

THE COLLEGE OF MEDIA AT ILLINOIS PRESENTS

14th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival 2012



April 25-29, 2012

The Virginia Theatre

203 W. Park, Champaign



www.ebertfest.com

Illustration by Kagan Mcleod

Special Support Provided by Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance and Steak 'n Shake

This year's festival is dedicated to

Paul Cox



“ You will
understand me
when you see
me dance. ”

Schedule of Events

Film Screenings

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

- 7:00 p.m. *Joe Versus the Volcano*
10:00 p.m. *The Truth About Beauty and Blogs*
10:15 p.m. *Phunny Business: A Black Comedy*

Thursday, April 26, 2012

- 1:00 p.m. *Big Fan*
4:00 p.m. *Kinyarwanda*
8:30 p.m. *Terri*
10:30 p.m. *Kind Hearts and Coronets*

Hosted by Patton Oswalt

NOTE: This screening is at Foellinger Auditorium and is free and open to the public.

Friday, April 27, 2012

- 1:00 p.m. *On Borrowed Time*
4:00 p.m. *Wild and Weird with the Alloy Orchestra*
8:30 p.m. *A Separation*

Saturday, April 28, 2012

- 1:00 p.m. *Higher Ground*
4:00 p.m. *Patang*
8:30 p.m. *Take Shelter*

Sunday, April 29, 2012

- 12 noon *Citizen Kane*

Post-Festival Screening

Sunday, April 29, 2012

- 4:30 p.m. *Antwone Fisher*

The Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance is pleased to announce that they will have a special showing of "Antwone Fisher" immediately following the close of Ebertfest (April 29). 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 4:30 p.m. and is free to the public.

Live On-air Interview

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

- 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Jim Turpin's (WDWS-AM 1400) Ebertfest Interview

Panel Discussions

Illini Union

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

Thursday, April 26, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.
The Personal and Political in Film
Moderated by Nate Kohn
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
*Far Flung Correspondents:
What's New Around the World?*
Moderated by Omer Mozaffar
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

Friday, April 27, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.
Underrepresented Cinematic Voices
Moderated by Eric Pierson
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
ON DEMAND: Movies Without Theaters
Moderated by Jim Emerson
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

Workshop

Saturday, April 28, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Shooting Your Short Film
Presented by Don Tingle
General Lounge, 2nd Floor

Special Presentation

Saturday, April 28, 2012

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
The Tree of Life: Making Movies Using Scientific Data
Moderated by Donna Cox and Robert Patterson
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor



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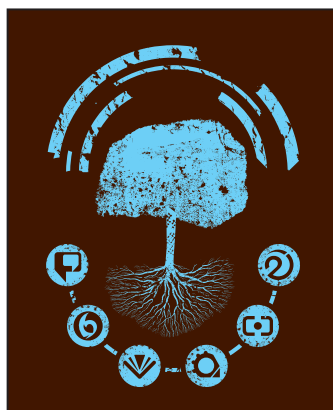
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Welcome

to the 14th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival

This year's festival is dedicated to Paul Cox

From Roger Ebert

Something nice happened to us while we were preparing the schedule for Ebertfest 2012, which plays April 25-29 at the Virginia Theater in Champaign-Urbana, Ill. We'd invited Patton Oswalt to attend with his "Big Fan." He agreed and went one additional step: "I'd like to personally choose a film to show to the students, and discuss it."

That sounded to me like a splendid idea, embodying the spirit of this festival, which combines the love of good films with volunteerism. This is a rare festival where no business takes place. No films are bought or sold. No deals are signed. It's simplicity itself: We join in a classic 1920 palace, 1,600 of us, and watch a film as it should be seen, on a vast screen with perfect sound. Then we talk about them afterwards. The festival and the theater come to us through the work of countless volunteers from the University and the community of Champaign-Urbana. On a more mundane level, the considerable cost of the festival isn't met by ticket sales, and is offset by our generous sponsors, who you'll see thanked on the screen before every screening.

Oswalt's choice to show and discuss is a natural for him: Robert Hamer's "Kind Hearts and Coronets" (1949), starring Alec Guinness – who plays eight different members of the same family, men and women, ranging in age over six decades. Sir Alec's other roles in a long career included Hitler and Obi-Wan Kenobi. *The movie will be shown free and open to the public at 10:30 p.m. April*

26 in Foellinger Auditorium (a new day and time made necessary because of a change in the shooting schedule of Oswalt's new film).

Patton Oswalt himself suggests the same versatility; think of the gulf between his characters in "Big Fan" and 2011's "Young Adult." In seeing "Big Fan" I was struck by how deeply he penetrated to the heart of the character, sidestepping obvious openings for easy comedy and asking himself what many of us must have wondered: Who are those people who seem to live on sports talk radio, as all-knowing experts on first-name terms with the host? "Big Fan" illustrates something I believe: The more specific a performance is, the more universal it can become. The film plays at 1 p.m. April 26.

Now I'd like to discuss the rest of our selections in the order they will appear. As always, they were selected by me, in consultation with the festival director, Nate Kohn. My wife Chaz, who will reprise her popular role as emcee, also had major input.

"Joe Versus the Volcano" (1990) will play at 7:00 p.m. April 25, as our opening night film. No film has almost played in Ebertfest more often than this one. Nate may be able to confirm that it's been shortlisted in at least ten of the past years. Something always came along to crowd it out. Because it was often rumored to be a selection, people started to badger me about when they'd finally be able to see it, and we

determined that this would be the year.

As you will see, John Patrick Shanley's film is so visionary and epic in conception that it really requires a big screen like the Virginia's to make its ideal impact. I can't wait to see again that early scene of dark skies lowering over its factory – a vast block of ugliness set down in the middle of a field of mud. Tom Hanks stars as the worker who hates his job so much he welcomes a death sentence from his doctor. In the spirit of Alec Guinness, Meg Ryan plays three different roles in the film: As Joe's secretary, and both daughters of Granamore (Lloyd Bridges), who wants to hire Joe to be a human sacrifice.

As I wrote in my review: "I had



not seen this movie before. Most movies, I have seen before. Most movies, you have seen before. Most movies are constructed out of bits and pieces of other movies, like little engines built from cinematic Erector sets. But not 'Joe Versus the Volcano.' I continue to believe it deserves greater recognition, and cannot understand why I gave it 3.5 stars instead of four.

"Joe" will be followed on opening night by a documentary and a short spotlighting the prosperous new generation of African-American comedians. In John Davies' **"Phunny Business: A Black Comedy,"** at 10:15 p.m. April 25, we learn that an amazing number of those careers were launched by a black comedy club in Chicago named All Jokes Aside. Name the successful black comedians since 1990 who didn't begin there, and you'd be making a very short list.

The film is fascinating for its memories of big names early in their careers, but also for its inside look at Raymond C. Lambert, the businessman who ran it with precise professionalism and steered it through the high seas of Chicago finance and politics. There's an ironic lesson of some sort to be learned when the club is finally undone by its own success. And a sad old lesson when it confronts racism. Ray Lambert will be with us in person. Also John Davies, the director, who began in Chicago television an unthinkable number of years ago by producing for Gene Siskel and me.

Also live! on our stage! will be the rising young African-American comedienne Kelechi Ezie, who will show her short **"The Truth About Beauty and Blogs,"** at 10:00 p.m. After both films screen, she and Lambert will discuss the current situation in her business, as contrasted to the All Jokes Aside scene 20 years ago.

On Thursday, April 26, after "Big Fan," we'll show another of this year's new discoveries, **"Kinyarwanda,"** at 4:00 p.m. The film was made on a tight budget and shooting schedule and uses all local actors in Rwanda, but

it could not be more effective or look more professional. Watching it made me realize that "Hotel Rwanda," powerful as it was, gave the view from the top, and "Kinyarwanda" puts us inside the situation at ground level.

Rwandans commit the murders, suffer from the murders, recover and repent. Interlocking vignettes establish a vivid group of characters. Each one adds to the mosaic. Characters from one turn up in another. Gradually a powerful outcome is arrived at. Finally Muslims and Catholics link hands to face the bloodthirsty killers. What we're seeing is South Africa's truth and reconciliation process at work in another situation. Among our guests will be Alrick Brown, the Jamaican writer-director; Cassandra Free-

entire world, including his troubled home life, his peers, and the solace he finds in solitude. Both Wysocki and Azazel Jacobs, the director, will be with us in person.

"On Borrowed Time," a documentary filmed largely during the most recent two years of Paul Cox's life, will play at 1:00 p.m. Friday. Ebertfest has had no better friend than Cox, who has visited us for the screenings of three of his films, "A Woman's Tale," "Innocence" and "Man of Flowers" (he holds the festival record). From the day in 1983 I saw "Man of Flowers" at the Chicago International Film Festival, I've considered Paul one of the most principled, sensitive and gifted of directors, and his warmth will be known to the many who've met him here.

Paul very nearly died in 2009.

It's simplicity itself: We join in a classic 1920 palace, 1,600 of us, and watch a film as it should be seen, on a vast screen with perfect sound.

man, who plays Lieutenant Rose, and other members of the production team.

"Terri," at 8:30 p.m. April 26, contains two immediately convincing performances, by Jacob Wysocki as an overweight and bullied 15-year-old, and John C. Reilly as an assistant principal. It's easy to imagine that Reilly might also have been bullied in school. The film shows how their relationship deepens and develops, and enlists our sympathy for a fat kid who wears pajamas to school "because they fit." At a time when bullying is being much discussed, the film could not be more timely. But it isn't a simple message movie; it's a subtle and warm-hearted exercise in empathy.

Wysocki, a rising young star, also stars in "Fat Kid Rules the World," which just won an Audience Award at SXSW. What I admire about this film is how observantly it creates his character's

His life was saved by a liver transplant on Christmas Day of that year, which came at the last moment after a heartbreaking series of delays. David Bradbury had already started making this documentary when Paul received his terrifying diagnosis, and continued to film as Paul confronted the prospect of death. Cox is considered one of Australia's national treasures, and we see here how his vision and spirituality helped sustain him through the crisis. Paul will be joined on stage by Nate Kohn, who has become his close friend. *This year's Ebertfest is dedicated to Paul Cox.*

The Alloy Orchestra returns to Ebertfest for the 12th time this year. Known globally for their original compositions which accompany silent films, they're based in Cambridge, Mass. Devoted lovers of silent films, they've made many converts; festival-goers have told me they began

to explore cinema's first 30 years after being introduced to silent films by the Alloy.

On their travels, they usually showcase feature-length films. But especially in the early years, a great many films were shorts. They've compiled a special program sampling those riches, and call it **"Wild and Weird,"** playing at 4:00 p.m. Friday. We will be joined in the orchestra pit and onstage by the Alloy's members, Roger Miller, Ken Winokur and Terry Donahue. This screening is sponsored by Steak 'n Shake.

"A Separation," at 8:30 p.m. Friday, scarcely needs my introduction after winning this year's Academy Award for best foreign film. But it was scheduled for Ebertfest 2012 long before that happy day, and Nate and I had it on our schedule soon after I saw it at the Toronto festival in September 2011. It was my choice for the best film of last year.

This is an extraordinary film, taking on an intractable moral dilemma and considering it in such observant terms that we learn an enormous amount about the Iranian society and its people. Given the constraints on filmmakers in Iran, where the director Jafar Panahi is now in prison, "A Separation" is an impressive feat for its director Asghar Farhadi, who focuses on the personal stories involved and leaves it to the audience to determine right and wrong.

"I like to put a question mark around the issues I'm concerned about," Farhadi told me in an interview. "This is a way of inviting the viewer to critique, without my views getting in the way. I prefer to add numerous question marks to every issue. I think a cinema that asks questions is preferable to a cinema that is stylistically critical." Farhadi has told us he hopes to attend the screening.

Remember the astonishing visuals in Terrence Malick's "The Tree of Life" that evoked the Big Bang and the evolution of life? Those were created in Urbana by the Advanced Visualization Lab and the eDream Institute at

continued on next page

Welcome from Roger Ebert

continued from previous page

the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, which specialize in scientific visualizations for movies and large-screen productions. How were they done? There'll be a demonstration of NCSA's techniques from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday in the Pine Lounge of the Illini Union, with moderators Donna Cox and Robert Patterson.

"Higher Ground," at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, is a triumph for Vera Farmiga, who directed and stars in it. It shows us a woman whose need for religion, and her relationship to it, changes over the years. We see her as a child, as a young woman of about 20, and again around 40. It is especially perceptive in showing the way that belief, for her, is founded to begin with on personal relationships with fellow believers and her church, and later deepens and is challenged by her accumulating life experience.

Like *"Terri"* and *"A Separation,"* this is a film about issues which avoids a message. It doesn't tell us what to believe, nor does it judge what the heroine believes. It stands aside from a set interpretation of right and wrong, and shows us the character Corinne in context, as she tries to make the right decisions for herself. The screenwriter, Carolyn S. Briggs, will appear in person.

"Patang," at 4:00 p.m. Saturday, was an entry in the 2011 Chicago Film Festival, when I first viewed it. I immediately thought of it for Ebertfest. I was struck by the skill of its director, Prashant Bhargava, in introducing a large number of characters and organically showing us how they interacted, particularly within a family. The movie has interlocking stories that are clear enough, but it doesn't follow a rigid narrative map. It reminds me more of Robert Altman's gift for plunging into the middle of a community of characters and giving them freedom.

What a delight it was to learn more about the filmmaker. Bhar-

gava was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, went to grade school and the Kenwood Academy. About 25 years ago, his father, Vijay Bhargava, started taking my film class in the University of Chicago's Fine Arts Program. He was one of my favorite students; we sat next to each other in the back row, munching on oatmeal cookies (I munched, anyway). He and his family made many trips home to relatives in India, and from what he observed there, Prashant was inspired with the idea of this film. He told me: "Dad spent over 25 years working in the administration of Michael Reese Hospital. After 20 years of attending your class and supporting my career as a director and designer, he has taken up acting! He has taken over 25 classes at Chicago's Act One Studios." Prashant, his father, and many actors and crew members will attend the screening.

"Take Shelter," playing at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, is the second Ebertfest film directed by Jeff Nichols and starring Michael Shannon. *"Shotgun Stories"* played here in 2008. This film struck me immediately as featuring one of the best performances of the year, and the failure of the Academy to nominate Shannon is an indication of the fairly narrow range of films it considers.

It seems clear to me that Shannon and Nichols must have worked closely together to create the tension in this film between reality and paranoia. Curtis, the family man played by Shannon, seems disturbed in ways we can't quite put our finger on. Yet the events that terrify him seem real enough. Again this year the nation is being punished by one horrible tornado after another, and if a father takes dramatic steps to try to protect his family, isn't that justifiable?

The film does a masterful job of creating its family (Jessica Chastain is effortlessly convincing as the wife), and Nichols has a sure touch for small town life.



Michael Shannon in a scene from "Take Shelter."

Scenes like the pancake breakfast are filled with small visual details that will be familiar to anyone who has ever attended one. And consider the scene when the wife tells her husband it is time for them to go outside again. The acting, the direction and the camera strategy are uncanny. This screening is sponsored by the Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance. Michael Shannon, Jeff Nichols and Sony Pictures Classics co-president Michael Barker will be present in person.

"Citizen Kane" plays at noon on Sunday. It is often voted the greatest film ever made, but I imagine everyone in the theater will have seen it before. So why show it? Two reasons: (1) More than most films, it benefits from additional viewings. And (2) several years ago, when I could still speak and all of my troubles were in the future, I recorded a commentary track for the Warner Bros. DVD. It was named by *Variety's* Video Premiere edition as the best commentary track of the year.

It occurred to me that playing the commentary track might be a way to sneak my speaking voice back into Ebertfest. In the early years of the festival, one of my great joys was to participate in the onstage discussions after each film. These days I love the sessions led by our guest moderators. But indulge me and allow my voice to be heard one more time in the Virginia.

Using the scene-by-scene

technique, I've often gone through *"Kane"* and other films with an audience. The ground rules are simple: We show the film. When anyone in the room sees something they want to discuss, they call out *"Stop!"* and we freeze the frame and discuss it, sometimes nudging the film forward or back one frame at a time. In the early days, we did this on 16mm. Then laserdiscs. Then DVDs. Now we have the new Blu-ray 70th anniversary edition. I make no claims to be a distinguished expert on *"Kane,"* but when you look at a film with thousands of eyes joining you, it's likely that sooner or later you'll have discussed just about everything discussable.

Over the years, I did this process many times with my film class in the University of Chicago Fine Arts Program, and at the Conference on World Affairs at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I also did it at the Canadian Center for Advanced Film Study, the Smithsonian Institute, the American Film Institute, the Virginia Festival of American Film, the Philadelphia Film Festival, the Hawaii Film Festival, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and the Savannah Film Festival.

Savannah 2004 was the last time I did it. That year one of the students at the Savannah College of Art and Design observed something not pointed out in any of my sessions in the previous 30 years. I want you to watch for it. Wait for the scene where young

Charlie Kane's parents sign the document making Mr. Thatcher his legal guardian. In the background, through the window, you can see the boy playing in the snow with his sled. The adults stand up and walk into the back of the shot to watch him through the window. Now I will quote from the article I wrote from Savannah:

The scene ends as the three adults walk back towards the window. "Stop! The chair moved!" somebody shouted. "Just as the camera tracks past the chair on the lower right," the voice said, "the chair moves out of the way." We reversed the film and looked at it again. The voice in the dark was correct. The chair movement isn't even subtle. An unseen hand clearly yanks the chair away from the path of the camera. But because our attention is naturally on the moving actors and not on an obscure chair in the corner, we miss it. We miss it so completely that in my 30 years of "Kane" shot-by-shots nobody had ever spotted it. Until now. "Thank you for the chair," I told the audience, quite sincerely.

Our sponsors and volunteers make the festival possible. Many sponsors have been with us all 14 years; some are with us for the first time this year.

