroyed by the studio, often makes lists of the greatest of all time.

Oh, he had an ego. He once came to appear at Chicago's Auditorium Theatre. A snowstorm shut down the city, but he was able to get to the theater from his nearby hotel. At curtain time, he stepped before the handful of people who had been able to attend. "Good evening," he said. "I am Orson Welles -- director, producer; actor; impresario; writer; artist; magician; star of stage, screen and radio, and a pretty fair singer. Why are there so many of me, and so few of you?"



Zac Efron and Claire Danes in a scene from "Me and Orson Welles."

Richard Linklater's "Me and Orson Welles" is one of the best movies about the theater I've ever seen, and one of the few to relish the resentment so many of Welles' collaborators felt for the Great Man. He was such a multitasker that while staging his famous Mercury Theatre productions on Broadway, he also starred in several radio programs, carried on an active social life and sometimes napped by commuting between jobs in a hired ambulance. Much of the day for a Welles cast member was occupied in simply waiting for him to turn up at the theater.

Most viewers of this film will not necessarily know a lot about Welles' biography. There's no need to. Everything is here in context. The film involves the Mercury's first production, a "Julius Caesar" set in Mussolini's Italy. It sees this enterprise through the eyes of Richard Samuels (Zac Efron), a young actor who is hired as a mascot by Welles, and somehow

rises to a speaking role. He is star-struck and yet self-possessed and emboldened by a sudden romance that overtakes him with a Mercury cohort, Sonja Jones (Claire Danes).

The film is steeped in theater lore. The impossible hours, the rehearsals, the gossip, the intrigue, the hazards of stage trap doors, the quirks of personalities, the egos, the imbalance of a star surrounded entirely by supporting actors -- supporting on stage and in life.

Many of the familiar originals are represented here, not least Joseph Cotton (James Tupper), who co-starred with Welles in "Citizen Kane" and "The Third Man." Here is John Houseman (Eddie Marsan, not bulky enough but evocative), who was Welles' long-suffering producer. And the actor George Coulouris (Ben Chaplin), who played Mr. Thatcher in "Kane." All at the beginning, all in embryo, all promised by Welles they would make history. They believed him, and they did.

Richard Linklater's "Me and Orson Welles" is one of the best movies about the theater I've ever seen, and one of the few to relish the resentment so many of Welles' collaborators felt for the Great Man.



FRIDAY 4pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

ME AND ORSON WELLES
(2008) PG-13

Directed by
Richard Linklater

Written by
Holly Gent Palmo,
Vincent Palmo Jr.

Cast:
Zac Efron
as Richard Samuels
Claire Danes
as Sonja Jones
Christian McKay
as Orson Welles

Running time: 114 minutes
Print Courtesy: **Detour**
Filmproduction

McKay summons above all the unflappable self-confidence of Welles, a con man in addition to his many other gifts, who was later able to talk actors into appearing in films that were shot over a period of years, as funds became available from his jobs in other films, on TV, on the stage and in countless commercials ("We will sell no wine before its time"). Self-confidence is something you can't act; you have to possess it, and McKay, in his first leading role, has that in abundance.

He also suggests the charisma that swept people up. People were able to feel that even in his absence; I recall having lunch several times at the original Ma Maison in Beverly Hills, where no matter who I was interviewing (once it was Michael Caine), the conversation invariably came around to a mysterious shadowy figure dining in the shade -- Welles, who ate




Christian McKay and Zac Efron in a scene from "Me and Orson Welles."


lunch there every single day.

Efron and Danes make an attractive couple, both young and bold, unswayed by Welles' greatness but knowingly allowing themselves to be used by it. Linklater's feel for onstage and backstage is tangible, and so is his

identification with Welles. He was 30 when he made his first film, Welles of course 25, both swept along by unflappable fortitude. "Me and Orson Welles" is not only entertaining but an invaluable companion to the life and career of the Great Man.



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Falling in love with a perfect love story

By Roger Ebert

Norman Jewison's "Only You" is the kind of light-hearted romance that's an endangered species in today's Hollywood. It is total fantasy, light as a feather, contrary to all notions of common sense, it features a couple of stars who are really good kissers – and it takes place mostly in Venice, Rome, and the glorious Italian hillside town of Positano. What more do you want? Movies like this were once written for Katharine Hepburn ("Summertime"), Audrey Hepburn ("Roman Holiday") and Rossano Brazzi ("Three Coins in the Fountain"). Or remember Clark Gable and Sophia Loren in "It Happened in Naples"? There is a case to be made that no modern actors have quite the innocence or the faith to play such heedless lovers, but Marisa Tomei and Robert Downey Jr. somehow manage to lose all the baggage of our realistic, cynical age, and give us a couple of fools in love.

"Only You" gives us two people who should fall in love and live happily ever after together for the rest of their days. They know it, we know it, and all their friends know it.

The movie begins when the heroine, Faith, is 11. She and her cousin Kate ask a Ouija board who she will marry, and the answer is clear: She will marry a man named Damon Bradley. A few years later, a fortuneteller tells her the same thing. Such a coincidence cannot be ignored, and so "Damon Bradley" becomes a psychic beacon for the appropriately named Faith.