Chaz has been my right hand in the planning of Ebertfest 2012. 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 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 Theater put out the welcome mat. The Champaign Park District and the

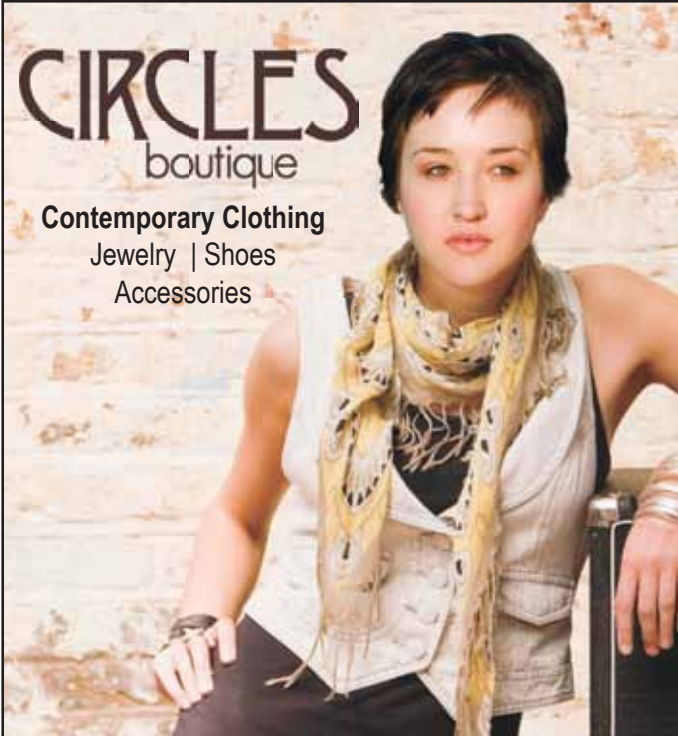
Champaign Police Department are always helpful. Local volunteers act as drivers and guides for our guests. Betsy Hendrick throws her now-legendary Saturday night party. Where would we be without our fabled projectionists James Bond and Steve Kraus, with the help of Travis Bird, who bring their own digital 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 most of our guests in the heart of the campus.

Our sponsors and volunteers make the festival possible.

Many sponsors have been with us all 14 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 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. Leone Advertising is our invaluable webmaster at 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 sponsors the Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance and Steak 'n Shake.

And very special thanks to University President-designate Robert Easter and his wife Cheryl, and Chancellor Phyllis Wise, for their generous support.

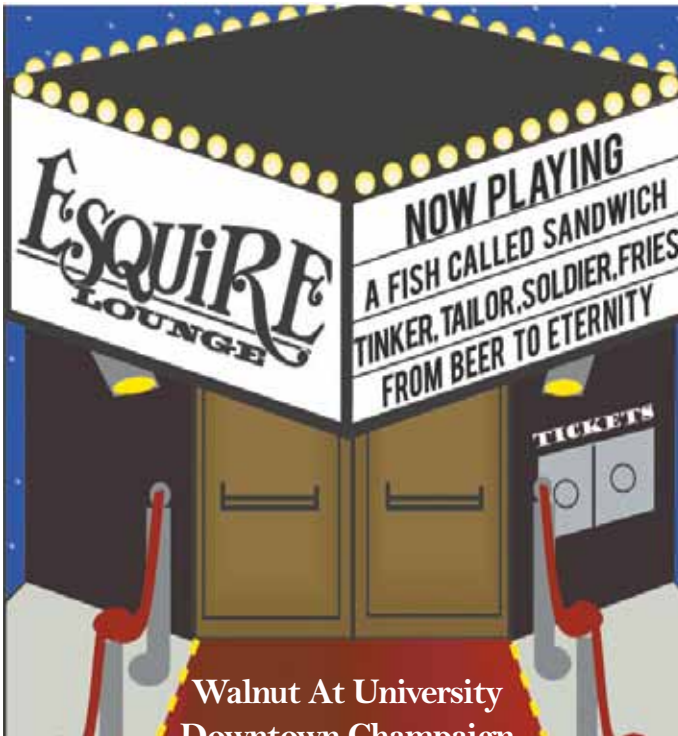


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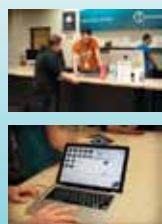
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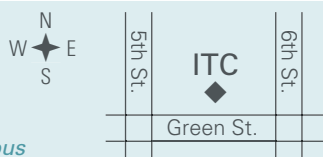
We are proud to announce that the IlliniTech Center has been recognized by Apple as having demonstrated a commitment to premium service and technical excellence during the second half of 2011. Only a select few service providers across the country achieve this status and are awarded the title of Apple Premium Service Provider. We're happy to be Champaign County's only Premium Service Provider, as well as your only commercially authorized Apple Service Provider.

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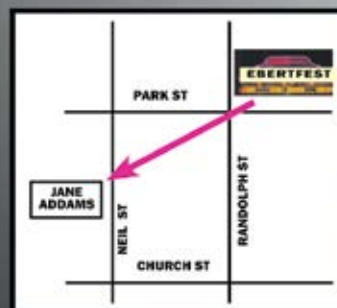


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Greetings

from the University of Illinois

Festival represents the preservation of art and higher culture

Dear Ebertfest Fan,

This will be my first Ebertfest since becoming Chancellor. Yet, because of its loyal fan following, I feel as if I already know how this signature event magically transforms our campus and our community into what I am going to boldly call Sundance Midwest.

Am I overstating the significance of a five-day feast of films, lectures, appearances and spirited conversations among film buffs? I don't think so. Almost from the day I arrived I have heard of the lasting and positive impact our

alumnus Roger Ebert has made on our incredible arts scene here in Champaign-Urbana. He is truly amazing.

I am thrilled that you are supporting Ebertfest and supporting the arts. The intersection of the arts and higher education is so vital for the health of a university community. Art museums, film and music festivals, and performing arts centers on university campuses have the responsibility of being on the cutting edge of discovery, just like scientific research must be.

In our ever expanding world, our push to globalize, the arts have the potential to be the

glue that allows cross cultural exchanges. To whatever extent the arts are ignored or starved, will mean that our ability to enhance cross cultural exchange will be less than optimal.

Art and higher education preserve our culture. They preserve our civilization by creating critical thinkers. They challenge us. They preserve beauty. They create spaces of contemplation and reflection. In the words of poet James Oppenheim they give us bread and roses.

Thank you for being here. See you at the Virginia Theatre!



Phyllis Wise
Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

College of Media thanks Ebert, organizers, fans for appreciation

Welcome to Ebertfest!

The College of Media at the University of Illinois is proud to be your host for Ebertfest. We appreciate your support and delight in your enthusiasm for what the next few days bring to Champaign-Urbana.

Ebertfest is a very special time in our community. It's a time that we welcome movie lovers from around the world who will make Champaign-Urbana their home for a week. It's a time when we roll out the red carpet for the industry guests who come to share their experiences making these films. It's a time that the University of Illinois and Champaign-Urbana come

together to welcome home our native son and alumnus who takes great care in choosing the films we need to see.

The College of Media is proud to be your host for Ebertfest and our pride is only intensified by the 14 years of its success and its far-reaching effects. We are so grateful to Roger and Chaz for their loyalty and support. While the name Roger Ebert is known by many, we are so fortunate to know the man. Thank you for keeping us near to your heart, and sharing your love of the movies and moving making with all of us. Your homecoming every April is an event like no other.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Mary Susan Britt and Dr. Nate Kohn who organize and

direct this festival. It requires logistics that would humble ordinary humans. And they work tirelessly and graciously to make this event the best each year. Many thanks to our sponsors who return each year to make Ebertfest possible. And to our own community volunteers and students – your support means the world to us.

Finally, thanks to all of you – the movie lovers. Your love of the art of storytelling and filmmaking keeps us looking towards the future. Thank you for your support and for joining us for this annual tribute to great movies and to a great movie critic.

Enjoy the show!



Jan Slater
Interim Dean, College of Media



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from the Festival Director

Ebertfest remains true to original celebration of great movies

It is a great privilege to welcome you to the fourteenth 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 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 also thank Michael Barker of Sony Pictures Classics, DuArt Film and Video, Reid Brody – Filmworkers, First Independent Pictures, Visigoth Pictures, ATO Pictures, David Bradbury, Khushi Films, and Marilee Womack of Warner Brothers for graciously providing us with their very best 35mm and digital prints.

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

We are celebrating ... movies that Roger considers worthy of our full attention, films that reveal and reflect the wonder of the human condition.

continues to blossom each year in the Central Illinois spring.

A particular thanks goes out to our Film Circle Sponsors: Roger & Chaz Ebert, Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance, American Airlines & American Eagle, Steak 'n Shake, and Betsy Hendrick; and to our Diamond Sponsors: Leone Advertising, Shatterglass Studios, L.A. Gourmet Catering, Fandor and The News-Gazette.

Among those, we extend a hearty welcome to our newcomers, Steak 'n Shake and Fandor.

Roger has to be Steak 'n Shake's biggest booster. In the early years of the festival, Roger, Chaz, Dusty, Joan, and other guests would invariably end up at Steak 'n Shake after the last show on Thursday night and carouse there until the wee hours. In the past few years, our Far Flung Correspondents always include Steak 'n Shake as a part of their tour of festival landmarks. And of course Mary Susan and I have been known to frequent the South Neil Street branch on more than one occasion during the festival. We look forward to a long and fulfilling association with Steak 'n Shake.

And Fandor is fast becoming the place on line to watch the best in independent films. During the festival they will be recording our panel and after-film discussions and making them available

on fandor.com. Watch for their team and welcome them to the festival.

One of our most dedicated sponsors, the Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance, in addition to sponsoring our showing of "Take Shelter," is this year sponsoring a free post-festival screening of "Antwone Fisher." Please plan to attend at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 29, in the Virginia Theatre right after "Citizen Kane," the concluding film of this year's festival. We thank the Anti-Stigma Alliance for realizing the power of film to change minds and attitudes, for supporting our festival, and for all the good they do year after year in Champaign County.

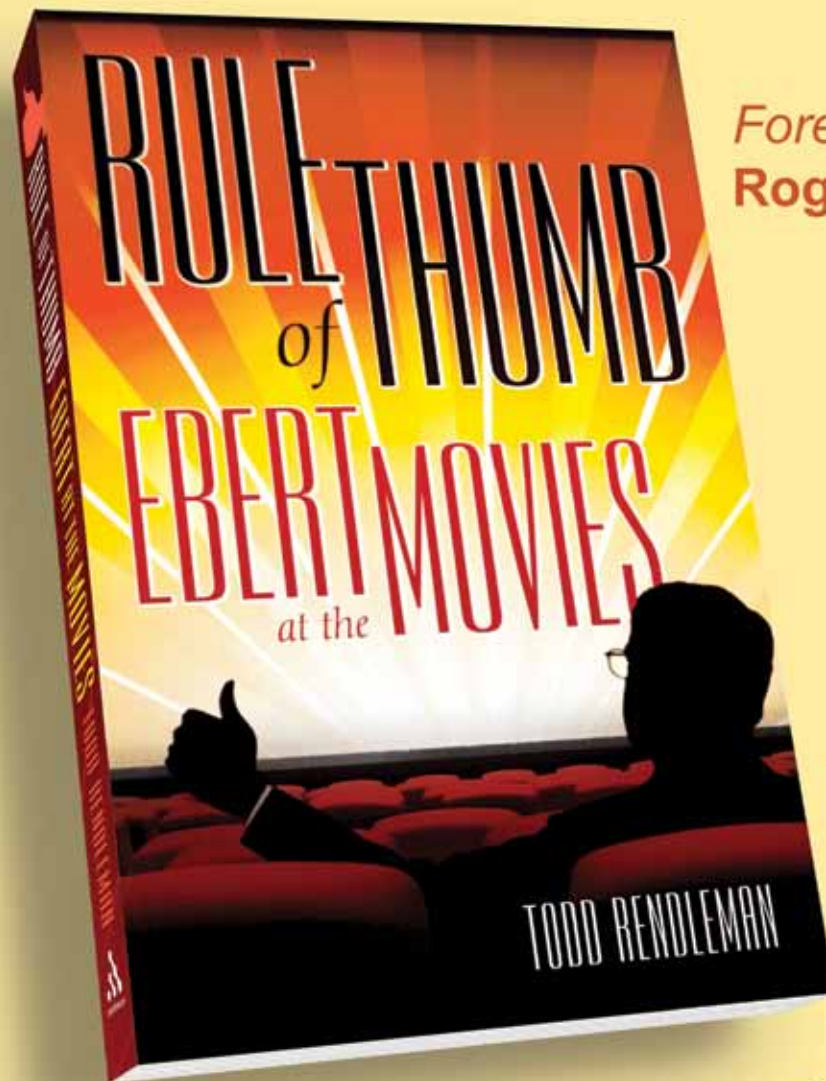
Finally, I want to recognize Associate Festival Director Mary Susan Britt, Dean Jan Slater, and President-designate and Mrs. Robert Easter and Chancellor Phyllis Wise, without whose hard work and enthusiastic support this festival would not be possible.

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.



Nate Kohn
Festival Director



Foreword by
Roger Ebert

 continuum

“Todd Rendleman’s book on **Roger Ebert** is a remarkable achievement—biography, cultural history, astute appreciation and analysis of the critic’s methods and values, and on top of all that, a lovely read.”

Richard T. Jameson, editor, *Film Comment* (1990-2000)

Now Playing at a Bookstore Near You

A star of the silents gets a brand new look

By Jill Disis, Daily Illini Staff Writer

One of the Virginia Theatre's oldest residents is back — and its return has been music to patrons' ears.

The Wurlitzer pipe organ, a staple since its installation and opening on December 28, 1921, spent a year away from the theatre to undergo renovations. But on March 31, patrons were treated to the organ's rededication ceremony that also celebrated the theatre's 90th anniversary.

Steven Bentz, the director of the theatre, called the renovation “a lot of excitement.”

“You can really feel it in your bones when all the stops are out and it's really playing at full volume,” he said. “That's in large part due to the improvements that were made during the renovation. ... (It was) totally disassembled and then patiently and lovingly put back together.”

The venture started, appropriately, out of love. Jill Knappenberger made a large donation to the theatre's owner, the Champaign Park District, specifically to renovate the theatre's historical pipe organ. It was made to honor the memory of her late husband, Gaillard — a music lover and musician. The donation helped kick start the renovation process.

Bentz said the organ started life as the music accompaniment for the silent movies the theatre used to play. The instrument was meant to replace an entire group of musicians when a company could not afford to have an entire pit orchestra in a theatre. But even then, Bentz said the sound quality was not as versatile as what has been accomplished by

the renovation.

“Thanks to the recent improvements ... it is now a full concert organ,” he said. “It can play a full concert program at the kind of volume that is required.”

One of the most noticeable things about the new look is actually a throwback to its original design — the fine, dark mahogany finish. Brian Davis of John-Paul Buzard Pipe Organ Builders in Champaign, who worked on the renovation process, said the finish resembles the exact original look the organ had back in 1921. It's a bit different than the white paint finish that patrons might be used to.

“Originally, it was a dark stained mahogany and that was a standard for the Wurlitzer Company,” Davis said. “At some point somebody repainted it ... added some gold and details and fanciness to the model. There is a model like that at Radio City Music Hall — one of the few that everyone knows about. They painted it white like Radio City Music Hall and made it stand out like that. We wanted to go for an original finish.”

Davis said other renovation work performed included polishing and fixing the organ's pipes, many of which had been smashed or damaged, and rebuilding the counsel and keyboard. They also used electronics to replace many of the wires connecting the counsel to the basement, where the instrument's wind and regulation system begins.

“We stuck through to the original design on that but tried to simplify some of the



An organist plays the Virginia Theatre's renovated pipe organ on April 6, 2012. The organ received a new finish and new pipes among other changes during the past year. Photo by Joseph Lee, The Daily Illini



Electronics replace some of the old wiring of the instrument, but much of the organ — especially the main counsel from the keyboards to the pipes to the pedals — play like the instrument did before. Photo by Joseph Lee, The Daily Illini

(components).” he said. “It's kind of the mix of the best of both worlds.”

Bentz said the company included some other new components, including a “full fanfare of special sounds” ranging from drums to horns and even a glockenspiel.

“The thing that is so delightful about the restoration of this instrument is to see and feel the power that has been brought out with this renovation,” he said.

Davis called the organ's recent recital a success, saying

he's happy with the work accomplished.

“That made all of the hard work and — literally — sweat and blood worth it, to get people really excited and laugh their heads off at the first recital.”

The organ isn't the only part of the theatre with a new look. Bentz said the theatre itself will “go dark” in May for a renovation of the auditorium. It will reopen in March or April of 2013. In the meantime, some of the theatre's special programming over the summer and fall will take place outdoors.

*You can really feel it in your bones when
all the stops are out and it's really
playing at full volume.*

- Steven Bentz -

Schedule

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

Presented by the College of Media **April 25-29, 2012**

FILM SCREENINGS

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

- 7:00 p.m. *Joe Versus the Volcano*
10:00 p.m. *The Truth About Beauty and Blogs*
10:15 p.m. *Phunny Business: A Black Comedy*

Thursday, April 26, 2012

- 1:00 p.m. *Big Fan*
4:00 p.m. *Kinyarwanda*
8:30 p.m. *Terri*
10:30 p.m. *Kind Hearts and Coronets*

Hosted by Patton Oswalt

NOTE: This screening is at Foellinger Auditorium
University of Illinois campus
Free and open to the public

Friday, April 27, 2012

- 1:00 p.m. *On Borrowed Time*
4:00 p.m. *Wild and Weird with the Alloy Orchestra*
8:30 p.m. *A Separation*

Saturday, April 28, 2012

- 1:00 p.m. *Higher Ground*
4:00 p.m. *Patang*
8:30 p.m. *Take Shelter*

Sunday, April 29, 2012

- 12 noon *Citizen Kane*

All films except "Kind Hearts and Coronets" 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.

SPECIAL POST-FESTIVAL SCREENING

Sunday, April 29, 2012

- 4:30 p.m. *Antwone Fisher*
Free and open to the public

The Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance is pleased to announce that they will have a special showing of "Antwone Fisher" immediately following the close of Ebertfest (April 29). 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 4:30 p.m. and it will be free to the public.

LIVE WDWS ON-AIR INTERVIEW

Please Tune In to WDWS-AM 1400!

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

- 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Jim Turpin's (WDWS) Ebertfest Interview

ACADEMIC PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Illini Union

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

Thursday, April 26, 2012

- 9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.
The Personal and Political in Film
Moderated by **Nate Kohn**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

- Far Flung Correspondents: What's New Around the World?*
Moderated by **Omer Mozaffar**
Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

ACADEMIC PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Friday, April 27, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Underrepresented Cinematic Voices

Moderated by **Eric Pierson**

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

ON DEMAND: Movies Without Theaters

Moderated by **Jim Emerson**

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

WORKSHOP

Free and open to the public

Saturday, April 28, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Shooting Your Short Film

Presented by **Don Tingle**

Illini Union – General Lounge, 2nd Floor

You have a script, actors and locations. Now what do you do? This workshop will show you how to shoot your short film. Directing, camera work, lighting, sound... and the all important craft services. We'll break it down and demonstrate techniques, skills and equipment. Beginning and intermediate filmmakers will benefit from this workshop. Our focus is on how to get the "big budget" look for little or no money, whether you are shooting with professional equipment or a cell phone. We'll discuss the sequence of events that happen on set, roles and responsibilities of cast and crew, what shots to get, where to put and how to move the camera, image composition and creativity, simple lighting techniques and skills that will help you produce your movie. Filmmaking is a rapidly becoming a competitive sport with juried festivals and on-line contests. Weekend filmmakers are breaking new ground telling compelling stories with creative visuals and reaching worldwide audiences. This workshop is appropriate for all age groups.

Mr. Don Tingle is the Workshop Director for the Alabama Filmmakers Co-op. Don has presented over 100 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.

FOR FESTIVAL INFORMATION

For more information contact: Mary Susan Britt at marsue@illinois.edu or 217-244-0552.

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

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Free and open to the public

Saturday, April 28, 2012

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

The Tree of Life: Making Movies Using Scientific Data

Moderated by **Donna Cox and Robert Patterson**

Illini Union – Pine Lounge, 1st Floor


The Advanced Visualization Lab (AVL) and eDream Institute at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), University of Illinois, develop scientific visualizations for movies and large-screen productions. Their latest works include Terrance Malick's *The Tree of Life* (TTOL), nominated for 2012 Academy Awards. AVL's astrophysical scenes for TTOL include a visualization of the first stars in the universe going supernova and a flight through the Milky Way galaxy. AVL will present their unique process making animated scientific imagery and focus on virtual camera work, cinematic treatment and the challenges of rendering science for movie entertainment. The panel will include a demonstration of NCSA's visualizations at the Illini Union. <http://avl.ncsa.uiuc.edu/> edream.illinois.edu/

DIRECTIONS TO THE ILLINI UNION:

From the Virginia Theatre to the Illini Union:

- Turn RIGHT (south) 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.

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14th Annual Film Festival 2012

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ARTISTS AND ENTREPRENEURS

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AT THE STEPHENS
FAMILY YMCA

NATIONAL
ALLIANCE ON
MENTAL ILLNESS

THE PAVILION
BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH SYSTEM

UIUC SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL WORK

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.

Information

What you need to know about the Festival

TICKET INFORMATION

- A Festival Pass to all 12 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 or www.thevirginia.org.
- 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 26, 2012
- Friday, April 27, 2012
- Saturday, April 28, 2012

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 12 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.
- **No outside food or drink** in the Virginia Theatre
- 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

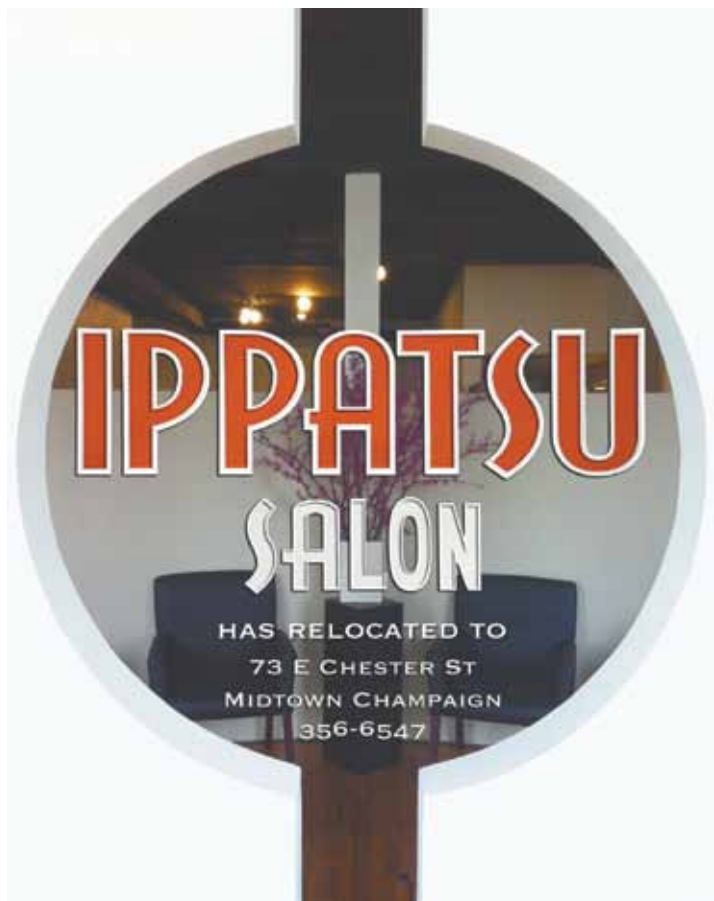
14th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival 2012
April 25-29
Virginia Theatre, Champaign, Illinois


Roger Ebert Introduces the Films of 2012
Something new happened to us while we were planning the schedule for Ebertfest 2012, which plays April 25-29 at the Virginia Theatre in Champaign-Urbana. It's "Weird" invited Patron Conrad to spend with his "Big Day", he signed and read one additional copy "He did to personally choose a book to show to the students, and discuss it".
Continue reading introducing the films of Ebertfest 2012

All Q&A sessions and panel discussions will be streamed live on www.ebertfest.com
WATCH THE 2011 EBERTFEST DOCUMENTARY

Festival Links
• Ebertfest Archives
• Ebertfest PFDs, Slippers, etc.
• Ebertfest Photos
• Ebertfest Live Streaming
• Ebertfest on Facebook

www.ebertfest.com




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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 the **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. Open 4:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. daily.

211 N. Neil Street, Champaign, IL
(217) 378-8001

Cowboy Monkey

<http://www.cowboy-monkey.com>
Cowboy Monkey is more than just a watering hole! We have some of the best food in town including appetizers, salads, sandwiches, fish tacos, and many other gourmet dishes. Full lunch menu and beer garden open. Open 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 a.m.

6 Taylor Street, Champaign, IL
(217) 398-2688

Garcia's Pizza In A Pan

313 N. Mattis Avenue
Champaign, IL 61821
(217) 352-1212

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<http://www.greatimpasta.restaurant.com>
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156 Lincoln Square, Urbana, IL
(217) 359-7377

Guido's

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2 E. Main Street, Champaign, IL
(217) 359-3148

Jupiter's Pizzeria & Billiards

<http://www.jupiterspizza.com/>
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 a.m.

39 Main Street, Champaign, IL
(217) 398-5988

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 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 a.m. daily.

32 E. Chester St, Champaign, IL
(217) 351-7775

Soma Ultra Lounge

<http://www.somaultralounge.com>
Exclusive Ultra Lounge. Open 8:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Available for parties Sunday through Tuesday evenings.

320 N. Neil St., Champaign, IL
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(217) 352-5001

2010 North Prospect Avenue
Champaign, IL
(217) 398-1606

2009 North Kenyon Road
Urbana, IL
(217) 344-3855

Thompson.McClellan

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Official Photographers for Roger Ebert's Film Festival

Casting a lens on Champaign-Urbana

By Joe Ward, Daily Illini Staff Writer

Roger Ebert wrote in his review of "The Tree of Life" that the film reminded him of childhood in Urbana "where life flows in and out through open windows."

"About a town that somehow, in memory, is always seen with a wide-angle lens."

That wide-angle lens is sure to be cast on Urbana once more with Ebert's 14th annual film festival, a weekend of culture that contributes more to the romantic portrayal of life in Urbana that Ebert so frequently evokes.

Beyond shout-outs in high profile movie reviews, Ebert has done more for Champaign-Urbana than perhaps any other University alumnus. His contributions to the University, the city's culture, and even The Daily Illini are invaluable, according to sources who've benefitted from Ebert's generosity.



A young Roger Ebert during his college years.

Ebert and wife Chaz donated \$1 million for the creation of a film studies center that will be named after the Pulitzer prize winner. Also, Ebert is planning to gift the University library system footage from his syndicated television show and has said he will donate more materials to the library in the coming years.

Angharad Valdivia, department head of Media and Cinema Studies, said the creation of the Roger Ebert Center for Film Studies would have a tremendous impact on the University.

"It won't compete with a NYU or UCLA, but it would be very great to have such a program here at Illinois," she said.

Media and Cinema Studies majors benefit greatly from the local film festival, Valdivia said, because of the possibility of interaction with people on the production side of film.

"He gets national figures, amazing people, to come to Champaign-Urbana, where you can actually interact with them," she said. "Unlike (Los Angeles) you can get engagement that is close to one-on-one."

The film festival puts Champaign-Urbana on the cultural map for the weekend, but it has many other tangible effects, too. According to Terri Reifsteck of the Champaign County Convention and Visitors



Roger Ebert donated \$1 million for the creation of a film studies center at the University that will be named after him. Ebert has donated footage from his syndicated television show to the University. He also says he will donate more materials to the University library system in the coming years.

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to come to Champaign-Urbana, where you
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Unlike (Los Angeles) you can get
engagement that is close to one-on-one.*

- Angharad Valdivia -

Bureau, the festival is a boom to business in the downtown area, particularly to establishments close to the Virginia Theatre. She said people from out of town stay in area hotels for multiple nights and frequent local restaurants and bars during their stay.

Ebert's time with and subsequent support for The Daily Illini has been well recorded. He interjected when the company debated changing the paper's name due to its Native American

connotations and recently helped spearhead a funding initiative for the nonprofit Illini Media company.

But perhaps even more impressive is the body of work he left for discovery by any DI staffer who decides to casually browse the paper's archives library. A former editor-in-chief, Ebert covered events as far flung as apartheid in South Africa (which he documented in a beautifully written multi-part series following a student

*That was Roger in a nutshell:
He was a sponge soaking up every new
experience offered by life as he ventured
outside what had been a fairly narrow
background growing up in Central Illinois.*

- Karen Pettite -

trip) and as personal as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, where his weighty, contemplative prose would console the most grief-stricken student of the day.

Wrote Ebert's former editor Karen Pettite in a commemorative publication celebrating Illini Media's 100 years: "That was Roger in a

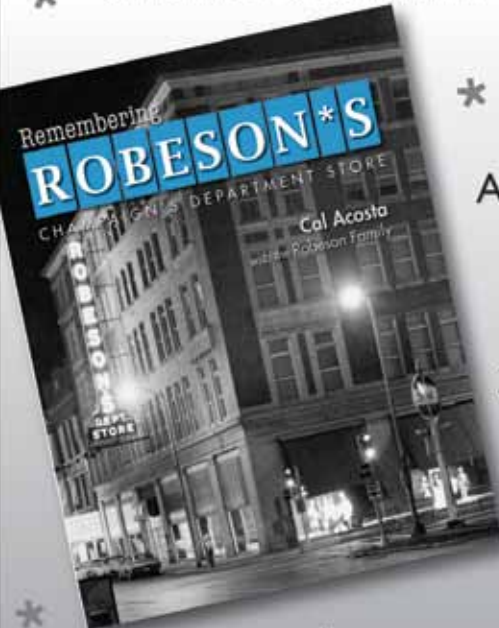
nutshell: He was a sponge soaking up every new experience offered by life as he ventured outside what had been a fairly narrow background growing up in Central Illinois."

A narrow background viewed through a wide-angle lens, maybe "The Tree of Life" director Terrence Malick should buy the rights to that movie.



Karen Pettite, the editor-in-chief of The Daily Illini during Roger Ebert's tenure. Here she poses during her school years with a copy of the DI. Pettite says Roger was like a "sponge" soaking up information.

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Guests

A warm welcome to our 2012 Special Festival Guests

The following are invited special guests for the festival. As always, their attendance is contingent on factors over which we 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.

Joe Versus the Volcano

(Wednesday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.)

STEPHEN GOLDBLATT

((cinematographer, director of photography) was born on April 29, 1945 in Johannesburg, South Africa and moved with his family to London when he was seven. By the time he was 20, Goldblatt was already working as a professional photographer for the Times Newspaper Group, capturing memorable images that appeared on the covers and pages of many British and European newspapers and magazines. Goldblatt's photographs ranged from the somber portrayal of Churchill's funeral to rock stars including The Beatles and The Who. In between photographic assignments, Goldblatt attended the Guildford School of Art and the Royal College of Art Film School.

Goldblatt's early film work is represented almost exclusively by Granada's documentary television

series, "Disappearing World." From 1975 onwards, he focused his career on cinematography, eventually working on notable films like "The Hunger," "Cotton Club," "Lethal Weapon," "Joe Versus the Volcano," "Prince of Tides," and many others. It is however, Goldblatt's work with director Mike Nichols on "Angels in America," "Closer," and "Charlie Wilson's War" that clearly demonstrates his closest artistic collaboration to date. His most recent films include "Julie and Julia," directed by Nora Ephron, and "The Help," directed by Tate Taylor.

In the late 1990's, during a "film sabbatical" and after many years of leaving his still cameras at home, Goldblatt began to photograph his life and surroundings again.

He lives with his wife, Deborah, in Berkeley, California and has three grown children. When he's at home, Goldblatt enjoys tending to his pond and koi fish, gardening, playing his guitar, reading every day, and attempting to master the art of husbanding.

The Truth About Beauty & Blogs

(Wednesday, April 25, 10:00 p.m.)

KELECHI EZIE (writer, co-producer, actress) is an actress, singer and writer from Buffalo, New York. She is a graduate of Princeton University, where she earned a degree in History and Theater, and won the Walter Phelps Hall Prize in European History for her original thesis *Reading What Is There: Africans in Early Modern England*. She moved to New York shortly after to pursue an acting

career, and began working in plays and musicals. Ezie wrote, co-produced and starred in "The Truth About Beauty and Blogs," which is her first screenplay. She is currently writing a series based on the film's main character Vanessa, as well as her first feature film.

Phunny Business: A Black Comedy

(Wednesday, April 25, 10:15 p.m.)

JOHN DAVIES (producer, writer, director) began his career as a producer on the PBS movie review series "Sneak Previews" with Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert. Moving to Los Angeles in the 90s he executive produced the Showtime documentary "It's Black Entertainment," the Court TV documentary "Hip Hop Justice" and the ESPN documentary "Politics & The Games," a look at the political history of the Olympics. In addition, he produced numerous network comedy specials for "Comic Relief" and was Emmy nominated for producing and writing "A Comedy Salute To Andy Kaufman" for NBC. John also created and executive produced series like "Second City Presents" for the BRAVO network, "Movie Club with John Ridley" for AMC and the NBC summer comedy series "The Rerun Show." More recently he was the co-creator and executive producer of the hit MTV series "Run's House," winner of the NAACP award for Outstanding Reality Series and executive produced its spin-off series, "Daddy's Girls." John is currently developing a scripted series inspired by "Phunny Business: A Black Comedy," his latest documentary.

RAYMOND C. LAMBERT (producer, writer) has a broad-based business background working with both publicly traded and privately held companies in entertainment, investment banking, and consumer products. The creator of All Jokes Aside comedy clubs, he has served as a consultant on comedy and talent to producers at NBC, HBO, Comedy Central, and BET. He earned an Associate Producer credit for the feature film "Slow Burn" and served as a writer and producer of the documentary film "Phunny Business: A Black Comedy," which chronicles the rise and fall of All Jokes Aside. In addition to his business and creative accomplishments, Raymond devotes his charitable energies to the Chicago Public Schools iMENTor Program, the 21st Century Youth Project, and was recently selected to serve on the Gene Siskel Film Center Advisory Board. An avid runner, Raymond has completed the New York City, Chicago and Boston Marathons. Raymond earned his undergraduate degree in Marketing from Morehouse College, with honors, and his MBA in General Management from The Darden School at the University of Virginia.

REID BRODY (producer) is a seasoned media and entertainment executive with an accomplished track record of success. As founder and president of Filmworkers Club, he has created and built a highly successful post-production service provider with facilities in Chicago, Dallas and Nashville. Filmworkers' various units include a digital production studio, a motion graphics design firm, and the only motion picture film lab in the

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Midwest. Brody is also co-founder and principal of 2DS Productions, an independent movie and entertainment company, which produced "Nothing Like the Holidays" for Overture Films in 2008 and currently has three movies set for production in 2012. Brody is an accomplished writer, director, songwriter and music producer as well. He resides in Chicago.

ALI LEROI (comedian) is the Emmy®-winning executive producer/director of the new hit TBS series "Are We There Yet?," which begins its syndication run in June 2012. Based on the hit film of the same name, LeRoi partnered with Joe Roth of Revolutions Studios, Ice Cube, and Matt Alvarez of Cubevision to develop the show for TV.

LeRoi is also the co-creator of the critically acclaimed comedy "Everybody Hates Chris," inspired by the childhood experiences of comedian Chris Rock and currently in syndication. He is a Golden Globe® nominee, a two-time NAACP Image Award winner, a WGA nominee and winner of the 2007 AFI TV Program of the Year award.

Major motion picture credits include producing and co-writing "Head of State" and "Down to Earth," as well as producing cult-favorite "Pootie Tang." Although most comfortable in his positions of show-runner and director, LeRoi occasionally lends his voice or musical talents to his productions, having voiced several characters and written pieces of music for several episodes of the series and films he's produced. LeRoi was formerly a stand-up comic, and toured extensively with his close friend Bernie Mac, before transitioning into television, where his career took off.

LeRoi is currently developing a new slate of projects back at home in LA. Originally from Chicago, he has been married for 19 years and has two sons.

Big Fan

(Thursday, April 26, 1:00 p.m.)

ROBERT SIEGEL (director) is a New York-based screenwriter and director. His directorial debut, *Big Fan*, was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance 2009. The film also earned nominations for Best Picture at the 2010 Gotham Awards and the John Cassavetes Prize at the 2010 Independent Spirit Awards. Siegel is also the writer of the Darren Aronofsky-directed film "The Wrestler," for which Siegel earned a Best Original Screenplay nomination at the 2009 WGA Awards. From 1996 to 2003, Siegel served as editor-in-chief of the satirical newspaper *The Onion*, where he won the 1999 Thurber Prize For American Humor and edited the #1 New York Times bestselling book "Our Dumb Century." A native of Long Island, N.Y., he lives near Union Square with his wife and son.

PATTON OSWALT (actor) won critical acclaim in Robert Siegel's feature film "Big Fan" (2009), which made its debut at Sundance in January 2009 and was distributed by First Independent Pictures. Patton recently filmed his new Adult Swim live-action TV series "The Heart, She Holler," film "Scoutmasters" with Johnny Knoxville, and starred alongside Charlize Theron in "Young Adult," receiving a Critic's Choice nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

As a comedian, Patton has shot four TV specials and two critically acclaimed albums. In August 2009 he released his third album, as well as a Comedy Central One Hour Special "My Weakness Is Strong," which received a Grammy nomination for "Best Comedy Album." He now tours regularly, headlining both in the United States and United Kingdom. In addition, he has a bi-monthly show at the new Largo at the Coronet Theater in Los Angeles.

Patton was a series regular on Showtime's "United States of Tara," and played Spence on "The King of Queens" on CBS for nine seasons. He appeared on "The Sarah Silverman Program,"

"Flight of the Conchords," "Seinfeld," "Reaper," "Aqua Teen Hunger Force" and "Tim and Eric's Awesome Show, Great Job!" He also recurred on Syfy's new series "Caprica." Patton is a regular contributor to "Countdown with Keith Olbermann," "Real Time with Bill Maher" and Lewis Black's "Root Of All Evil."