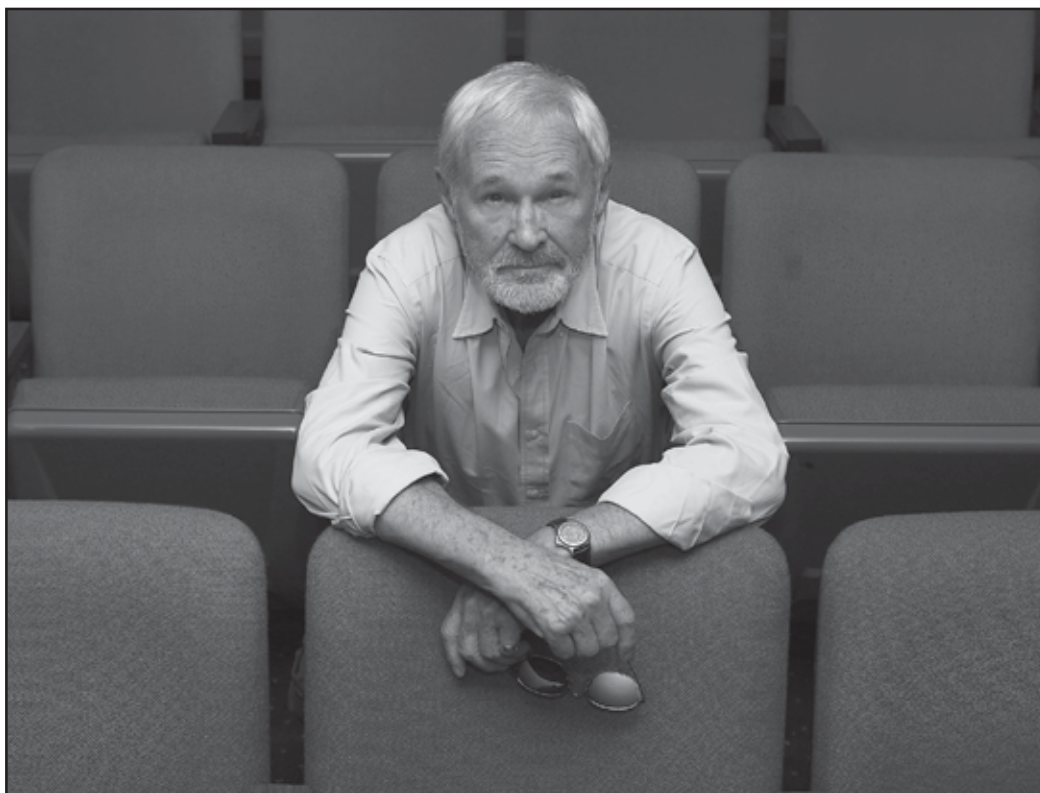
Years pass, however, and no Damon Bradley appears, and finally Faith, now played by Marisa Tomei, becomes engaged to a podiatrist (John Benjamin Hickey). Then, on the eve of her wedding, she receives a call from a friend of the groom's, who cannot attend

the ceremony because he is on his way to Venice. The friend's name, of course, is Damon Bradley, and Faith abandons all her wedding plans, of course, to fly after him to Venice.

Peter, the man who has made the call, is played by Robert Downey Jr., and one of the questions posed by the movie is whether he is, in fact, really Damon Bradley. What is interesting is that he may be, even if he's not – a paradox you will understand after you see the movie. Whether he is or isn't hardly matters after Faith and Peter fall in love in Venice, or after they continue their romance in Rome, or after it nearly comes to pieces in Positano.

The screenplay by Diane Drake of course throws great hurdles in the way of the lovers, not least those caused by Faith's explicit belief in the childhood prophecy. All of this is sheer contrivance and artifice, which is part of the fun. There is a fine line between the Idiot Plot, so called because the characters act in defiance of common sense, and what we might call, in deference to Jewison's 1987 hit, the Moonstruck Plot – in which the characters also act in defiance of common sense, but we don't mind because it's fun.

"Only You" gives us two people who should fall in love and live happily together for the rest of their days. They know it, we know it, and all of their friends know it. We also know with a confidence bordering on certainty that they will fall in love. And so there is a special kind of movie pleasure in watching them pigheadedly postpone their bliss – especially when they do it on Italian locations



Norman Jewison, director of "Only You."



FRIDAY 8:30pm

lovingly photographed by Sven Nykvist.

I can think of many angst-laden young Hollywood stars, many of them accomplished actors, who could not have come within miles of the work done by Downey and Tomei in this movie. There is craft involved, yes, and even a certain inspiration, but what I reacted to more strongly was an ineffable sense of good nature: Tomei and Downey seem happy in their being here, and happier together than apart. That it what must be present if we're to respond to a story like this. I have not read in the supermarket papers that they are "linked in real life," and so I must assume their chemistry comes from acting. All the more remarkable. (Or maybe not; many real-life couples sometimes seem fed up with one another on the screen.) Norman Jewison, who directs "Only You" with a light, smiling



Marisa Tomei and Robert Downey Jr. in a scene from "Only You."

touch, began his directing career just as movies like this were going out of style. He directed Doris Day in "The Thrill of It All" (1963), co-starring James Garner, and in "Send Me No Flowers" (1964), with Rock Hudson, and I hope Marisa Tomei understands it is a compli-

ment when I say that in "Only You" she has some of Doris Day's sunny warmth. I suppose Doris Day is out of fashion, and so are movies like "Only You," but just because something is not done anymore doesn't mean it's not worth doing.

BEHIND THE SCENES

ONLY YOU
(1994) PG

Directed by
Norman Jewison

Marisa Tomei

as Faith

Robert Downey Jr.

as Peter

Bonnie Hunt

as Kate

Joaquim De Almeida

as Giovanni

Trivia:

Bridget Fonda was the original choice for the lead female role.

Running time: 108 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Sony Pictures**

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Eileen and Chuck

A Small Act

An education... for \$15 a month

By Roger Ebert

The heartwarming documentary "A Small Act" centers on the life story of Chris Mburu, who as a small boy living in a mud house in a Kenyan village had his primary and secondary education paid for by a Swedish woman. This cost her \$15 a month. They had never met. He went on to the University of Nairobi, graduated from Harvard Law School, and is today a United Nations Human Rights Commissioner.

The film shows Mburu seeking the Swedish woman who "made my life possible." She is Hilde Back. Before even meeting her, in gratitude he started a foundation named the Hilde Back Foundation, to fund scholarships for poor village children. She is now 85 years old, a German Jew who was sent to Sweden as a child. Her family died in the Holocaust. She never married, has lived in the same apartment for 35 years, was a school-teacher. She is a tiny woman, but robust and

filled with energy. We see them meeting for the first time.

She is flown to Kenya, serenaded by the choir from Mburu's village, feasted, thanked, gownned in traditional robes. She says that her \$15 was an insignificant sum to her, but she kept it up because she thought even a small act was worth performing.

In the film, we see the mud house Chris grew up in. Then we follow Kimani, Ruth and Caroline -- three Kenyan students who hope to win high scores and continue in school. This will depend on winning one of the scholarships. Their families pin all of their hopes on these kids.