Patton appeared in Steven Soderbergh's feature film "The Informant!" and "Observe and Report" with Seth Rogen. Patton starred in "The Comedians of Comedy," which was shot as an independent feature film, a TV series and a long-running tour. Patton has also appeared in more than 20 films, including "Magnolia," "Starsky and Hutch" and "Reno 911!: Miami."

Patton provided the voice for Remy, the rat, in Pixar's Oscar-winning "Ratatouille." He also voices characters on "Word Girl" and TBS's "Neighbors from Hell."

Patton's first published book "Spaceship Zombie Wasteland" has recently been released and was on the New York Times Best Seller List for January 2011.

In May 2011, Patton filmed his newest hour special "Patton Oswalt: Finest Hour" which airs on Showtime and Comedy Central.

Kinyarwanda

(Thursday, April 26, 4:00 p.m.)

ALRICK BROWN (producer, director, writer) has a MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. A filmmaker and teacher, he has found his calling writing, directing and producing narrative films and documentaries often focusing on social issues affecting the world at large. For over two years he served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cote d'Ivoire. The interactions with the people of his village and his overall experiences in West Africa have informed his creative expression; an expression first fostered by his birth in Kingston, Jamaica and migration to, and upbringing in Plainfield, N.J. A fluent French speaker, he graduated from Rutgers University with a BA in English and a Masters

in Education. Since then he has devoted his energy to changing the world by giving a voice to the voiceless and telling stories that otherwise would not be told.

Brown's collective work has screened in over 40 film festivals, national and international, and received numerous awards. He and his co-producer, received the HBO Life Through Your Lens Emerging Filmmaker Award to produce their critically acclaimed documentary "Death of Two Sons." In 2004, he was one of four NYU students featured in the IFC Documentary series "Film School," produced by Academy Award-nominee Nannette Burstein. In 2007 he addressed the Motion Picture Association of America on C-SPAN. "Kinyarwanda" marks Brown's feature film directorial debut.

ISHMAEL NTIHABOSE (executive producer, writer) is a Rwandan-born filmmaker who after working on "Sometimes in April," "Shooting Dogs" and "Shake Hands with the Devil" as an assistant, decided that he was ready to step out on his own. As executive producer he brought together a team of international filmmakers to bring his first feature film, "Kinyarwanda," to life.

DARREN DEAN (producer) came to film late in life, writing, directing and producing the award-winning short, "Sleep Over." He followed that up as co-writer and producer of "Prince of Broadway," which has won 18 prestigious awards internationally to date. Dean, also a respected journalist, is currently in pre-production as writer/producer on the big screen adaptation of Will Eisner's "A Contract With God."

TOMMY OLIVER (producer) began his filmmaking career during his junior year at Carnegie Mellon University resulting in the indie film "Sofia For Now." After college, Tommy co-founded film production company, Black Squirrel Films where he produced several award winning shorts, commercials and the feature film "Blank." He is currently in

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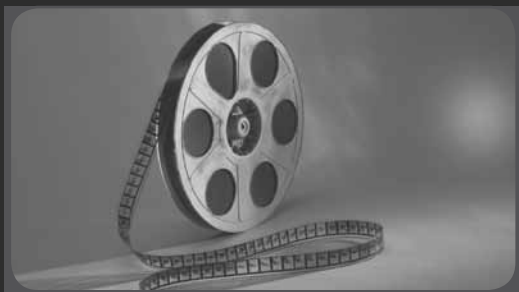


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pre-production on the big screen adaptation of Will Eisner's "A Contract With God."

DEATRA HARRIS (co-producer) Deatra L. Harris has written, produced and directed several short films, including "Addicted" and "A Woman's Worth," which have shown at film festivals across the United States as well as internationally. She holds a BA in MIS/Math from Bowling Green State University and is currently developing a feature length narrative and animation.

CASSANDRA FREEMAN (actor) is an established star of both stage and screen. She has appeared on Broadway in "Seven Guitars" and on TV in "Guiding Light," "All My Children," "Shark" and "Numb3rs." On the big screen, Freeman came to international recognition with roles in Chris Rock's "I Think I Love My Wife" and Spike Lee's "Inside Man," where she starred alongside Denzel Washington. She is a graduate of both Florida State University and NYU's prestigious acting programs.

EDOUARD BAMPORIKI (actor) is an award-winning filmmaker, actor and poet. As a young Rwandan artist, he has received national and international attention for his stories of hope, unity and reconciliation. Bamporiki was born in a small village in the Western province, educated in Rwandan schools and lives in the capitol city of Kigali. His feature debut in Lee Isaac Chung's "Munyrangabo" yielded him a Best Actor nomination in Cannes. In 2008, he wrote, directed, starred in and produced "Long Coat," which won first prize in African Film at the Focus Future Film Festival in New York.

HADIDJA ZANINKA (actor) A Burundi born Rwandese, Hadidja makes her film debut in the demanding role of Jean in KINYARWANDA. Returning to Rwanda with her family following the Genocide in late 1994, she is currently completing her studies in Travel and Tourism and aspires to take the film world by storm.

Terri

(Thursday, April 26, 8:30 p.m.)

AZAZEL JACOBS, (writer, director) son of avant-garde filmmaker Ken Jacobs, was born in 1972 and raised in New York's lower Manhattan surrounded by important and innovative artists. He went to undergraduate school at the film department of SUNY Purchase and received his Masters from the American Film Institute in 2002.

During his study, he made the experimental piece "Nobody Needs To Know." Two years later he teamed up with fellow filmmaker Gerardo Naranjo to make the micro budget feature "The GoodTimesKid," which found a small, but loyal following and was released by Benteen Films in 2009.

Azazel's award-winning "Momma's Man" premiered at Sundance 2008, and quickly became one of the most lauded films of the year, winding up on many "best of" lists. It was distributed domestically by Kino International. Manohla Dargis in the NY Times declared it "independent film defined." "Terri," a coming of age comedy/drama, premiered in competition at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and internationally in competition at the Locarno Film Festival. It was released domestically by ATO Pictures in July of 2011.

JACOB WYSOCKI (actor) landed his first professional acting job with a recurring role on the ABC Family series "Huge." He followed this up with a critically-acclaimed turn in the 2011 Sundance standout "Terri," starring in the title role opposite John C. Reilly. Jacob received a Gotham Award nomination for Breakthrough Actor for "Terri" and was highlighted by The Huffington Post as one of 2011's Fresh Faces in Movies.

Jacob will next be seen in Matthew Lillard's directorial debut "Fat Kid Rules the World," set for its world premiere at the 2012 South by Southwest Film Festival. He most recently completed production on the

Universal Pictures comedy "Pitch Perfect," set in the world of competitive a capella, and the independent feature "Drones" directed by Rick Rosenthal.

Jacob regularly performs with the ComedySportz improv troupe at the National Comedy Theater in Hollywood and is a member of the viral video sketch group Bath Boys Comedy. He can be found on the Web at bathboyscomedy.blogspot.com and on Twitter (@Jacob Wysocki).

Kind Hearts and Coronets

(Thursday, April 26, 10:30 p.m.)

NOTE: This screening is at Foellinger Auditorium on the University of Illinois campus. Free and open to the public.

PATTON OSWALT (actor) won critical acclaim in Robert Siegel's feature film "Big Fan." Oswalt will host the special screening of this film at Foellinger Auditorium.

On Borrowed Time

(Friday, April 27, 1:00 p.m.)

PAUL COX, (director) born in Holland and living in Australia, is an auteur of international acclaim and is one of Australia's most prolific filmmakers with 39 features, shorts and documentaries to his name. Paul has been the recipient of numerous special tributes and retrospectives at film festivals across the world including a major retrospective at the Lincoln Centre in New York City.

Wild and Weird:

The Alloy Orchestra plays 10 fascinating and innovative films 1906-1926

(Friday, April 27, 4:00 p.m.)

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 Picture 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).

A Separation

(Friday, April 27, 8:30 p.m.)

PEYMAN MOADI (actor) was born in 1972 in New York City to Iranian parents. When he was 5, his family moved back to Iran. He'd hoped to return to New York to study film, but remained in Iran, where he graduated from the Karaj Azad University with a degree in metallurgical engineering, as his parents wished.

In the late 2000s, Moadi began his career in film, known initially for his screenplays, and later as an actor, director and even costume designer. An

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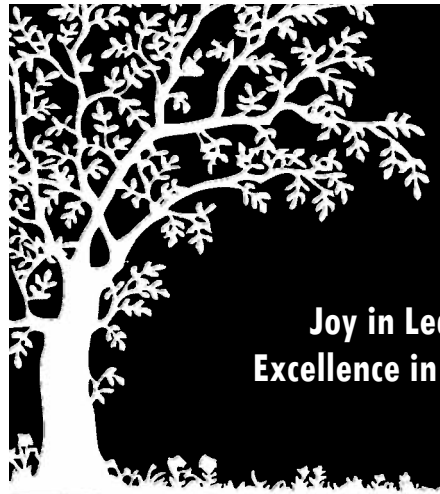
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accomplished screenwriter, his most famous dramas are "Café Setareh" (2006) and "Coma" (2004). But his true love was acting, and his debut was in Asghar Farhadi's "Darbareye Elly" (2009), which was Iran's submission for an Oscar in 2010. He re-teamed with Farhadi in 2011 with his highly acclaimed performance in "A Separation" ("Jodaeiye Nader az Simin"), which earned him the Best Actor award at the Berlin Film Festival and Best Actor nomination at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards.

Also a stage actor and director, he was seen on stage in Tehran performing "Drought and Lie," and is currently directing "The Snow on the Pines," currently in production.

Higher Ground

(Saturday, April 28, 1:00 p.m.)

CAROLYN S. BRIGGS (writer) holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Arkansas. Her 2002 memoir "This Dark World: A Memoir of Salvation Found and Lost" (BloomsburyUSA, 2002) has been reissued as "Higher Ground: A Memoir of Salvation Found and Lost" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2011). She wrote the screenplay adaptation of the film "Higher Ground" (Sony Pictures Classics, 2011). She is currently writing essays for Religion Dispatches and a screenplay adaptation of "Of Time and Memory." Briggs is an associate professor of English at Marshalltown Community College in Iowa.

Patang (The Kite)

(Saturday, April 28, 4:00 p.m.)

PRASHANT BHARGAVA (director) released his first feature film, "Patang" after six years in the making. His short film "Sangam" premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, garnering several awards and distinctions. The film was distributed by Film Movement and Mubi and broadcast on Arte/ZDF,

The Sundance Channel and PBS. Prashant started out in the arts as a graffiti artist in his hometown of Chicago. He went on to study computer science at Cornell University and theatrical directing at The Actors Studio MFA program. For the past fifteen years, he has directed and designed commercials, music videos, title sequences and promos.

JAIDEEP PUNJABI (producer)

VIJAY BHARGAVA (executive producer)

RANJANA BHARGAVA (associate producer)

SEEMA BISWAS (actor)

NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI (actor)

Take Shelter

(Saturday, April 28, 8:30 p.m.)

JEFF NICHOLS (director) is a writer and director born in Little Rock, Arkansas. His feature film debut, "Shotgun Stories," was nominated for a 2008 Independent Spirit Award, won the Grand Jury Prize at the Seattle International and Austin Film Festivals, and won the FIPRESCI International Jury Prize at the 2007 Viennale. Roger Ebert (Chicago Sun-Times) and David Edelstein (New York Magazine/NPR) included "Shotgun Stories" in their lists for Best Films of 2008. Nichols second feature, "Take Shelter," debuted at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and is being released by Sony Pictures Classics. "Take Shelter" was awarded the Critic's Week Grand Prix at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival and was nominated in five categories at the 2012 Independent Spirit Awards. Nichols is currently in post-production on his third feature, "Mud," starring Matthew McConaughey and Reese Witherspoon. He is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, School of Filmmaking and now lives in Austin, Texas.

MICHAEL SHANNON (actor), Academy Award® nominee, is currently in production on season three of Martin Scorsese's HBO series, "Boardwalk Empire," co-starring Steve Buscemi and Kelly Macdonald, in which he portrays Nelson Van Alden, a dedicated senior agent with the Treasury Department who has a strong interest in controlling bootlegging.

Upcoming, Shannon has David Koepp's "Premium Rush," opposite Joseph Gordon-Levitt, scheduled for an August 2012 release. Next, he will be seen in Zack Snyder's Superman reboot, "Man of Steel," opposite Henry Cavill, Amy Adams and Diane Lane (July 2013). Recently, Shannon completed Ariel Vromen's "The Iceman," the true story of mob killer Richard Kuklinski, played by Shannon, opposite Chris Evans, Winona Ryder and Ray Liotta.

In 2011, Shannon starred in "Take Shelter" in which he re-teamed with director Jeff Nichols. Shannon plays a working-class husband and father who questions whether his terrifying dreams of an apocalyptic storm signal something real to come or the onset of an inherited mental illness he's feared his whole life, a role which earned him a 2012 Independent Spirit Award Best Actor nomination. In his first collaboration with Nichols, Shannon starred in "Shotgun Stories."

Shannon was nominated for a Best Supporting Actor Oscar® for his role as a psychologically troubled neighbor's son in Sam Mendes' "Revolutionary Road," opposite Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet and Kathy Bates.

Shannon has over 30 film credits including Liza Johnson's "Return," Marc Forster's "Machine Gun Preacher," Flavia Sigismond's "The Runaways," Werner Herzog's "My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done" and "Bad Lieutenant," Sydney Lumet's "Before the Devil Knows Your Dead," Oliver Stone's "World Trade Center," William Friedkin's "Bug," Curtis Hanson's "Lucky You," Michael Bay's "Bad Boys II," Curtis Hanson's "8 Mile," David McNally's "Kangaroo Jack," Cameron Crowe's "Vanilla Sky,"

Michael Bay's "Pearl Harbor," John Waters' "Cecil B. DeMented," Noah Buschel's "The Missing Person," and Shana Feste's "The Greatest."

Shannon also maintains a strong connection to the theater. In 2010, he starred in Craig Wright's off-Broadway play, "Mistakes Were Made." Shannon's portrayal of Felix Artifex, a small time theater producer, who gets in way over his fast-talking head when he takes on an epic about the French Revolution, earned Shannon numerous nominations including a Lortel Award for Outstanding Lead Actor, a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Actor, an Outer Critics Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, and a Drama League Award for Distinguished Performance, as well as a listing on Time Magazine's Top 10 Plays and Musicals.

Additional theater credits include "Our Town" (Barrow Street Theater), "Lady" (Rattlestick Theater), "The Metal Children" (Vineyard Theater), "Woyzeck" (Gate Theater), "The Idiot" (Lookingglass Theater), "The Little Flower of East Orange" (Public Theater), "The Pillowman" and "Man From Nebraska" (Steppenwolf Theater), "Mr. Kolpert" and "The Killer" (Red Orchid Theater), "Bug" (Barrow Street Theater, Red Orchid Theater and Gate Theater), and "Killer Joe" (SoHo Playhouse, Next Lab Theater and Vaudeville Theater).

Michael Shannon grew up in Lexington, Kentucky and began his professional stage career in Chicago, Illinois.

MICHAEL BARKER (distributor) is the Co-President and Co-Founder of Sony Pictures Classics (SPC), which distributes, produces, and acquires independent films from the US and around the world. In 1992, Barker co-founded the company with Tom Bernard, and in January 2012, Sony Pictures Classics celebrated their 20th Anniversary.

Over the past 25 years, Barker has worked with many of the world's finest independent filmmakers including Pedro Almodóvar, Robert Altman, Woody

continued on next page

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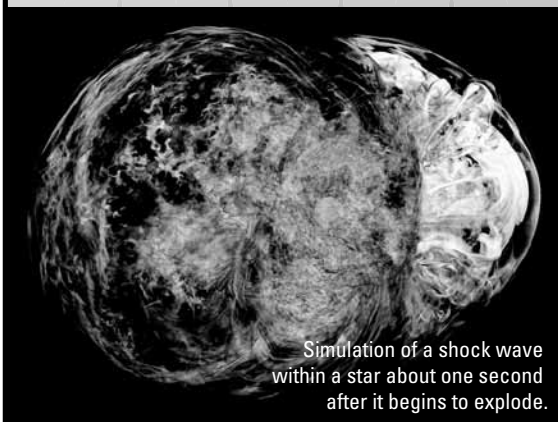
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Allen, Hector Babenco, Ingmar Bergman, Frances Coppola, David Cronenberg, Guillermo del Toro, James Ivory/Ismail Merchant, Jim Jarmusch, Norman Jewison, Neil LaBute, Ang Lee, Richard Linklater, Louise Malle, David Mamet, Errol Morris, Wim Wenders and Zhang Yimou.

The recent Sony Pictures Classics slate includes Asghar Farhadi's Academy Award® nominated film "A Separation," Roman Polanski's "Carnage," John Michael McDonagh's "The Guard," Jeff Nichols' "Take Shelter," Pedro Almodovar's "The Skin I Live In" and David Cronenberg's "A Dangerous Method." Sony Pictures Classics also released Woody Allen's Academy Award® nominated film "Midnight in Paris," which has made almost \$60 million at the box office and is Allen's highest grossing film in North America. Sony Pictures Classics marked their 5th collaboration with the iconic director on his upcoming film, "Nero Fiddled."

Other upcoming releases include the Academy Award® nominated films Agnieszka Holland's "In Darkness" and Joseph Cedar's "Footnote," as well as Whit Stillman's "Damsels In Distress," Nadine Labaki's "Where Do We Go Now?," Jonathan Demme's "Neil Young Journeys," Tanya Wexler's "Hysteria," Lawrence Kasdan's "Darling Companion" and Gareth Evans' "The Raid." At Sundance 2012, Sony Pictures Classics most recently acquired Malik Bendjelloul's "Searching for Sugar Man" and Lee Toland Krieger's "Celeste & Jesse Forever."

Honors bestowed on Barker's films include 27 Academy Awards® (23 of those at Sony Pictures Classics), including 10 for Best Foreign Language Film and 124 Academy Award® nominations (101 at Sony Pictures Classics), including 5 for Best Picture ("Midnight in Paris," "An Education," "Howard's End," "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Capote") as well as 12 Opening Night Presentations at the New York Film Festival. He has also received the Honors Award from the Directors Guild

of America, France's Chevalier Order of Arts and Letters from the French Minister of Culture, the GLAAD Media Award, a retrospective at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, the Gotham Industry Lifetime Achievement Award from the IFP, and the FINDIE Spirit Award.

Barker serves on the Board of Directors for the American Museum of the Moving Image, as well as on the Entertainment Media and Technology Dean's Advisory Board at NYU's Stern School of Business, and is a member of the Visiting Committee to the Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago. Barker was previously the co-founder of Orion Classics (1983-1991), which released Akira Kurosawa's Oscar®-winning film "Ran." Barker was also an executive at United Artists (1980-1983) where he released films by R.W. Fassbinder ("Lola," "Veronika Voss") and François Truffaut ("The Last Metro"). He has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Texas.

Citizen Kane

***(with Roger Ebert
commentary track)***

(Sunday, April 29, 12:00 noon)

DAVID BORDWELL (author, scholar) is retired from teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has written several books on film aesthetics and history, and he is a particular fan of silent movies, 1940s Hollywood, and Asian filmmaking. A collection of his essays, "Poetics Of Cinema," was published in 2007. He and Kristin Thompson, who have collaborated on "Film Art: An Introduction" (10th edition, 2012), write about film regularly at www.davidbordwell.net/blog. Some of their online essays have been collected in "Minding Movies: Observations about the Art, Craft, and Business of Filmmaking" (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

2012 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 FFCs. Ali is also a regular contributor to IndieWire's Press Play blog, where he recently co-produced a video essay series on Steven Spielberg, and "The House Next Door," Slant Magazine's official blog. In addition, his writing appears on various film and pop-culture sites on the blogosphere. He tweets @aliarikan.

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, Turkey. 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 and biographies.

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

OLIVIA COLLETTE is a journalist based in Montreal, Canada. She has contributed to RogerEbert.com, Roger's FFCs and The Spectator Arts Blog, and is set to write a piece for an upcoming World Film Locations book. Her film essays tend to reflect an innate fascination with music, languages and mythology. Read Olivia's thoughts on all manner of pop culture at her blog "Livvy Jams."

JIM EMERSON is a writer and film critic whose film experience includes screenwriting, producing, editing, exhibiting, marketing, publishing, journalism, criticism, video essays and academic study. He is the founding editor-in-chief of and a contributor to RogerEbert.com, where he has a blog called "Scanners" and oversees "The Demanders." He also tweets @jeemerson. In the mid-1990s Jim was the editor of Microsoft Cinemania, a multimedia movie encyclopedia on CD-ROM and the web, which is where he first started working

with Roger. He has contributed to old media and new.

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."

SCOTT JORDAN HARRIS is an English film critic and sportswriter. He is online arts editor of "The Spectator;" editor of the books "World Film Locations: New York" and "World Film Locations: New Orleans;" and senior editor of "The Big Picture" magazine. He is one of Roger's Far-Flung Correspondents and has written for the BBC, "Fangoria" and "The Guardian." He is covering Ebertfest 2012 for "Sight & Sound," "The Spectator" and BBC radio's "The Film Programme."

ODIE HENDERSON, a globetrotting computer programmer by trade and movie lover by hobby, has contributed to Slant Magazine's "The House Next Door" blog since 2006. Additionally, his work has

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appeared at "Movies Without Pity" (2008) and numerous other sites. He currently runs the blog "Tales of OdieNary Madness" and is the troublemaker behind the "Black History Mumf" series at the "Big Media Vandalism" blog.

Wael Khairy is an Egyptian national film critic writing for a number of local publications. He has written several reviews and essays for two World Film Locations books published in the UK. His revolution-related tweets were published in the bestseller, *Tweets from Tahrir*. Wael is also one of Roger's FFCs and also writes ads for BBDO, the most awarded multinational advertising agency in the world. Besides his website "The Cinephile Fix" and the Chicago Sun-Times blog, Wael also writes regularly for "The Spectator's" Arts Blog. Wael graduated from the American University in Cairo with a major in Communications of Media Art and minors in both Accounting and in Film, which he completed at UCLA.

Kevin B. Lee is a film critic, video essayist and film distributor. He contributes to "The Demanders" column on RogerEbert.com. He is editor of the IndieWire Press Play video blog, and a contributor to Fandor's Keyframe blog. He is also VP of Programming and Education at dGenerate Films, which specializes in distributing Chinese independent films.

Christy Lemire, co-host of "Ebert Presents At the Movies," is the film critic for The Associated Press, based in LA. She also co-hosts the YouTube show "What the Flick?!" 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 and the Broadcast Film Critics Association.

Jeffrey Lerner is an award-winning producer/writer of numerous highly acclaimed special features, new media, 3D and interactive content found on DVD/Blu-ray disc and digital download releases of feature films and TV programs from the major studios. Highlights include "American Horror Story" (Season 1), "Horrible Bosses," "Sex and the City 2," "Glee" (Seasons 1-3), "Due Date," "The Hangover," "Cedar Rapids," "Harry Potter (1-5)," "Batman Begins," "Good Night and Good Luck," "Nip/Tuck," "ER," "Citizen Kane," "Casablanca" and "The Right Stuff." Jeffrey is currently a vice president of the Producers Guild of America and serves as chairman of the Producers Guild's AP Council. He was awarded the Video Premiere Awards' Best Audio Commentary for the "Citizen Kane" audio commentary he produced and that will be heard at the festival. Jeffrey currently works with Blue Collar Productions in Los Angeles (www.bluecollar.com). He is also a graduate of The University of Michigan and holds an MFA from The Florida State University's College of Motion Picture Arts.

Nell Minow reviews movies and DVDs each week for Beliefnet.com and radio stations across the country as "The Movie Mom." Her Movie Mom blog includes interviews, features, giveaways, and commentary on media, culture, and values. Nell's book, "The Movie Mom's Guide to Family Movies," includes more than 500 classic films with suggested questions for family discussion. Her writing about film has appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Tribune, USA Today, and Parents, Parenting, and Child Magazine, and she has been profiled in the Ladies' Home Journal, Washington Post and The New Yorker.

Jana Monji, made in San Diego, lost in Japan several times, has written about theater and movies for the LA Weekly, LA Times, and currently, Examiner.com and the Pasadena Weekly. Now living in LA, she has found her inner Latina dancing Argentine tango. This year, she celebrates her second short story publication in the Asian American Literary Review.

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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 FFCs. He is a nice boy.

MICHAL OLÉSZCZYK is a film critic, translator and festival programmer based in Kraków, Poland. He earned his PhD in film studies with a dissertation on Pauline Kael's film criticism. He regularly contributes to many Polish outlets, and has been an occasional contributor to "Fandor" and "Slant" Magazine. He published the first Polish book on the films of Terence Davies, as well as a translation of J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum's *Midnight Movies*. His blog is "Last Seat on the Right."

ERIC PIERSON is a film and TV 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 that range 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," will appear in "Watching While Black: Centering the Television of Black America," scheduled for publication in January. Eric can also be seen in the documentary, "Infiltrating Hollywood: The Rise and Fall of the Spook Who Sat By The Door." Eric is a UI graduate with degrees in Theater and Communications.

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

STEVE PROKOPY is the Chicago editor for Ain't It Cool News, where he has contributed film

reviews and interviews under the alias "Capone" since 1998. He is also a frequent guest on Chicago Public Radio's Filmspotting movie review show. Steve received a BA in journalism from Northwestern University in 1990.

KRISHNA SHENOI is an 18-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, movie soundtracks, superhero films, *The Eels*, and his mother's food.

His passion for film viewing and film making began early on. When he was seven or eight, he used to make home movies with an old Sony camcorder, building blocks, clay models, or whatever he could find, employing very rough stop-motion animation techniques. Today, he still creates short films, paintings and digital art, all of which you can see on his website, Artistic Scrapyard.

He is extremely proud to be Roger's youngest FFC and will be coming to Illinois from Bangalore along with his mother for his second Ebertfest.

GERARDO VALERO is Roger's FFC from Mexico City, where he lives with his wife Monica. He's been following Roger since the mid-1980s, collecting his "Movie Yearbooks" since 1989 and contributing entries to his "Little Movie Glossary" for the past eleven years.

Since 2009 Gerardo has been writing essays for RogerEbert.com, and for the last year has been writing a daily blog on Mexico's Cine-Premiere Magazine. His favorite films are Steven Spielberg's "Jaws" (1975) and Francis Coppola's "The Godfather I / II," their ranking depending on which one of them he's seen more recently.

PABLO VILLAÇA, 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 is still its only Brazilian member, being elected its first non-English speaking Governing Committee member in 2011. He published columns in English on websites such as Hollywood Elsewhere and



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is an eventual collaborator of the acclaimed site Movie City News. In 2001, he won a theater award for adapting an old children's fairytale for the stage and in 2005 he published his first book, "O Cinema Além das Montanhas" ("Cinema Beyond the Mountains"), a biography of film director Helvécio Ratton. He's currently working on two books: the first collection of his film criticism and a behind-the-scenes look on the production of a major Brazilian film.

He is also currently the film critic of Cinema em Cena, the oldest Brazilian movie website (which he created back in 1997). He also teaches Film Theory, Film Language and Film Criticism courses all over Brazil, having taught more than 1,000 students since 2009. 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, he acted by special invitation as temporary director of the International Film Institute, which operated from LA. In 2011, he

wrote and directed his second short film, "Blind Death," which will start being exhibited in 2012.

GRACE WANG is a writer, producer, and one of Roger Ebert's Far Flung Correspondents. She is a contributing author to various publications including The Spectators Arts Blog, the books "World Film Locations: New York and World Film Locations: BeiJing," and has worked as a Programming Associate and Social Media Coordinator for the Toronto International Film Festival and Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival.

Grace is fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese and muses at Etheriel Musings and @etherielmusings. In her spare time she practices as a lawyer, daydreams on public transport, and has a weakness for red shoes and good people. Grace has lived and worked in eight countries on three continents. She currently resides in Toronto, Canada.

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

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Joe Versus the Volcano

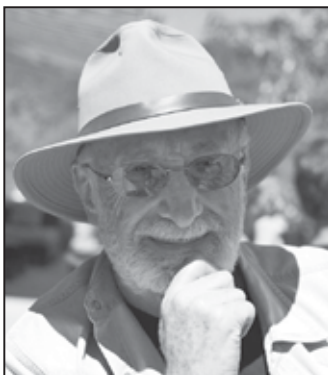
Shanley's bizarre world far from average "Joe"

By Roger Ebert

Gradually during the opening scenes of "Joe Versus the Volcano," my heart began to quicken, until finally I realized a wondrous thing: I had not seen this movie before. Most movies, I have seen before. Most movies, you have seen before. Most movies are constructed out of bits and pieces of other movies, like little engines built from cinematic Erector Sets. But not "Joe Versus the Volcano." It is not an entirely successful movie, but it is new and fresh and not shy of taking chances. And the dialogue in it is actually worth listening to, because it is written with wit and romance.

The movie announces its individuality in its opening shot, which is of a loathsome factory — a vast block of ugliness set down in the middle of a field of mud. Into this factory every morning trudge the broken spirits and unhealthy bodies of its employees, among them the ashen-faced Joe (Tom Hanks), who has felt sick for years and believes that the buzzing fluorescent tubes above his desk may be driving him mad.

The factory is a triumph of production design (by Bo Welch, who also designed "Beetlejuice"). It is a reminder that most movies these days are rigidly realistic in their settings, as if a law had been passed against flights



Stephen Goldblatt, "Joe Versus the Volcano" director of photography, is one of this year's Festival guests.



"Joe Versus the Volcano" movie poster

of fancy like this factory that squats obscenely in the center of the screen. The entire movie breaks that law and allows fantasy back into the movies again. Like "Metropolis," "The Wizard of Oz," "Ghostbusters" or "Batman," this movie isn't content to photograph the existing world — it goes to the trouble of creating its own.

In the factory, Joe hunches in his little corner, quailing at the attacks of his boorish boss (Dan Hedaya) and hardly daring a peek at the office secretary

(Meg Ryan), whose huge typewriter seems ready to crush her. He hates his job. Hates, hates, hates it. He barely has the strength to crawl out to a doctor's appointment, where he learns that a Brain Cloud is spreading between the hemispheres of his brain.

He will feel terrific for four or five months, and then he will die.

The death sentence is a liberation. Joe quits his job, and is almost immediately offered another one. A man named

Like "Metropolis," "The Wizard of Oz," "Ghostbusters" or "Batman," this movie isn't content to photograph the existing world — it goes to the trouble of creating its own.



WEDNESDAY 7:00pm

"Joe Versus the Volcano" achieves a kind of magnificent goofiness. Hanks and Ryan are the right actors to inhabit it, because you can never catch them going for a gag that isn't there.

Graynamore (Lloyd Bridges) owns an island that is rich in a rare mineral. The island is inhabited by natives who must be placated. They need a human sacrifice for their volcano. Since Joe is going to die anyway, Graynamore reasons, why shouldn't he go out in style by leaping into the volcano?

Sounds good to Joe. And meanwhile the movie has been developing into a duet between whimsy and romance. The writer-director, John Patrick Shanley, is the same man who wrote Norman Jewison's wonderful "Moonstruck" and the astonishingly bad "The January Man." Now he is back on the track again. The best thing about his direction is his own dialogue. The characters in this movie speak as if they would like to say things that had not been said before, in words that had never been used in quite the same way.

En route to the island, Joe meets one of Graynamore's daughters and then the other. Both are played by Ryan, who has three different kinds of fun with her three characters: grungy, waspish and delectable. They set sail for the South Seas. Everything leads to the moment when they stand on the lip of the fiery volcano, wondering whether they should risk fate by jumping in. Only in this movie could jumping into a volcano be considered risking fate, rather than certain death.

"Joe Versus the Volcano" achieves a kind of magnificent goofiness. Hanks and Ryan are

the right actors to inhabit it, because you can never catch them going for a gag that isn't there: They inhabit the logic of this bizarre world and play by its rules. Hanks is endearing in the title role because, in the midst of these astonishing sets and unbridled flights of fancy, he underplays. Like a Jacques Tati, he is an island of curiosity in a sea of mystery.

Some of the movie's sequences are so picaresque they do themselves in: The native tribe, for example, is a joke that Shanley is unable to pull off. What's

strongest about the movie is that it does possess a philosophy, an idea about life. The idea is the same idea contained in "Moonstruck": that at night, in those corners of our minds we deny by day, magical things can happen in the moon shadows. And if they can't, a) they should, and b) we should always in any event act as if they can.



Abe Vigoda in a scene from "Joe Versus the Volcano."



Tom Hanks in a scene from "Joe Versus the Volcano."

BEHIND THE SCENES

JOE VERSES THE VOLCANO

(1990) Rated PG

Written and Directed by
John Patrick Shanley

Cast:

Tom Hanks as Joe

Meg Ryan as Patricia/Angelica/
DeDe

Lloyd Bridges as Graynamore

Abe Vigoda as Chief of the
Waponis

Robert Stack as Dr. Ellison

Dan Hedaya as Mr. Watari

Amanda Plummer as Dagmar

Running time: 94 minutes

Print Courtesy: Warner Bros.



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Phunny Business: A Black Comedy

preceded by film short The Truth About Beauty and Blogs

Documentary highlights influential night club

By Roger Ebert

What Second City was for "Saturday Night Live," a Chicago comedy club was for virtually every black comedian who emerged in the 1990s. All Jokes Aside was a black-owned enterprise that seemed to have infallible taste in talent, perhaps because it was the only club in the country that didn't relegate blacks to "special nights" or "Chocolate Sundays." Its opening-night act was Jamie Foxx, then unknown. It introduced or showcased talents such as Bernie Mac, Cedric the Entertainer, Steve Harvey, D.L. Hughley, Carlos Mencia, A.J. Jamal, Sher-yl Underwood, George Wallace, Bill Bellamy, Dave Chapelle, Adele Givens, and on and on, including the personnel of the touring Kings of Comedy and Queens of Comedy.

"Phunny Business: A Black Comedy" is a most unexpected documentary about the rise of a club that often sold out three houses a night for 10 years, wasn't on the radar of many Chicagoans and closed, in a way, as the victim of its own success: When the young comics it launched made it big, they found more money doing concerts on big stages than



Raymond C. Lambert, "Phunny Business"

gigs in a small room.

This is a film not so much about black comedians, although we see and hear a lot of them, but about black entrepreneurs. Raymond C. Lambert, who co-founded the club, began as a stock trader for the

work in Chicago.

Turned out, it would. He opened on Wabash Avenue in the South Loop, booked the best of a new generation, insisted on impeccable manners, dress and training for his staff, made headliners wear suits and

ties, and drew affluent crowds. He was also providing almost the only venue in the nation for black fe-

This is a film not so much about black comedians, although we see and hear a lot of them, but about black entrepreneurs.

male comedians, the threatened subspecies of a threatened species, and booked black gay comics at a time when that was unheard of. He even booked one white comic, Honest John, who backstage one night advised Deon Cole, "try some of this real California weed instead of that Chicago &#!+," after which Cole went onstage and found himself suddenly gifted with telescopic tunnel vision.

The film goes in depth about business details, including the peculiarity that All Jokes Aside paid its performer their full fees, promptly, with checks that didn't bounce, no matter how many tickets had been sold — an achievement few comedy clubs of any description could boast, then



John Davies, the director of "Phunny Business."



WEDNESDAY 10:00pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

**PHUNNY BUSINESS:
A BLACK COMEDY**
(2010) Not Rated

Written by John Davies and
Raymond C. Lambert

Directed by
John Davies

Cast:
Narrated by John Ridley
Featuring Doug Banks, Bill
Bellamy, Cedric the Entertainer,
Mike Epps, Jamie Foxx, Chris
Gardner, Adele Givens, Steve
Harvey, D.L. Hughley, Honest
John, Raymond C. Lambert, Ali
LeRoi, Bernie Mac, Carlos Mencia,
J.B. Smoove, Aries Spears, Sheryl
Underwood, George Wallace,
George Willborn, Damon Williams
and Michael Winslow

Running time: 84 minutes

Print Courtesy: Reid Brody —
Filmmakers



A frame from "Phunny Business."

*Today Lambert says **he looks back with satisfaction.** He created All Jokes Aside at a time when it was needed, and it achieved what it set out to achieve ...*

and now. One of Lambert's partners was a woman named Mary Lindsey, herself a trader at the CBOE, who supervised talent with a firm hand, a ready tongue and dress code inspections.

The film, directed by John Davies, has access to a lot of archival footage, going back to the earliest days when the "stage" was a curtain on a back wall. We get bites from many of the comics, but no extended stretches; the narration and editing often seem to be upstaging the comedians. I would have preferred more comics and fewer montages about Chicago's weather, women and food. It is also safe to say that we see enough of Raymond Lambert in the film, from the opening titles onward. He's heard not as a doc-style talking head, but in scripted material that sells itself a little too hard. The comedians come across as more

relaxed and natural. Former Sun-Times comedy reporter Ernie Tucker shares warm memories, as do Second City's John Kapelos and Tim Kazurinsky.

The club on Wabash was the victim of larger paychecks paid by big stages (like the Chicago Theatre, not far away), a rent that doubled, and gentrification as the South Loop underwent a boom. Lambert invested \$1 million in a move a mile north to the "entertainment district," only to face ruinous delays in getting a liquor license (despite a record of 10 years with no incidents). White and Asian owners of nearby galleries and restaurants signed a petition protesting about a change in the "ambiance" of the area — meaning, "more blacks." So it goes.