One says she would miss her family at a boarding school, but would enjoy being able to study by electric light. In this village the students study by the light of a single oil flame. Most families in Kenya want their children to attend high school, seeing that as the key to success in life. They lack the money, but recent-



Jennifer Arnold, director of "A Small Act."

ly, Kenya has been able to make primary education free.

The schools we see are not physically impressive; the one focused on in the film is a very basic brick structure with no amenities and crowded classrooms with simple board benches and desks. A gym? Don't make me laugh.

Education focuses on reading (in English) and math, with some history and geography. The students are impressed by their ability to be in school at all.

Their parents sacrifice to send them; child labor could add to the family income. At the end of primary school, they take tests to qualify for secondary education if they can afford it. The film shows some of the test questions. To me, they look difficult for kids that age. They pass or fail; too many American schools graduate students who are functionally illiterate.

Hilde Back is asked if, since she never had children, she thought of Chris as a son. We see in the film that they stay in close touch. "But I have had children," she replied. "I was a teacher. I had many, many children." And one lived in a mud house in Kenya.



Hilde Back in a scene from "A Small Act."



SATURDAY 11am

Hilde Back is asked if, since she never had children, she thought of Chris as a son. We see in the film that they stay in close touch. "But I have had children," she replied. "I was a teacher. I had many, many children." And one lived in a mud house in Kenya.



Hilde Back and Chris Mburu in a scene from "A Small Act."

BEHIND THE SCENES

A SMALL ACT
(2010) No MPAA rating

Written and Directed by
Jennifer Arnold

Produced by
Patti Lee

Cast
Chris Mburu
Jane Wanjiru Muigai
Hilde Back

Running time: 98 minutes
Print Courtesy: **Harambee Media, Inc.**

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Life, Above All

Rising to some of life's toughest challenges

By Roger Ebert

Oliver Schmitz's "Life, Above All" has been the best heart-warmer and tear-jerker so far – and when I write from Cannes I use the term "tear-jerker" as a compliment, because this is a hardened crowd and when you hear snuffling in the dark you know it has been honestly earned. The film is about deep human emotions, evoked with sympathy and love.

"Life, Above All" takes place entirely within a South African township, one with moderate prosperity and well-tended homes. It centers on the 12-year-old Chanda, who takes on the responsibility of holding her family together after her baby sister dies. Her mother is immobilized by grief, her father by drink, and a neighbor woman helps her care for two younger siblings.

Suspicion spreads in the neighborhood that the real cause of the family's problems is AIDS, although the word itself isn't said aloud until well into the film. More plot details can await my review, but let me particularly praise the performances of young Khomotso Manyaka, in her first role as Chanda; Keabaka Makanyane as



Oliver Schmitz, director of "Life, Above All." © Dreamer Joint Venture GmbH Alsbruk 2010, Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

her mother, and Tinah Mnumzana as the neighbor. The film's ending frightens the audience with a dire threat, and then finds an uplift that's unlikely enough in its details to qualify as magic realism.

"Life, Above All" must be particularly effective in South Africa, where former president Thabo Mbeki persisted in puzzling denial about the causes and treatment of AIDS. This contributed to a climate of ig-

norance and mystery surrounding the disease, which in fact increased its spread. By directly dealing with the poisonous climate of rumor and gossip, the film takes a stand. But in nations where AIDS has been demystified, "Life, Above All" will play strongly as pure human drama, and of two women, one promptly and one belatedly, rising courageously to a challenge.

The film is about deep human emotions filled with sympathy and love.



A still image from "Life, Above All."



A still image from "Life, Above All."

SATURDAY 2pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

LIFE ABOVE ALL
(2010) PG-13

Directed by
Oliver Schmitz

Khomotso Manyaka
as Chandra
Keabaka Makanyane
as Esther
Lerato Mvelase
as Lillian

Running time: 100 minutes
Print Courtesy: **Sony Pictures Classics**

Leaves of Grass

One of the year's best ...
and Ed Norton times two



Edward Norton plays a dual role, twin brothers who have grown apart, in this scene from "Leaves of Grass."

By Roger Ebert

Tim Blake Nelson's "Leaves of Grass" is some kind of sweet, wacky masterpiece. It takes all sorts of risks, including a dual role with Edward Norton playing twin brothers, and it pulls them off. It is certainly the most intelligent, philosophical and poetic film I can imagine that involves five murders in the marijuana-dealing community of Oklahoma and includes John Prine singing "Illegal Smile."

Sometimes you can't believe your luck as a movie unfolds. There is a mind behind it, joyful invention, obvious ambition. As is often the case, I had studiously avoiding reading anything

at all about "Leaves of Grass" before going to see the movie, although I rather doubted it would be about Walt Whitman. What I did know is that the actor Tim Blake Nelson has written and directed three films I enormously admired: "Eye of God" (1997), "O" (2001) and "The Grey Zone" (2001), all three dealing in a concrete dramatic way with important questions: Religion, redemption, race, the Holocaust. And that the actor Edward Norton has never agreed to appear in a film he didn't believe he had reason to respect.

The film opens with Norton as a philosopher named Bill Kincaid giving a lecture on Socrates to a packed classroom of star-struck students at Brown. It's a measure of Nelson's writing and Norton's acting that this lecture isn't a sound bite but is allowed to continue until the professor develops his point, and it's an interesting one. Only as I think back do I realize what an audacious way that is to open a

movie about the drug culture of rural Oklahoma.

Spoilers in this paragraph. Kincaid is on the fast track. He's published books, is a crossover intellectual superstar, is offered a chance to open his own department at Harvard. Then he gets a telephone call telling him his twin brother Brady is dead. He has long since severed his old family ties, but he flies home for the funeral to Little Dixie, Oklahoma, and is met at the airport by his twin's best friend



Tim Blake Nelson, director of "Leaves of Grass."