Still, it was a grand run, and it is good to have it memorialized. Today Lambert says he looks back with satisfaction.

He created All Jokes Aside at a time when it was needed, and it achieved what it set out to achieve, and on its stage many of today's most successful black actors and comedians got their start. Consider that Jamie Foxx, his opening night act, went on to win an Academy Award. And Foxx still gives back: He was the headliner at this year's benefit for the Gene Siskel Film Center.

THE TRUTH ABOUT BEAUTY AND BLOGS

13 minute short film

Kelechi Ezie is an actress, singer, and writer from Buffalo, New York. She is a graduate of Princeton University, where she earned a degree in History and Theater, and won the Walter Phelps Hall Prize in European History for her original thesis *Reading What Is There: Africans in Early Modern England*. She moved to New York shortly after to pursue an acting career, and began working in plays and musicals. Kelechi wrote, co-produced and starred in *The Truth About Beauty and Blogs*, which is her first screenplay. She is currently writing a series based on the film's main character Vanessa, as well as her first feature film.



Kelechi Ezie - Writer, Co-Producer, Actress, "The Truth About Beauty and Blogs"

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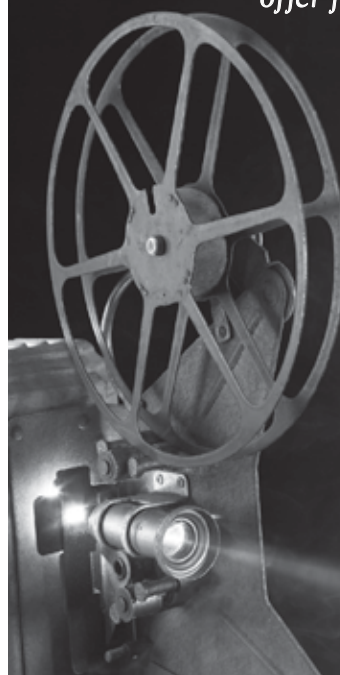
George Kuchar

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Big Fan

The darker side of sports comedy

By Roger Ebert

Paul is a short, chubby 35-year-old man who lives with his mother and works the night shift as a parking-garage attendant. His mother screams at him that he only dates his own right hand. But there is another Paul, "Paul of Staten Island," who is a regular caller to a sports radio station, defending his beloved New York Giants against the hated Eagles fan "Philadelphia Phil." This Paul is proud, articulate and happy.

He and his best (or only) friend, Sal, never miss a Giants home game. They're tailgaters. They park in the Giants parking lot and watch the game on a TV set that runs off his car battery. Behind them, inside the towering stadium walls, star player Quantrell Bishop leads the Giants toward a championship.

"Big Fan," one of the more thought-provoking sports movies I've seen, is the directorial debut of Robert Siegel, who wrote "The Wrestler." A comedy with dark undertones, it asks: What kind of a man listens to and calls sports talk radio compulsively, even at 2 a.m.? Even out of season? Even on, say, Thanksgiving? He should get a life, do you think? That's what his mother thinks. Paul believes he has a life, a glorious life, as a Fan.



Robert Siegel directed "Big Fan."



Patton Oswalt stars as Paul in "Big Fan."

I've known such people. They identify so strongly with their idols that it's a kind of derangement. They are their city, their team, their heroes. When their team loses, they bleed. Supporters of a rival team are their enemies. Pro athletes get paid. Pro fans work pro bono. For anyone to describe himself as a team's "No. 1 Fan" is kind of pathetic.

One night Paul (Patton Oswalt) and Sal (Kevin Corrigan) are out late eating pizza when they see

the great Quantrell Bishop (Jonathan Hamm) at a gas station. They tail him. He is driven to a dicey neighborhood in Staten Island for murky purposes (a cocaine buy, is my guess). Then he drives into Manhattan, and Paul and Sal follow him into a lap-dance emporium. They approach "QB" to praise him, and he's nice enough at first. Then they recklessly tell him they've been following him all the way from the shady neighborhood. Are they implying a shakedown?

A comedy with dark undertones, it asks: What kind of a man listens to and calls sports talk radio compulsively, even at 2 a.m.? Even out of season? Even on, say, Thanksgiving?



FRIDAY 1:00pm

Patton Oswalt, best known as a stand-up comedian, brings a kind of brilliance to his performance.

QB explodes and hammers Paul, who awakens three days later in a hospital after emergency surgery for bleeding in the brain.

QB is suspended. Paul is not eager to testify against him. A detective (Matt Servitto) tries to question him. He says he can't remember. "Can't – or won't?" the cop asks. His hunch is correct. When Paul's shyster brother files a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against QB, Paul refuses to cooperate. He can't think of Quantrell Bishop as the man who nearly killed him. That's because, in a sense, Paul is Quantrell Bishop. Without QB, there is no Paul there.

Then the film follows Paul more deeply into the consequences of his obsession. I've seen films about fanatic sports fans before, in particular, frightening films about British football hooligans, who organize into armed gangs. Paul is a more common American type, one who is especially tiresome to sportswriters, who they zero in on with a combination of fascination and resentment: Who are you to pass judgment on my team?

Patton Oswalt, best known as a stand-up comedian, brings a kind of brilliance to his performance. He plays a man limited in curiosity, confidence and ambition. He

sounds good on the radio because he's listened to thousands of hours of sports radio, which largely comes down to the same verbal formulas repeated time and again. Alone in his toll booth late at night, he scripts words for "Paul from Staten Island" and reads from legal pads, striding back and forth in his bedroom while his mother, next door, shouts for him to shut up so she can get some sleep.

This isn't only, or even, a sports movie. It's about leading a life vicariously. There's a movie out now called "Surrogates," about a future time when people recline at home hooked up to brain sensors, and lead their lives through more attractive and younger android versions of themselves. This practice is going on now. Quantrell Bishop is Paul's surrogate. Disconnect him, and Paul is a body on a bed, dreaming with his right hand.

BEHIND THE SCENES

BIG FAN
(2009) Rated R

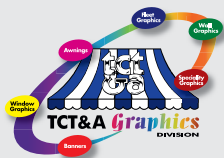
Written and Directed by
Robert Siegel

Cast:

Patton Oswalt as Paul
Kevin Corrigan as Sal
Marcia Jean Kurtz as Paul's mom
Michael Rapaport as Philadelphia Phil
Matt Servitto as Velardi
Jonathan Hamm as Quantrell Bishop
Gino Cafarelli as Jeff

Running time: 88 minutes

Print Courtesy: **First Independent Pictures**



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Kinyarwanda

Genocide up close and personal

By Roger Ebert

I thought I knew something about Rwanda, but I didn't really know very much. I was moved by "Hotel Rwanda" (2004), but not really shaken this deeply. Not like this. After seeing "Kinyarwanda," I have a different kind of feeling about the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994. The film approaches it not as a story line but as a series of intense personal moments.

The characters speak both English and the nation's own language, Kinyarwanda. The film's co-writer and director, a Jamaican named Alrick Brown, says he was surprised the first time he learned that all Rwandans speak the same tongue. Here was a nation in which the members of one tribe, the Hutu, set about to massacre the members of another tribe, the Tutsi. Yet were they really even members of different tribes?

There is a scene in which this is discussed. Since time immemorial, people in Rwanda more or less got along. When Belgium colonized the nation, "ethnic scientists" came in with their calipers and found that the skulls and ribcages of two groups were somewhat different. Although they were already recognized as tribal groups before the Europeans arrived, it was



Ishmael is a small boy who is sent out to buy cigarettes for his father when he overhears some soldiers talking about searching for guns and Tutsi.

convenient for the Belgians to name one of these groups, the Tutsi, the ruling class, and the Hutu as subservient. That led to a perhaps inevitable Hutu revolt, and some 500,000 to 1 million members of both tribes died.

This dreadful massacre was ignored by the world, apart from the ineffectual U.N. "peacekeeping mission" we saw in "Hotel Rwanda." What Brown does in "Kinyarwanda," working with research by his executive producer Ishmael Ntiabose, is to weave together several compact interlocking stories to connect events before, during and finally after the genocide. The U.N. is hardly to be seen. Rwandans commit the murders, suffer from the murders, recover and repent. Here over an unspecific period of several months, we see South Africa's truth and reconciliation process at work.

The vignettes establish a vivid group of characters. Jeanne and Patrique (Hadidja Zaninka and Marc Gwamaka), a young couple from different tribes, are in love. Lt. Rose (Cassandra Freeman), the head of a military unit trained in Uganda, hopes to bring peace. Emmanuel (Edouard Bamporiki), the head of a Tutsi killing unit. Father Pierre (Mazimpaka Kennedy), a Catholic priest. The Mufti of Rwanda (Mutsari Jean), head of the nation's Muslims. Perhaps most memorable, a small boy named Ishmael (Hassan Kabera).

Each vignette adds to the mosaic. Characters from one turn up in another. Gradually a powerful outcome is arrived at. The Mufti issues an edict declaring that the nation's Muslims must not participate in killing and must open the mosques to places of shelter for all, regardless of tribe or religion. The



Director Alrick Brown says he was surprised that all Rwandans speak the same tongue.

*What Brown does in "Kinyarwanda" ... is to **weave together several compact interlocking stories** to connect events before, during and finally after the genocide.*



THURSDAY 4:00pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

KINYARWANDA

(2011) Not Rated

Written and Directed by
Alrick Brown

Cast:

Hassan Kabera *as* Ishmael
Edouard Bamporiki *as* Emmanuel
Cassandra Freeman *as* Lt. Rose
Marc Gwamaka *as* Patrique
Hadidja Zaninka *as* Jeanne
Mazimpaka Kennedy *as* Father Pierre
Cleophas Kabasita *as* Francine
Abdallah Uwimana *as* The Imam
Kena Onyenjekwe *as* Sgt. Fred

Running time: 96 minutes

Print Courtesy: Visigoth Pictures

None of the actors in "Kinyarwanda" are stars, and their characters all live in the same world.

priest tries to operate his church in the same way, but lacks the courage. Yet finally Muslims and Catholics link hands to face the bloodthirsty killers.

I mentioned Ishmael. This is a beautiful little boy who is sent out to buy cigarettes for his father, and overhears some soldiers searching for guns and "cockroaches." Cockroaches are the Hutu name for Tutsi. His father is hiding some Tutsi. He helpfully tells the soldiers where they can find cockroaches and leads them home. How this is resolved I will not say, but ask yourself this: Has Ishmael made

a childish error or does he do some agile last-minute thinking?

For all its greatness, "Hotel Rwanda" nevertheless used the conventional Hollywood

technique of a movie star as a protagonist to serve as the audience's entry point. None of the actors in "Kinyarwanda" are stars, and their characters all live in the same world. By the equal weighting and linking of their stories in rotation, Brown prevents us from anticipating who will prevail. The criticism of this approach by Variety's critic is unfortunate. Here is a powerful film.



"Kinyarwanda" approaches the Rwandan genocide as a series of personal moments.



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Terri

If the pajamas fit, wear them

By Roger Ebert

I found a rare absorption while watching Azazel Jacobs' "Terri," the story of a fat kid who is mocked at school. Movies about high school misfits are common; this is an uncommon one. Terri, so convincingly played by Jacob Wysocki, is smart, gentle and instinctively wise. His decision to wear pajamas to school "because they fit" may be an indication that later in life he will amount to a great deal. He has character.

All of that lies ahead in this story, which observes him for two or three weeks as he survives some turning points. Terri's parents are not in the picture. He lives in a cluttered little house with his Uncle James (Creed Bratton), whose books and music indicate he was once a much different man. Now he is drifting into senility, and Terri cares for him with quiet affection.

The house is in a wooded semi-rural area, which Terri cuts through to reach the school. He has been missing a lot of school days and is called in by Fitzgerald (John C. Reilly), the assistant principal. This is a school administrator unlike those we usually see,

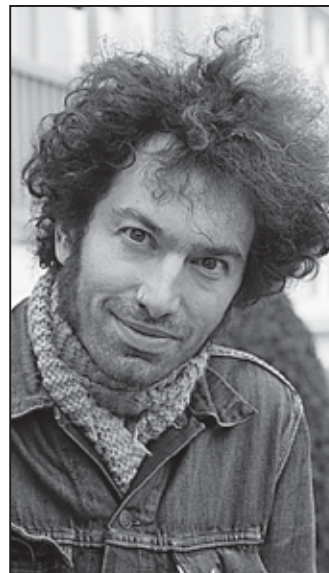
offering kindness, anger and hard-won lessons learned in his own difficult life. He and Terri slowly begin to communicate person to person, and this process is subtly constructed by Jacobs.

Indeed, the entire film moves at a human pace, not prodded by impatience or a desire to rush through the story. To view "Terri" after the manic thrashing of "Transformers: Dark of the Moon" was soothing and healing. It demonstrates how films can engage us in human life, rather than mocking it.

There are two more important characters. Chad (Bridger Zadina) is another of Fitzgerald's problem children, a morose, slouching outsider driven to pluck hairs from his head. Heather (Olivia Crocicchia) is a pretty young student who Terri observes during a home economics class as a boy takes liberties with her body. When this threatens to lead to her expulsion, Terri steps up and defends her to Fitzgerald, in a way that shows he respects her and empathizes.

Terri and Heather begin a friendship based on shy notes using mostly smiley faces. This leads to a strange and uneasy evening involving the two of them, Chad, a bottle of booze, and some of Uncle James' pills. This session, like the rest of the film, has a timing and sympathy that sets it apart from many similar scenes I've seen.

There's an element of Terri's life left for us to make of what we will. Told by his uncle to set some mousetraps in the at-



Azazel Jacobs directed "Terri," the story of a fat kid who is mocked at school. Jacobs is attending this year's festival.

tic, Terri captures some mice and lines up their bodies on a log in the woods. Later he sees a bird of prey gobbling one of them, and his face fills with wonderment. He catches more mice and keeps baiting the log. Does this make him an unwholesome sadist? Not at all. The movie invites no hasty conclusion. In honesty, I believe his reaction is... normal.

Five characters: Terri, Fitzgerald, Uncle James, Chad, Heather. All original. None limited by story conventions. None seen by me in previous movies. Observed with attention and sympathy. Not oversimplified, although it would help to know more about Heather. And a kid who is fat, and weird, but much more than fat and weird.



Jacob Wysocki, a guest at this year's film festival, stars as Terri.

Terri, so convincingly played by Jacob Wysocki, is smart, gentle and instinctively wise ... He has character.



THURSDAY 8:30pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

TERRI

(2011) Rated R

Written by
Patrick deWitt
Directed by
Azazel Jacobs

Cast:

Jacob Wysocki as Terri
John C. Reilly as Asst. Principal Fitzgerald
Creed Bratton as Uncle James
Bridger Zadina as Chad
Olivia Crocicchia as Heather Miles
Tim Heidecker as Mr. Flemish
Justin Prentice as Dirty Jack

Running time: 105 minutes

Print Courtesy: ATO Pictures



Jacob Wysocki and John C. Reilly in a scene from "Terri."

The actor Jacob Wysocki is unknown to me, but he brings such quiet confidence to the role that he creates absolute

conviction. A newcomer, he goes one on one with the masterful John C. Reilly in scenes of actual communication be-

tween two people rarely seen in any movie. He's more of a John Candy than a Chris Farley, if you get what I mean.

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Kind Hearts and Coronets

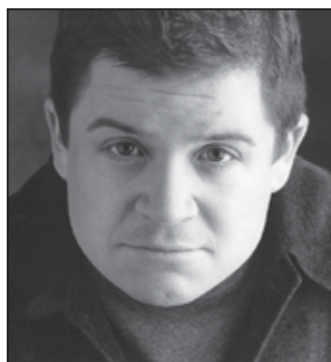
Hosted by Patton Oswalt at Foellinger Auditorium • Free and open to the public

Eccentric villain central to this murder-comedy

By Roger Ebert

IN the years after World War II, there emerged from the Ealing Studios of England a series of comedies so dry and droll, so literate and cynical, that the phrase "Ealing comedy" described them and no others. Many starred Alec Guinness, then in his 30s, so anonymous in appearance that he was told by an early teacher, "you will never make an actor." It was like that until the end of his days; once, while dressed as Hitler for a costume fitting, he stepped outside and failed to raise the eyebrow of a passing policeman. While the other great actors of his generation – Olivier, Gielgud, Richardson – attracted crowds wherever they went, Guinness could, he reported, go to the cinema without ever being asked for his autograph.

If he was unremarkable in person, he played a series of remarkable characters in the movies, each one a newly-minted original. He was shy, stammering Herbert Pocket in "Great Expectations" (1946) and two years later the diabolical Fagin in "Oliver Twist." He blew up "The Bridge On the River Kwai" (1957), was an eccentric painter in "The Horse's Mouth" (1958), a genial colonel in "Tunes of Glory" (1960) and the same year a vacuum-cleaner salesman as "Our Man in Havana." He was a desert prince in "Lawrence



Patton Oswalt, star of "Big Fan," will host a special screening of "Kind Hearts and Coronets" at Foellinger Auditorium.



A scene from "Kind Hearts and Coronets."

of Arabia" (1962), a Soviet official in "Dr. Zhivago" (1965), an imperturbable Indian doctor in "A Passage to India" (1984) and Cromwell, Disraeli, Father Brown, Scrooge and of course Hitler. Little wonder his autobiography is titled "Blessings in Disguise." It is an injustice that he is best remembered as Obi-Wan Kenobi in the "Star Wars" movies, which he told me were boring to make because he spent most of his time standing alone in front of a back-projection screen, reciting dialogue.

Consider how unnecessary such special effects were in "Kind Hearts and Coronets" (1949), in which Guinness plays eight different members of the same family, of both genders and a six-decade age span, by doing relatively subtle things with makeup, posture and behavior. Because he was nobody he could be anybody, and here he creates characters who are pompous, silly, inconsequential, or even actually nice to Louis. ("I was glad," says the hero of the film about his employer Ascoyne D'Ascoyne, "after all his kindness to me, that I should not have to kill him.")

The film began a classic run

of Ealing comedies, which continued with "The Lavender Hill Mob" and "The Man in the White Suit" (both 1951) and "The Ladykillers" (1955), in which a sweet little old lady buys the story that her new roomers, all crooks, are actually musicians. Their rehearsal sessions are priceless. All of these Ealings were being revived with new prints when I was in London in August 2002. The big screen underlined the quality of the black and white cinematography, which in the case of "Kind Hearts" seems to owe something to "Citizen Kane" – another film that begins at the end and then circles back with narration.

The opening scene of "Kind Hearts and Coronets" shows Dennis Price as Louis Mazzini, a newly-minted Duke who has methodically tried to murder his way to the title. In the last night before he is to be hanged, Louis writes his memoirs, and as he reads them aloud we journey back through his life. His mother, we learn, was a daughter of the aristocratic D'Ascoyne family, who ran away with an Italian tenor and was disowned. After the tenor died on the day of the boy's birth, his mother's ap-



*Price is impeccable as the murderer: **Elegant, well-spoken, a student of demeanor.***

peals to her family were coldly rejected, and mother and son were reduced to a life of genteel poverty. But Louis' mother always held out the hope that he might someday inherit the title (which in the D'Ascoyne family descended through women as well as men). After his mother dies, she is cruelly barred from the D'Ascoyne family crypt, Louis buries her in "a hideous suburban grave" and vows revenge.

He pastes the family tree onto the back of his mother's painting of the family home, where she spent her happy early days, and one by one he crosses off D'Ascoynes as they die. A "fortunate epidemic of diphtheria" carries off one, but Louis will have to personally murder some of the others, and as he takes a sixpenny tour of the family seat he wonders how he will get close enough, observing sadly, "It is so difficult to make a neat job of killing people with whom one is

not on friendly terms."

Price is impeccable as the murderer: Elegant, well-spoken, a student of demeanor. That is what gets him a job in the family bank, where an uncle takes pity on him. The uncle and all of the other D'Ascoynes are played by Guinness (the list includes the Duke, the Banker, the Parson, the General, the Admiral, Young Ascoyne D'Ascoyne, Young Henry, and Lady Agatha D'Ascoyne). What is intriguing is that all of these characters, while obviously members of the same family, are not obviously Guinness, unless we insist on thinking of them in that way. One tactic that helps his impersonations is the tendency of the director, Robert Hamer, to shoot mostly in long and medium shot, generally avoiding closeups that can be too carefully scrutinized.

Guinness plays D'Ascoynes who are tall, short or stooped, young or old, male or female,

finding the characters largely in his body language and a few wigs or beards. It is helpful, probably, that the focus of most of the scenes is on young Louis; it is significant, somehow, that the actor playing eight characters is not given top billing and the movie is not about him.

The methods of Louis' murders are in the spirit of George Orwell's famous essay "Decline of the English Murder" (1946), in which he regretted the modern practice of simply shooting people and being done with it. Praising the ingenuity of an earlier generation of English murders, Orwell examines those crimes "which have given the greatest pleasure to the British public," finding that poison is the preferable means, and that an ideal murderer is a member of the middle class who hopes to improve his social position or get hold of a legacy.

"Kind Hearts and Coronets," set circa 1900, admirably meets his criteria. One D'Ascoyne is dispatched by poison, another is blown up at tea, and a third is swept over a waterfall after Louis unties his boat. (The victim was spending an illicit weekend with his mistress at the time, and Louis observes: "I was sorry about the girl, but found some relief in the reflection that she had presumably during the weekend already undergone a fate worse than death.") My favorite murder involves a suffragette D'Ascoyne who is demonstrating in a hot air balloon when Louis shoots her down, observing "I shot an arrow into the air/She fell to earth in Berkeley Square."

In the course of his rise to the Dukedom, Louis conducts parallel affairs, one with a woman he loves, the other with a woman he needs. Sibella (Joan Greenwood) is the daughter of the family where he boarded after his mother's death; she loves him, but believes he has no prospects, marries a boring man, and then begins to call on Louis. Green-

BEHIND THE SCENES

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS
(1949) Not Rated

Written and Directed by
Robert Hamer

Cast:

Dennis Price as Louis Mazzini

Valerie Hobson as Edith

D'Ascoyne

Alex Guinness as The Duke/The Banker/The Parson/The General/The Admiral/Young Ascoyne/Young Henry/Lady Agatha

Running time: 106 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Ealing Studios**

wood's performance is luscious, with her little lisp and air of languorous petulance. The other woman, Edith (Valerie Hobson), is the widow of one of his victims, and well-placed with money and position in society.

When the amoral Louis is not with the one he loves, he loves the one he's with.

Despite its murders and intrigues, its betrayals and blood feuds, "Kind Hearts and Coronets" has a dry and detached air, established by the memoirs of Louis, who maintains a studied distance from the evils he has committed. Wounded by the slights to his mother, he essentially believes the D'Ascoynes are asking for it. The movie is unusually dependent on voice-over narration, objective and understated, which is all the funnier by being so removed from the sensational events taking place.

Murder, Louis demonstrates, and Orwell would agree, can be most agreeably entertaining, so long as the story lingers on the eccentricities of the villain rather than on the unpleasant details of the crimes.



Alec Guinness plays eight different members of the same family in "Kind Hearts and Coronets."

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Ebertfest like the dew.”

– Roger Ebert

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Poetic tribute to a fine friend of Ebertfest

By Roger Ebert

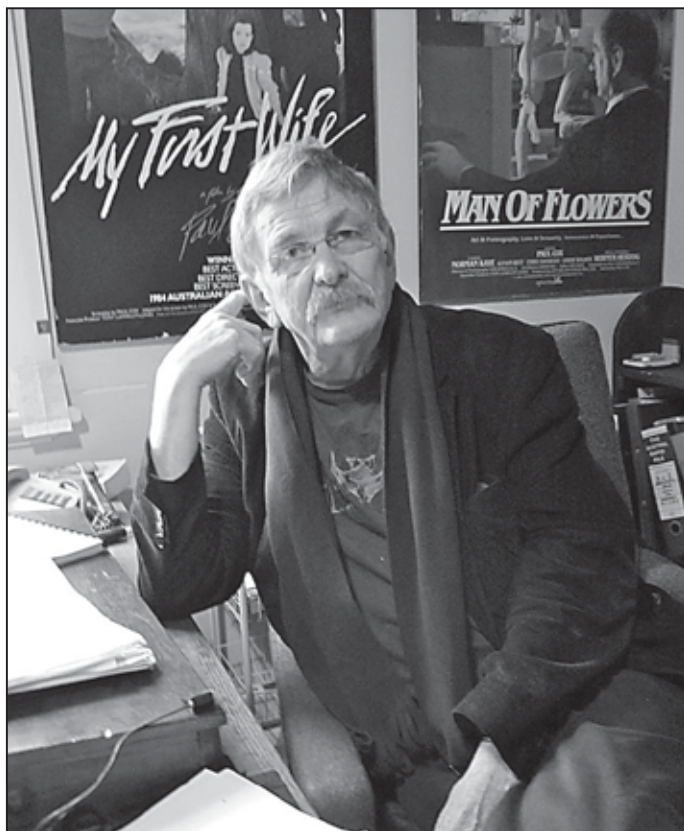
IT was Nate Kohn, his close friend, who broke the news to me that Paul Cox was seriously ill and required a liver transplant. That set in motion an exchange of emails between Paul and myself that spanned his darkest days. All three of us got together at Cannes 2009, and I fear we were all sharing the same gloomy thoughts. Was this the final time we would ever see one another? At the last moment, when all hope seemed to be fading, Paul received a transplant in December 2009, on Christmas Day. He is now back in the starting lineup.

Ebertfest has no better friend than Paul Cox. His "A Woman's Tale" was shown here in 2000, his "Innocence" in 2002, and his "Man of Flowers" in 2007. That was the year he joined his friend Werner Herzog onstage, and mentioned that Werner had at one time lived in a tent in Paul's Melbourne back yard. It didn't surprise me in the least that the two were friends. Not only are they both great filmmakers, but they both work entirely outside the limitations of commercial cinema. They make exactly the films they want to make, exactly how they want to make them.

Our email exchanges in 2009



Wendy Hughes is featured in the documentary. She has worked with Cox.



Paul Cox, the director featured in "On Borrowed Time." Cox is a guest at this year's film festival.

were fraught with concern. Paul was faced with a discouraging series of challenges before he could even qualify for a transplant. Imagine how it must feel when life itself seems just beyond your grasp. Paul is more spiritual than I am (not in a religious sense, but in a cosmic sense). He was open to thoughts on ethereal planes, and indeed some years earlier he'd communicated with Chaz about a dream he'd had about my health. He was a great support for Chaz during my own

darkest days. Now he called on this spirituality and his friends all over the world to help him through.

I'd heard that David Bradbury was working on a documentary about Paul, and if ever there was a film destined for Ebertfest it's this one. Finally seeing it, I was surprised by how poetic it was. How well it evoked Paul's gentle and wise spirit, his laughter, his determination to press on. How it would help someone know and understand this heart and soul of

Ebertfest has no better friend than Paul Cox. His "A Woman's Tale" was shown here in 2000, his "Innocence" in 2002, and his "Man of Flowers" in 2007.



FRIDAY 1:00pm

I saw my first Cox film ... at the 1983 Chicago International Film Festival, and that's where I first met him. It took ten seconds for us to become friends.

the cinema. It is visually very beautiful, which is altogether appropriate for a subject whose own films are so painterly and often concerned with artists. Since we will be attending the North American premiere, I think that's enough for me to write about the film itself.

But I'm not finished with Paul. What psychic GPS system must we share that so often brings us together? I saw my first Cox film, "Man of Flowers," at the 1983 Chicago International Film Festival, and that's

where I first met him. It took ten seconds for us to become friends. Since then we have meet at many film festivals: Toronto, Cannes, Hawaii, Telluride, Calcutta, who knows? Two stories illustrate his personality:

1. At Cannes, sitting next to him at a screening, I felt him trembling with anger at a cretin who was steadily texting throughout the movie. "He has no idea," Paul told me, "how close I came to snatching that cell phone from his hands and smash-

ing it to bits beneath my heel."

2. At Calcutta, our seats were so positioned that we could see directly into the open door of the projection booth, where the projectionists were playing cards. The screening of Paul's film did not go well. The framing was off, the focus was bad, one reel was out of order, and – this is the strangest part – I seem to clearly recall that at one point the film was shown upside down. I'm not an expert, but I believe that's physically impossible. Yet that's what I think I saw with my own eyes.

What was Paul's response? Did he tear the door from its hinges and beat the projectionists over the head with it. No, he did not. Confronted with the most incompetent projection he had ever witnessed, one that transcended reality and entered the realm of legend, Paul was ... amused.

BEHIND THE SCENES

ON BORROWED TIME
(2011) Not Rated

Written by
Mike Rubbo
Directed by
David Bradbury

Cast:
Narrated by David Wenham
Featuring Paul Cox, David Wenham, Gosia Dobrowolska, Philip Adams, Bob Ellis, Julia Blake, Terry Norris, Tony Llewellyn-Jones, David Stratton, John Clarke, Chris Haywood, Aden Young, Wendy Hughes, Bob Jones

Running time: 87 minutes

Print Courtesy: **David Bradbury**



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Wild and Weird

featuring the Alloy Orchestra

Film screening sponsored by: Steak 'n Shake

A delightful, not-so-silent program

By Roger Ebert

The first time I saw the Alloy Orchestra perform with a silent film was at the Telluride Film Festival, a place where I've been introduced to so many of the pleasures of the movies. I was able to invite them to Ebertfest in the early 2000s, and they've been back every year since, except for one year when the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra played. As everybody knows, "silent" films were invariably accompanied by music, although few of them must have enjoyed the resources of the Alloy. (Sneak down to the orchestra pit, say hello to Terry Donahue, Ken Winokur and Roger Miller, and get a glimpse of some of their more unusual instruments, including a chamber pot).

"Wild and Weird," the Alloy's special program this year, consists of short silent films hand-picked by the Alloy's members. Most of their bookings are with features, and by compiling this selection they're able to suggest additional riches from the early

As everybody knows, "silent" films were invariably accompanied by music, although few of them must have enjoyed the resources of the Alloy.



Many of the short films included in the program show how early filmmakers were very attached to special effects.

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.



FRIDAY 4:00pm

years. Then, as now, some of the most experimental work is done in short subjects.

This program is especially timely right now in the aftermath of the success of Martin Scorsese's "Hugo," which centered on the rediscovery of the French film pioneer Georges Méliès and his work. Only Scorsese would have been bold enough to attempt such a project. Although his famous "A Trip to the Moon" is on the Alloy's "Wild and Weird" DVD, it won't be included in the program at Ebertfest, in order to free time for their eclectic selection of shorts that have possibly never been seen before by our audience.

Many of them show how the earliest filmmakers were intoxicated by the magic of special effects. Méliès himself began as a magician who used film to per-



Stop motion, superimposition and dissolves are a few of the techniques used.

form "tricks" at a time when few audiences would have been so sophisticated about the techniques he was using. The first filmmakers delighted in digging into the new medium up to their elbows: Stop motion, superimposition, dissolves, optical shots.

I will leave it to you to dis-

cover the pleasures of the Alloy's treasures, but cannot resist pointing out that "Those Awful Hats" (1909) is not only the shortest film directed by D. W. Griffith but also, I would argue, the most dramatic and arguably the first cinematic use of the deus ex machina.

BEHIND THE SCENES

WILD AND WEIRD

(2011) Rated PG

Written and Directed by
Various (including Buster Keaton, Georges Méliès, Ferdinand Zecca, Segundo de Chomon, Winsor McCay)

Cast:
Various (including Buster Keaton, Georges Méliès)

Running time: 80 minutes

Print Courtesy: Film Preservation Associates

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A Separation

No rules can account for human feelings

By Roger Ebert

“A Separation” is a film in which every important character tries to live a good life within the boundaries of the same religion. That this leads them into disharmony and brings them up before a judge is because no list of rules can account for human feelings. The film involves its audience in an unusually direct way, because although we can see the logic of everyone's position, our emotions often disagree.

The movie takes place in present-day Iran, a modern nation that attempts to live under Islamic law. The film's story has no quarrel with Islam, but it demonstrates that the inflexible application of the letter of the law may frustrate the spirit of the law. This is true in all nations under all religions and all laws. Laws are an attempt to regulate hypothetical situations before they may arise. If laws were replaced by principles, they might be a better fit with human nature.

Imagine this situation. Nader and Simin (Peyman Moadi and Leila Hatami), a happily married middle-class couple in Tehran, have a sweet 11-year-old daughter, Termeh (Sarina



Simin and Nader are a happily married couple in Tehran who are torn by tragedy.

Farhadi); Nader's senile father also lives with them. They have agreed in principle to move abroad, where they hope Termeh's prospects might be better. Simin is ready to leave now. Nader wants to stay for his father's sake.

"But he doesn't know you!" his wife says. "No, but I know him." Both are correct. Here we have the universal dilemma of Alzheimer's. At an impasse, Simin moves to her mother's apartment, and as a necessity sues for divorce, although the two want to remain married. Nader hires a caregiver for his father. She is Razieh (Sareh Bayat). She keeps the nature of her job a secret from her husband, Hodjat (Shahab Hosseini), who as a strict Muslim, would never allow her to work in a

man's household without his wife present.

Nader returns one day to find his father tied to the bed and Razieh absent. She has a good reason for this, but Nader doesn't know it and neither do we. He fires her, and she accuses him of pushing her downstairs and causing a miscarriage. Hodjat sues Nader for manslaughter. One of the witnesses will be Miss Ghahraei (Merila Zare'i), the daughter's tutor, who is sincere but may not be as reliable as she thinks herself.

That's what you must know about the plot. The case ends up in the office of an official interrogating judge (Babak Karimi), whose task is to hear evidence and evaluate it. He is a fair man, open-minded, and all the witnesses testify



Peyman Moadi stars as Nader in "A Separation."

*Laws are an attempt to regulate hypothetical situations before they may arise. If laws were replaced by principles, **they might be a better fit with human nature.***



FRIDAY 8:30pm

The writer-director, Asghar Farhadi, tells his story with a fair and even hand. His only agenda seems to be to express sympathy.

as truthfully as they can. But none of them have possession of all the facts, and the findings must be in accordance with religious law. Nader and Simin are moderate Muslims. Razieh is so religious that she questions whether she can change the underpants of a man, even though he is so old and sick. What drives her is the family's desperate poverty.

The writer-director, Asghar Farhadi, tells his story with a fair and even hand. His only agenda seems to be to express empathy. Although the judge

may be tending against our own sympathies, we understand why he does so and may be correct to do so. That a director can make such a sympathetic film in such a troubled time is a tribute to his strength of character.

The actors, as sometimes happens, create those miracles that can endow a film with conviction. Moadi and Hatami, as husband and wife, succeed in convincing us their characters are acting from genuine motives; they love each other and want the best for their family, but are divided on how to

act. That this leads them into a manslaughter case is by unhappy chance. Nor is the judge eager to punish.

"A Separation" provides a useful portrait of Iran today. Some inflamed American political rhetoric has portrayed it as a rogue nation eager to start nuclear war. All too many Americans, I fear, picture Iranians as camel-riding harem-keepers. Certainly some of Iran's punishments for adultery that we read about seem medieval. But this film portrays a more nuanced nation, and its decent characters are trying to do the right thing. To untangle right and wrong in this fascinating story is a moral challenge. I'd love to see the film with wise judges from American divorce courts and hear their decisions. Sometimes the law is not adequate to deal with human feelings.

BEHIND THE SCENES

A SEPARATION

(2011) Rated PG-13

Written and Directed by
Asghar Farhadi

Cast:

Peyman Moadi as Nader
Leila Hatami as Simin
Shahab Hosseini as Hodjat
Sarina Farhadi as Termeh
Sareh Bayat as Razieh
Merila Zare'i as Miss Ghahrail
Kimia Hosseini as Somayeh
Sahabanu Zolghadr as Azam

Running time: 123 minutes

Print Courtesy: Sony Pictures
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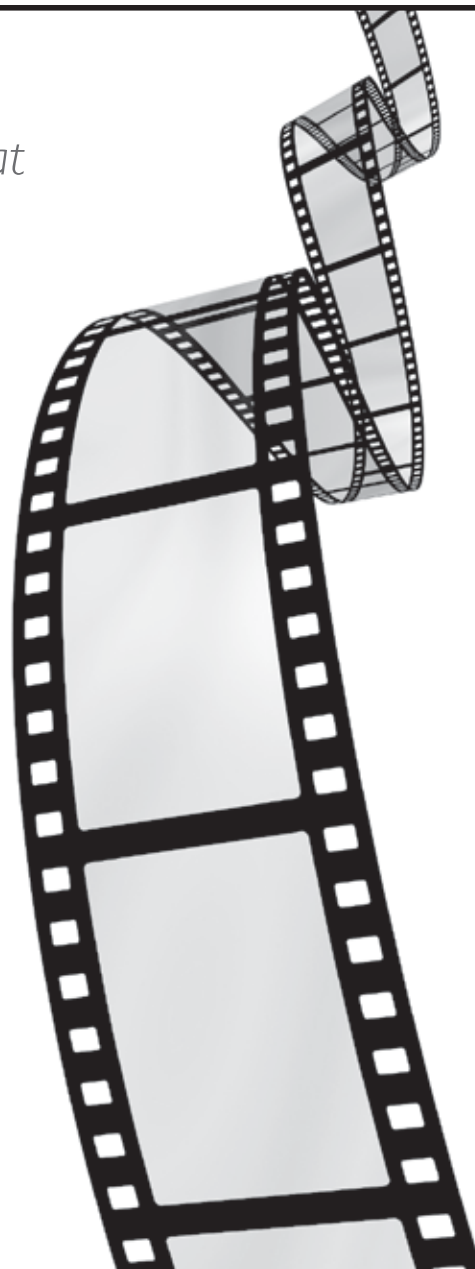
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Higher Ground

Growing into, and out of, Christianity

By Roger Ebert

Vera Farmiga's "Higher Ground" is the life story of a woman who grows into, and out of, Christianity. It values her at every stage of that process. It never says she is making the right or wrong decision, only that what she does seems necessary at the time she does it. In a world where believers and agnostics are polarized and hold simplified ideas about each other, it takes a step back and sees faith as a series of choices that should be freely made.