"Leaves of Grass" is some kind of sweet, wacky masterpiece. *It takes all sorts of risks, including a dual role with Edward Norton playing twin brothers, and it pulls them off.*



SATURDAY 6:30pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

LEAVES OF GRASS

(2009) R

Written and Directed by
Tim Blake Nelson

Edward Norton
as Bill/Brady Kincaid

Tim Blake Nelson
as Bolger

Susan Sarandon
as Daisy Kincaid

Keri Russell
as Janet

Richard Dreyfuss
as Pug Rothbaum

Steve Earle
as Buddy Fuller

Running time: 105 minutes
Print Courtesy: **First Look Pictures**

(Nelson). As it turns out, Brady is not dead, and the story was a lie designed to lure him back home for two purposes. One is to force him to see his mother, a 1960s pothead played by Susan Sarandon. The other is to act as his double to establish an alibi while Brady goes up to Tulsa for a meeting with the region's dominant marijuana dealer Tug Rothbaum (Richard Dreyfuss).

Now I will abandon synopsis and consider the pleasures of the film. First there's the dual performance by Norton, who is flawless as both an elite intellectual and a good ol' boy. In appearance, movement and dialect he's for all intents two different people, one who has reinvented himself and shed his down-home roots, the other who is growing the best marijuana around. I like the way the film makes the twins equally brilliant; Brady has designed and built a hydroponic farm that is producing its seventh generation of top-quality weed. He is also something of a philosopher himself. In writing his dialogue, Nelson doesn't condescend. He is a Tulsa native who dismisses the widespread notion that a man's "hick" accent (the movie's word) provides a measure of his intelligence. Brady sounds like a semi-literate redneck, but he's very smart.



Keri Russell and Edward Norton in a scene from "Leaves of Grass."

The story is the terrain the characters move through, and they are always the foreground.

Faithful readers will know I am much occupied with the various definitions of God. Here is Brady's theory, as explained to his best buddy: There is a God, but man can never conceive of him or know him, because God is perfect and we cannot know perfection. Take for an example parallel lines extending to infinity. There can never be indefinitely parallel lines demonstrating themselves in the real physical world, because it does not admit of parallelism.

That is widely understood. Ah, but man can conceive of parallel lines, and prove them absolutely by mathematics. Just so with Brady's God. We can form an idea of perfection reaching into infinity, but we live in a universe that will never – can never – intersect with his. Rather elegant thinking, wouldn't you say, as expressed in Brady's own pothead bar-room vernacular in the cab of a pickup truck with a shotgun rack.

I suspect there's a lot of Tim Blake Nelson in this film that is buried out of sight. Some elements are visible. That would include the Jewish community of Tulsa, which Nelson affectionately describes as "wildly eccentric, unlikely and exotic." The plot includes not only Rothbaum the drug lord and well-known charitable benefactor, but Ken Neuwald (Josh Pais) the financially desperate orthodontist who finds himself bizarrely drawn into the plot. As is Rabbi Zimmerman (Maggie Siff), who explains to Billy Kincaid her belief that the world is broken and our duty is to try to fix it.

Another valuable character is Janet (Keri Russell), a local English teacher and poet, who quotes Whitman to Billy and entrances him in a way he has never before allowed. I suspect Janet has personal meaning to Nelson. In a press conference he said he is grateful to have been raised around books and rhetoric, and much of his dialogue here may be payback. Yes, but also always perfectly appropriate and in tune.

The plot involves as many dead and severely wounded bodies lying around as in "Blood Simple," and Nelson weaves it expertly without a lot of visible "plotting." The story is the terrain the characters move through, and they are always the foreground. What stands out is the ability of both Billy and Brady (perhaps even more Brady) to understand the world philosophically and deal with it intellectually.

Here's a quote for the video box: "One of the year's best!" No, Tim Blake Nelson...thank you.



Susan Sarandon and Edward Norton in a scene from "Leaves of Grass."

The sublime Tilda in lust and love



Tilda Swinton stars in "I Am Love."

By Roger Ebert

Did she understand when she married her husband what sort of family she was joining? She knew they were rich Italian aristocrats, operators of textile mills in Milan. But did she understand that as a wife from Russia, she would serve and provide and even be loved, but would never truly be a member?

When we see Emma (Tilda Swinton) she is preparing the Recchi house for the birthday party of the patriarch. She seems to relate more as a caterer than as a hostess. At the head of the table is the grand old Edoardo (Gabriele Ferzetti). Among those gathered are his son and her husband, Tancredi (Pippo Delbono). The old man makes an unexpected announcement: He is retiring, and putting Tancredi in charge. But not Tancredi alone. His grandson, their son, Edo (Flavio Parenti) also will share the responsibility.

Is Emma filled with joy? Her husband and son will inherit the dynasty? She is so calm and expert, it's hard to say. Tilda Swinton is a daring actress who doesn't project emotions so much as embody them. "I Am Love"

provides an ideal role for her, in that her actions speak instead of words. We learn she has her own private space, that after launching a family event, she likes to leave it running smoothly and retire to her room upstairs.

The opening act of Luca Guadagnino's film establishes the stature of the Recchi family as surely as the Corleones are established in "The Godfather," or the Salinas in Visconti's "The Leopard." It may be impossible to write about this film without evoking "The Leopard," not simply because they both involve Italian aristocrats, but because they involve matters of succession, and the way that love and lust can breach the walls aristocrats live behind. Guadagnino makes the connection inescapable by the use of the name Tancredi; in "The Leopard," Alain Delon plays the Salina nephew of that name.

The Recchi family has been living in a particular way for a long time. Cushioned by great wealth, working in an industry associated with style, never challenged, well-educated, its hungers cloaked in tradition, it occupies its place of privilege effortlessly. Emma speaks

Italian fluently, but with a Russian accent, a reminder that she is not quite one of them.

Few actresses can embody urgent sexual desire so well as Swinton. She is realistic about such feelings. When she learns her daughter Elisabetta (Alba Rohrwacher) is a lesbian, she reacts not as a mother, possibly with shock, but as a woman, in surprise and curiosity. She has heard of such things. The heart has its reasons.

The feast opening the film is prepared by Antonio (Edoardo Gabbriellini), a friend of her son Edo's. She consults with this young chef, and a feeling passes into her. Later, on a visit to her daughter in San Remo, she happens to see Antonio, and with decision follows him through the streets. This is all done without dialogue. The camera is pursuer and pursued. The longer she follows him, the more certain they must meet.

Of course they make love. Actresses are often called upon to enact sex in the movies. Swinton does it differently with each character, understanding that sexuality is as distinctive as speech or taste. Emma is urgent as if a dam has



SATURDAY 9:30pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

I AM LOVE
(2009) R

Written and Directed by
Luca Guadagnino

Tilda Swinton
as Emma Recchi
Flavio Parenti
as Edoardo Recchi Jr.
Edoardo Gabbriellini
as Antonio Biscaglia
Alba Rohrwacher
as Elisabetta Recchi
Pippo Delbono
as Tancredi Recchi
Maria Paiato
as Ida Roselli

Running time: 120 minutes
Print Courtesy: Magnolia Pictures

burst, releasing not passion but happiness. Of course this affair threatens her relationship with her husband, her son and her family. But most long-established families have overcome the inconveniences of adultery. Continuity is more important than commitment. The film now observes the ways, not predictable, in which this new sexual act affects Emma's role.

All this time, Guadagnino has been paying due attention to other important members of the family. There is Allegra (Marisa Berenson), gatekeeper of her husband. There is the long-serving housekeeper Ida (Maria Paiato), who sees and understands everything and in many ways is Emma's refuge in the household. There is the personality of Emma's son, Edo, as yet untouched by the ordeals of business life, more open in his personal feelings. And there is the overarching sense in which the

Recchi family embodies a tradition which, like a church, requires devotion if not belief.

"I Am Love" is an amazing film. It is deep, rich, human. It is not about rich and poor, but about old and new. It is about the ancient war between tradition and feeling. For this role, Tilda Swinton learned to speak Italian with a Russian

accent, as Tilda Swinton would, but her performance is nothing as trivial as a feat of learning. She evokes Emma as a woman who for years has accepted the needs of the Recchis and discovers in a few days to accept her own needs. She must have been waiting a long time for Antonio, whoever he would be.



A scene from "I Am Love."



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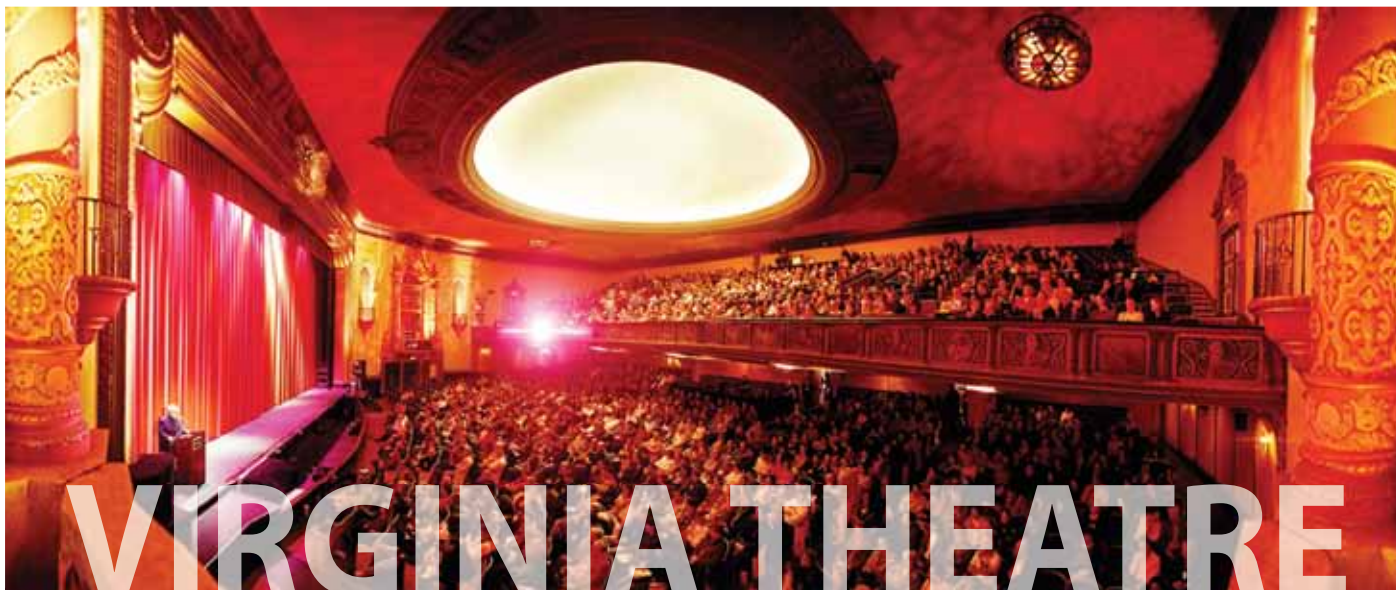
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Louder Than a Bomb

Film screening sponsored by: Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance

From heartbreak to hope in the art of a poem

By Roger Ebert

Poetry slams began in Chicago in 1984 and have become an international phenomenon without most people probably having heard of them. They're poetry readings as a spectator sport. Individuals and teams are scored by judges on the Olympic 10-point scale, but while Olympic diving judges claim to be looking at specific elements in a dive, slam judges are responding to emotion, charisma and--well, poetry. Some slammers are also rap artists, but slam and rap and different art forms, and slammers rely only on their voices.

"Louder Than a Bomb" is about the 2008 Chicago-area slam of the same name, the nation's largest. Teams and soloists from 60 high schools compete, and the finalists face off in a city-wide slam that fills a theater usually used for rock concerts. The suspense that year initially centered on Steinmetz, a troubled inner city school that had never entered before it won the 2007 Bomb in a thrilling upset. Can Steinmetz and its coach, James Sloan, repeat?

The film was directed by Greg Jacobs and Jon Siskel (Gene's nephew), who followed several competitors for months and guessed well in choosing those they focused on. The 2008 Steinmetz team had some gifted repeaters, and we also meet three outstanding solo talents:

- Nova Venerable from Oak Park/River Forest High School, who helps her mom with the complex needs of a disabled kid brother and then writes about that and her absent father.
- Nate Marshall from Whitney Young Magnet High School, whose parents were addicts but who, when asked to choose between basketball and poetry, chose words and masters them with almost bewildering fluency.
- Adam Gottlieb, from Northside College Prep, whose poems are so joyous and whose performances so charismatic that he makes it possible to think of a slammer as a rock star.
- The Steinmetz team, calling themselves the Steinmenauts, are Lamar Jordan, Kevin Harris, Jésus Lark, Charles Smith, and She'Kira McKnight. They develop artistic



Greg Jacobs and Jon Siskel, directors of "Louder Than a Bomb."

and personal differences that Coach Sloan helps them work out during tense scenes. When they triumphantly appear on stage, their very presence is a tribute to their poetry.

Siskel and Jacobs focus on the performances, which are inspiring and electrifying. Their film left me wondering why American television must be so gutless and shallow. If these kids and others like them were programmed against America Idol or Dancing With the Stars, the shabbiness of those shows would be placed in dramatic contrast. Here are real performers with real feelings and important things to say.

I hesitate to hint about the outcome of the contest, nor to



The Steinmetz team in a scene from "Louder Than a Bomb."



SUNDAY 12noon

BEHIND THE SCENES

LOUDER THAN A BOMB
(2010) No MPAA rating

Directed by
Greg Jacobs and Jon Siskel

Featuring:
Kevin Coval, Adam Gottlieb,
Elizabeth Graf, Kevin Harris,
John Hood, Lamar Jorden, Peter
Kahn, Jésus Lark, Nate Marshall,
She'Kira McKnight, Preye Porri,
James Sloan, Charles Smith,
Robbie Q. Telfer and Nova
Venerable

Running time: 100 minutes
Print Courtesy: Siskel/Jacob
Productions

steal some of the thunder and surprises from the performers. I'll end on this. After "Louder Than a Bomb" plays theatrically, it will air on the Oprah Winfrey Network. Why doesn't Oprah consider it a pilot for a series? America's Got Talent, all right, but maybe we've been looking for it in the wrong places. *minireview*

"Louder Than a Bomb" (Unrated, 100 minutes). Chicago's annual city-wide poetry slam competition involves teams or performers from 60 high schools, and the finals, called Louder Than a Bomb, are like a rock concert crossed with a basketball tournament. We meet the team from Steinmetz, hoping to repeat as city champions, and poets from Whitney Young, Oak Park/River Forest, and Northside College Prep. Inspiring and electrifying. Directed by Greg Jacobs and Jon Siskel (Gene's nephew).

*Here are **real** performers with **real** feelings and **important** things to say.*



Nova Venerable in a scene from "Louder Than a Bomb."



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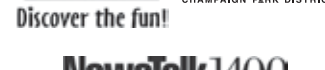
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Ebertfest Encore Schedule

During Ebertfest, The Art Theater will be encoring films from this year and a few selections from prior years. Separate admission is required for The Art Theater's shows, even for Ebertfest pass holders.

Screenings at The Art Theater

FRIDAY (4/29):

- 5:00 – *My Dog Tulip*
- 7:30 - *Metropolis* (Restored version with original soundtrack, not Alloy Orchestra)
- 10:30 - *Waking Life* (not an Ebertfest film, but directed by Richard Linklater)

SATURDAY (4/30)

- 1:00 – *My Dog Tulip*
- 3:00 - *Frozen River* (Ebertfest 2009)
- 5:30 - *My Winnipeg* (Ebertfest 2009)
- 7:30 - *Tiny Furniture*
- 10:00 - *Waking Life* (not an Ebertfest film, but directed by Richard Linklater)

SUNDAY (5/1)

- 12:00 – *Sita Sings the Blues* (Ebertfest 2009)
- 2:00 - *Metropolis* (Restored version with original soundtrack, not Alloy Orchestra)
- 5:00 – *Playtime* (Ebertfest 2005)
- 7:30 - *Tiny Furniture*

MONDAY (5/2)

- 7:30 - *Synecdoche, NY* (Ebertfest 2010)

TUESDAY (5/3)

- 7:30 - *Sita Sings the Blues* (Ebertfest 2009)

WEDNESDAY (5/4)

- 7:30 – Closed for a private rental

Thursday (5/5)

- 7:30 - *I Am Love*
- 10:00 - *Waking Life* (not an Ebertfest film, but directed by Richard Linklater)

All films will be digitally presented

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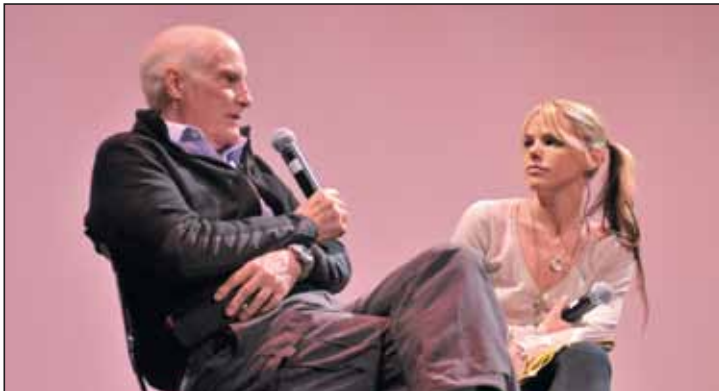
A look back at the 2010 Festival

*Photos courtesy of
Thompson McClellan*



Local media interviewing Roger and Chaz at the Opening Reception hosted by President and Mrs. Ikenberry.

*Director Barbet
Schroeder and Kim
Morgan discuss
"Barfly" on stage
at the 2010 fes-
tival.*



Vincent twirling his jacket and dancing to University of Illinois Marching Band's Illinois Loyalty song after the screening of "Vincent: A Life in Color."



Director Yajira Takita receives a standing ovation after the screening of "Departures" at the 2010 festival with Director Nate Kohn and Chaz Ebert.



Roger and his Far Flung Correspondents on the panel "The Global Web of Film Lovers, moderated by Omer Mozaffar, during the 2010 festival.



Festival guests on stage after the screening of "Synecdoche, New York." L-R Michael Barker (Sony Pictures Classics), Nell Minow, Anthony Bregman (producer), Kim Morgan, Charlie Kaufman (director).



Roger and Chaz embrace at the close of the 2010 festival.



Festival Director Nate Kohn moderates "Getting the Damned Thing Made" panel discussion at the 2010 festival.



Director Michael Tolkin on stage before the screening of "The New Age" at the 2010 festival.



Director James Mottern and Michelle Monaghan on stage after the screening of "Trucker."



Panel discussion audience asking questions during 2010 festival.



Governor Pat Quinn declared it "Ebertfest Day" at the opening of the 12th Annual Festival and presented Roger and Chaz with the Proclamation.

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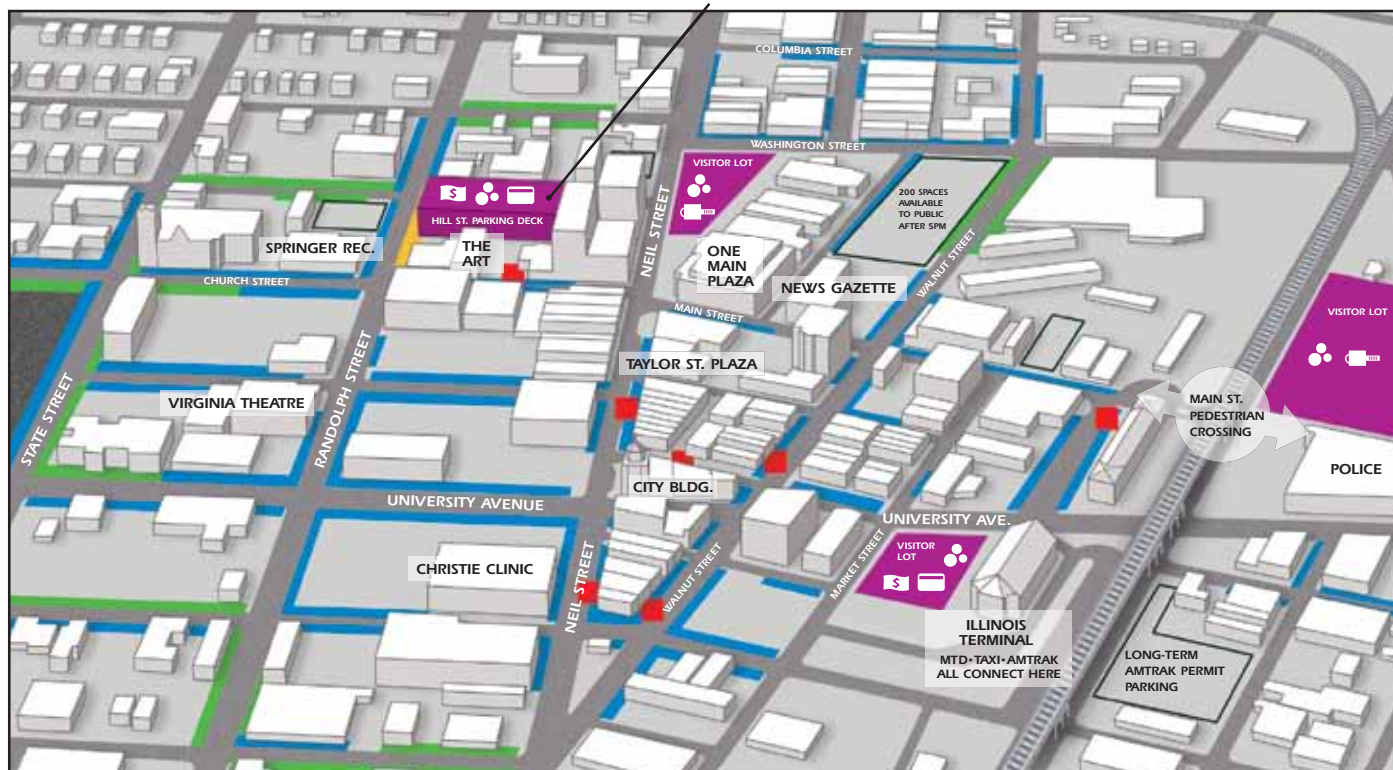


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“Ebert Presents” brings film reviews back to TV

By Melissa Silverberg, Daily Illini Staff Writer

Roger Ebert is back on TV, well at least his name is. “Ebert Presents, At the Movies,” a new weekly program which premiered Jan. 21, brings the genre of critical reviews that was made famous by Ebert back to TV viewers across the nation.

“Ebert Presents” is co-hosted by Christy Lemire of The Associated Press and Ignatiy Vishnevetsky of Mubi.com. The duo discusses and reviews movies each week along with various segments from other well-known film critics, including Ebert himself.

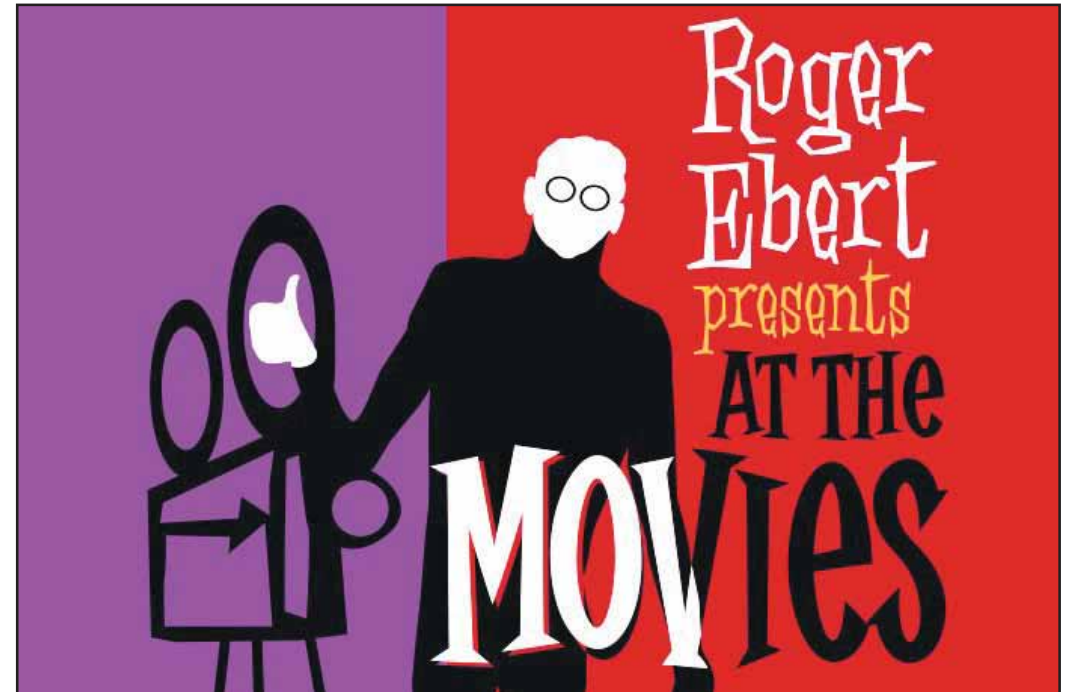
The program is produced in Chicago at WTTW, where Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert began taping “Sneak Previews” some 35 years ago. Ebert has been a part of many other similar shows including “Siskel & Ebert” and “Ebert & Roeper.” Ebert said now was the time to bring film reviews back to television.

“TV benefits from a show of intelligent criticism in the wasteland of meaningless celebrity news,” Ebert said in an e-mail interview. “It’s a corrective to showbiz gossip. And it helps get the news out about non-mainstream films.”

As blogging has expanded over the past several years, there are many more writers expressing their thoughts on films, but Dann Gire, the Daily Herald film critic and a contributor to “Ebert Presents,” said that he still sees film criticism as a serious undertaking.

“Well-written, insightful, knowledgeable, engaging film criticism continues to be an essential form of journalism, especially during the age of the Internet,” Gire said.

Gire said he has been beyond



excited to work with the show and near the legend that is Roger Ebert.

“During the four decades I have known Mr. Ebert, one quality strikes me as his greatest asset, aside from his obvious knowledge and intelligence: Fearlessness,” Gire said. “Who wouldn’t want to work with a guy like that?”

“Ebert Presents at the Movies” is now airing on 320 public television stations nationwide.

The executive producer is Roger’s wife, Chaz Ebert, and the director is Don Dupree, who was the director of “Siskel & Ebert” and “Ebert & Roeper” for 15 years.

“The potential for “Ebert Presents” is what gives me goosebumps,” Gire said. “This program celebrates the movies as an artform, not just popular entertainment, and does it with intelligence and wit.”



Christy Lemire

Christy is the film critic for The Associated Press in LA. Christy filled in for Roger Ebert several times on “At the Movies” in 2007 and has appeared on “The Charlie Rose Show,” “Good Morning America” and “The View,” to name a few.



Ignatiy Vishnevetsky

Ignatiy is a critic and essayist for *MUBI.com*, the *Chicago Reader*, and co-founder of the acclaimed *Cine-File.info*. Ignatiy helps program the Cine-File Selects series at the University of Chicago’s Doc Films, the nation’s oldest film society.



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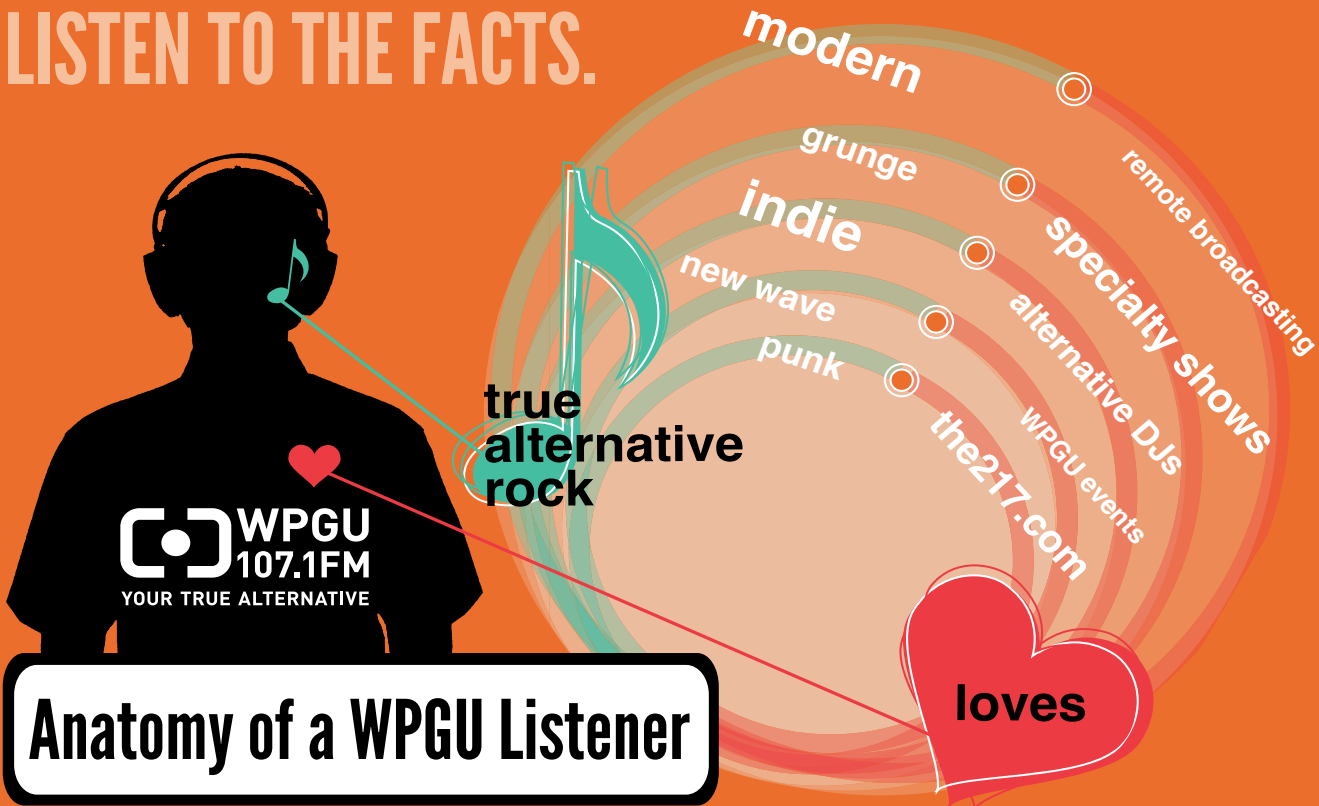
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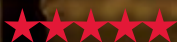
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