The woman's name is Corinne. We see her as a child, a teenager around 20 and an adult around 40. As a child, she invites Jesus into her life in a conventional mainstream Protestant sort of way. Later, she is born again, with full immersion and all the rest of it, after she and her husband credit God for saving them and their child from tragedy. Later still, she finds her evangelical congregation enforcing uncomfortable conformity upon her.

I would like to say "Higher Ground," which marks Farmiga's directorial debut, never steps wrong in following this process, but it does. Sometimes it slips too easily into satire, but at least it's nuanced satire based on true believers who are basically nice and good people. There are no heavy-handed portraits of holy rollers here, just people whose view of the world is narrow. There are also no outsize sinners, just some gentle singer-songwriters who are too fond of pot and whose lyrics are parades of clichés.

Corinne is played as a girl by McKenzie Turner, as an adult by



Vera Farmiga plays Corinne Walker in "Higher Ground." The movie is her directorial debut.

Vera Farmiga and as a teenager by Farmiga's sister, Taissa. At all of these stages in life, the character's face reflects awareness and intelligence, along with an inbred independence that makes her a little reluctant to go along with the crowd. At the discussions held by her prayer group, we can see her drawing a line between those who are thoughtful and those who are passive conformists. Corinne reads widely. She thinks about the Scriptures. She has opinions. She doesn't respond well when an older woman advises her that when she speaks out, it sounds too much like preaching. God forbid a woman should have an opinion.

Yet the preachers she comes into contact with are not bad men. The film carefully avoids stereotyping them. It's just that as she grows older, her congregation becomes a group where the others feel more included than she can. They accept. Even the men consider male dominance a duty, not a pleasure.

Corinne has a best friend,

Annika (Dagmara Dominczyk), she confides in. They share thoughts about sex and other things. (Farmiga might have been wise, however, to avoid the easy laugh when each woman draws her husband's penis. There is a statement to be made, but there must be a more subtle way to make it.)

Unhappiness strikes the group. I will not supply details. I observe, however, that a person who suffers great misfortune is unlikely to be comforted by the



Carolyn Briggs wrote the screenplay. She is attending this year's festival.

*Sometimes it slips too easily into satire, but at least it's **nuanced satire based on true believers** who are basically nice and good people.*



SATURDAY 1:00pm

assurance that God's will has been done. (In the case of my own misfortune, I prefer to think that God's will had nothing to do with it. People who tell me it did are singularly tactless.)

Ask yourself during the film where you think it takes place — which American state? I looked up the locations on IMDb and was surprised. Its location doesn't fit regional stereotypes. Nor do its characters. These are decent people, trying to do the right thing, and Corinne is a decent person who believes she must decide on the right thing for herself. When others inform her what that is, why are they rarely eager to have her input?

Vera Farmiga is such a warm actress. I don't know if she could play cruel. John Hawkes, who plays her alcoholic father, can play cruel — but not in a physically violent way. His is the kind



"Higher Ground" is the story of a woman who grows into, and later out of, Christianity.

of cruelty that shows a child her father is weak and pitiful, and doesn't deserve her respect. Perhaps that's how she began to doubt at an early age the paternalism of her social group.

We see the seeds of imagination growing through her reading. People in books sometimes

do things we can understand because we have come to know those people. Non-readers are likely to think they know what people should do because — well, they just should, that's all. You can read this in a book: "The unexamined life is not worth living."

BEHIND THE SCENES

HIGHER GROUND

(2011) Rated R

Written by
Carolyn Briggs and Tim Metcalfe
Directed by
Vera Farmiga

Cast:
Vera Farmiga as Corinne
Joshua Leonard as Ethan
Dagmara Dominczyk as Annika
Norbert Leo Butz as Pastor Bill
Bill Irwin as Pastor Bud
John Hawkes as CW
Taissa Farmiga as Teenage Corinne

Running time: 109 minutes

Print Courtesy: Sony Pictures Classics

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Patang

Stranger in a wondrous land

By Roger Ebert

I visited India only once, for less than two weeks, but I left a part of my heart there. I can't say I know it well, but I know how it made me feel, and it seemed impossibly exotic and absolutely comfortable at the same time: I was curiously at home in a strange land.

At an event in my hotel, I met a police chief's wife, who invited me to her home for dinner. Just like that. The families seemed to function in the ways of families I knew. The fact that so many people in this far-away land spoke English made it more accessible to me. I loved the way so much of the talk circled around philosophy. I developed a particular love of the exuberant music, colors, scents and tastes. It occurred to me that no women

can fail to look well-dressed in a sari.

But these are all superficial tourist truisms. I have learned more in my reading, but so could you. It's in the movies where I find sensual and instinctive insights. I like Bollywood, and the classicism of Ray, but there's one area of Indian films I've missed, or remain ignorant of: The low-budget indie scene. Sometimes, all over the world, such films are freed of the lockstep of plot and have a better feeling for the thing itself.

A new film named "Patang" in this year's Chicago International Film Festival opened a new world for me. It plunges head-first into a family based in Ahmedabad, where India's largest annual kite festival is celebrated. It reflects the way Indians live in each other's pockets (to borrow the British expression). Homes and businesses, temples and roadways, are all crowded close together, neighbors know one another, and it's all held together by a network of the most baffling and chaotic traffic in the world.

This film is joyous, but more than that: It's lovely in its construction. The director, Prashant Bhargava, born and raised in Chicago, knows what his basic storyline is, but reveals it subtly. The story in outline would be simple enough for a made-for-TV movie. There is nothing simple about "Patang." The bare bones of the story: An affluent uncle from Delhi named Jayesh (Mukkund Shukla) pays a much-delayed visit back home to his family in Ahmedabad, bringing along his daughter Priya (Sugandha Garg), who hasn't seen these relatives in years. He meets his mother Sudha



Prashant Bhargava directed "Patang."

(Seema Biswas), his grandmother Amma (Pannaben Soni), and his nephew – the son of his brother, who died of a heart attack. The nephew, Chakku (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) resents the way this distant man descends grandly on the small-town relatives and feels he has the right to make suggestions and changes. There are many more details, but that's all I choose to reveal.

The story line becomes fully clear only towards the end. In form "Patang" looks almost like a cinema verite documentary of this family, surrounded by the city and the kite festival. Although it was years in the making, many key shots were obtained during the festival itself, and we see the skies over the city filled with thousands of dancing, dueling kites, as every single rooftop is occupied by people. Below in the streets, bands, fireworks and food vendors create a tumult. There is a little romantic subplot, involving the daughter from Delhi and Bobby (Aakash Maheriya), who begin a flirtation on the rooftop and continue it during a motor-bike ride.

The family house itself is a character, and there are a few



During the story, Hamid, a young boy, is delegated by a kitemaker to deliver a parcel of kites to a family home.

*This film is joyous, but more than that:
It's lovely in its construction.*



SATURDAY 4:00pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

PATANG

(2011) Not Rated

Written and Directed by
Prashant Bhargava

Cast:

Nawazuddin Siddiqui as Chakku

Seema Biswas as Sudha

Sugandha Garg as Priya

Aakash Maheriya as Bobby

Pannaben Soni as Amma

Azur as Azur

Mukund Shukla as Jayesh

Hamid Shaikh as Hamid

Hameed as Hameed

Running time: 94 minutes

Print Courtesy: Khushi Films

So is the mystery of the nephew's resentment, which is explained obliquely by indirect dialogue. We are immersed in the life and sort it out for ourselves.

extended shots of its graceful, playful architecture and happy colors. Many interiors involve a photograph of the dead brother, whose soul seems to inhabit it. Meals are prepared and shared on a table in the street. The food looks delicious; fingers are often used. People are teased to perform songs. Gossip and chatter run wild. No attempt is made to lay all this out logically; indeed, we only gradually come to know who the characters are. It's clear enough, but not underlined and pounded home.

We meet a young boy named Hamid (Hamid Shaikh), who is delegated by a kitemaker to deliver a parcel of kites to this family home on the big day. His mission ends badly. A search goes up for Hamid. Meanwhile, on a bridge, Priya and Bobby begin a flirtation. Both are good looking. Her eyes dance with merriness. They've been together a few hours. In a lesser film, this would be a love story with

a happy ending. "But Bobby," she says, "we hardly know each other. Do you expect me to leave behind thousands of friends in Delhi?"

He does. Now watch carefully. Their flirtatious conversation is filmed in close-ups and closer-ups. The effect is intimate and sensual. In one shot only, cigarette smoke coils from her mouth. We never otherwise see her smoking. This establishes in a moment that she is more worldly than the boy. She kisses him, but that will be that: This is only a few-days visit.

Back at home, the frenzy of the kite-flying takes over. We learn that the kite strings are coated with powdered glass, and the idea is to cut another kite out of the sky and rule the clouds. This is never explained in so many words. We have to observe for ourselves that the kite-fliers protect their fingertips with tape. Such facts are embedded in the film, to be discovered

in context. So is the mystery of the nephew's resentment, which is explained obliquely by indirect dialogue. We are immersed in the life and sort it out for ourselves. The effect is curiously like being invited into this home and learning while we stay.

Prashant Bhargava was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, went to grade school and the Kenwood Academy. How did his background produce such a lovely and successful indie film in India? From my point of view, the story begins about 25 years ago, when his father, Vijay Bhargava, started taking my film class at the University of Chicago's downtown extension division. Vijay was smart, affable, good company. He always saved a seat for me in the back row. During the complete silent features of Buster Keaton, we worked our way through oatmeal raisin cookies and peach Snapple. He loved movies, knew a lot about them, and when I was going to the Calcutta Film Festival he set me up with his cousin, who showed me all over town, including the Victoria Memorial, an architectural wedding cake that he regarded with a certain pleasure, considering Victoria had once appointed herself Empress of India.

Last week I was signing my book at Barnes & Noble at Webster Place. Since I can't speak, I like to shake everyone's hand before a signing. There in the line was Vijay! I hadn't seen him since before my surgery in 2006. He introduced me to his son, Prashant, who had made a film that played at the Berlin and Tribeca festivals, and others. They gave me a DVD. I brought it home and was delighted by it.

Prashant told me his dad spent over 25 years working in the administration of Michael Reese Hospital. "After 20 years of attending your class and supporting my career as a director and designer, he has taken up

acting!" he told me. "He has taken over 25 classes at Chicago's Act One Studios. He is a gardener as well, and recently completed a master gardening course at UIC." As for his mother, Ranjana Bhargava, who catered the meals of the cast and crew of his film: "For over 35 years, Ranjana has spearheaded efforts to serve the needs of women, immigrants and other marginalized communities in Chicago. She has led and managed numerous non-profit organizations, including Apna Ghar, a domestic violence shelter serving predominantly Asian women and families. She now teaches vegetarian Indian cooking on the South Side of Chicago in our home."

Prashant attended Cornell, majored in computing, moved into film titles, music videos and live action commercials. "The seeds for the movie 'Patang' were based on the memories of my uncles' dueling kites," he said. "In India kite flying transcends

continued on next page



Jaideep Punjabi produced "Patang."

Patang

continued from previous page

boundaries. Rich or poor, Hindu or Muslim, young or old – together they look towards the sky with wonder, thoughts and doubts forgotten. Kite flying is meditation in its simplest form.

"In 2005, I visited Ahmedabad to experience their annual kite festival, the largest in India. When I first witnessed the entire city on their rooftops, staring up at the sky, their kites dueling ferociously, dancing without inhibition, I knew I had to make this film in Ahmedabad."

And so he did. "Inspired by the spiritual energy of the festival," he told me, "I returned the next three years, slowly immersing myself in the ways of the old city. I became acquainted with its unwritten codes of conduct, its rhythms and secrets. I would sit on a street corner for hours at a stretch and just observe. Over time, I connected with shopkeep-



Priya's love story is unconventional. The meeting with her beau is brief and does not end happily.

ers and street kids, gangsters and grandmothers. This process formed the foundation for my characters, story and my approach to shooting the film.

"I found myself discovering stories within Ahmedabad's old city that intrigued me. Fractured relationships, property disputes,

the meaning of home and the spirit of celebration were recurring themes that surfaced. The film's joyful message and its cinematic magic developed organically. My desire was for the sense of poetry and aesthetics to be less of an imposed perspective and more of a view that emerged

from the pride of the people and place."

And that's what happens. His film took three years of research, was seven years in the making, had 9 percent non-actors, improvised its takes based on the script. And it flies as free and colorfully as a kite.



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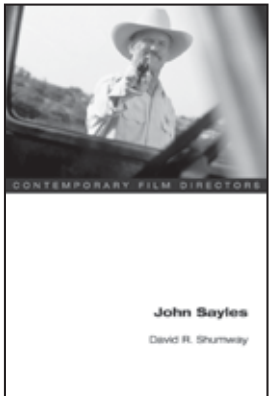


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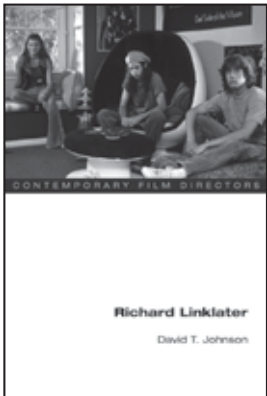
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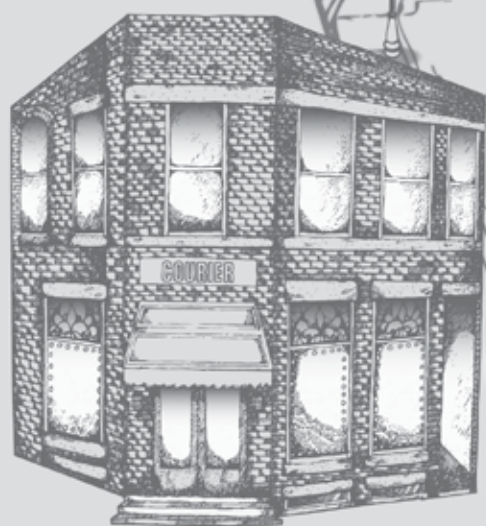
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Take Shelter

Film screening sponsored by: Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance

A dread is spreading in the land

By Roger Ebert

Here is a frightening thriller based not on special effects gimmicks but on a dread that seems quietly spreading in the land: that the good days are ending, and climate changes or other sinister forces will sweep away our safety. "Take Shelter" unfolds in a quiet Ohio countryside with big skies and flat horizons, and involves a happy family whose life seems contented.

It is the gift of actor Michael Shannon as Curtis LaForche that while appearing to be a stable husband and father with a good job in construction, he also can evoke by his eyes and manner a deep unease. Curtis has what he needs to be happy. He fears he will lose it. His dreams begin to be visited by unusually vivid nightmares: The family dog attacks him, for example, or storms destroy his home.

To the puzzlement of his wife, Samantha (Jessica Chastain), and their hearing-impaired daughter, Hannah (Tova Stewart), he builds a pen in the backyard for the dog, which had been living peacefully indoors. The storm dreams are not so easily managed. Ominous black clouds gather, their heavy raindrops brown and oily, and so subtle is the direction of Jeff Nichols that some of this poisoned rain seems to be real, not imaginary. They live on the outskirts of town, in an area which is swept from time to time with tornadoes.

His behavior begins to concern his best friend and workmate, Dewart (Shea Whigham), who helps him as much as he



Michael Shannon stars in "Take Shelter."

can. Their friendship dramatizes the thin ice beneath so many people these days, when employment is threatened by uncontrolled forces, and if you lose a job, there may not be another one. Stories about Curtis begin to spread in the community, and Curtis is not paranoid when he thinks people are talking about him. His explosion at a community benefit dinner is terrifying in its energy.

This is the second collaboration by writer-director and star, whose powerful "Shotgun Stories" (2007), established Nichols as a gifted new filmmaker and further cemented Shannon's growing reputation as an actor of uncommon force: the young Christopher Walken, my wife says, and he does embody the same shifting air of disquiet.

As his wife, Jessica Chastain is effective in her seventh major role this year; since "The Tree of Life," has any young actress ever put together such a series of roles?

A few jolting shots early in the film establish the possibility that bad things could happen. But Nichols builds his suspense carefully. Curtis is tormented but intelligent; fearing the family's history of mental illness, he visits his schizophrenic mother (Kathy Baker) in a care facility to ask if she had ever been troubled by bad dreams. He checks books



"Take Shelter" director and writer Jeff Nichols is a guest at this year's festival.

*It is the gift of actor Michael Shannon as Curtis LaForche that while appearing to be a stable husband and father with a good job in construction, **he also can evoke by his eyes and manner a deep unease.***



SATURDAY 8:30pm

BEHIND THE SCENES

TAKE SHELTER (2011) Rated R

Written and Directed by
Jeff Nichols

Cast:
Michael Shannon as Curtis
LaForche
Jessica Chastain as Samantha
LaForche
Tova Stewart as Hannah LaForche
Shea Whigham as Dewart
Katy Mixon as Nat
Natasha Randall as Cammie
Ron Kennard as Russell
Scott Knisley as Lewis
Robert Longstreet as Jim

Running time: 121 minutes

Print Courtesy: Sony Pictures
Classics



Jessica Chastain in a scene from "Take Shelter." Chastain plays the part of Samantha, who is married to Michael Shannon's character.

out of the library. He turns to the area's obviously inadequate public health facilities.

But he also acts as if his warnings should be taken seriously. He is driven to guard the family he loves. He borrows mon-

ey from the bank and equipment from work to greatly expand an old storm shelter in his backyard. His wife grows frightened by his behavior. His job and health insurance are threatened. And then a storm comes. Its na-

ture need not be discussed here. It leads to a scene of searing power, in which Samantha tells Curtis that it is safe once again to return to the surface — that it is a step he must take personally. The story seems somewhat resolved. Then the film concludes not with a "surprise ending" but with a series of shots that brilliantly summarize all that has gone before. This is masterful filmmaking.

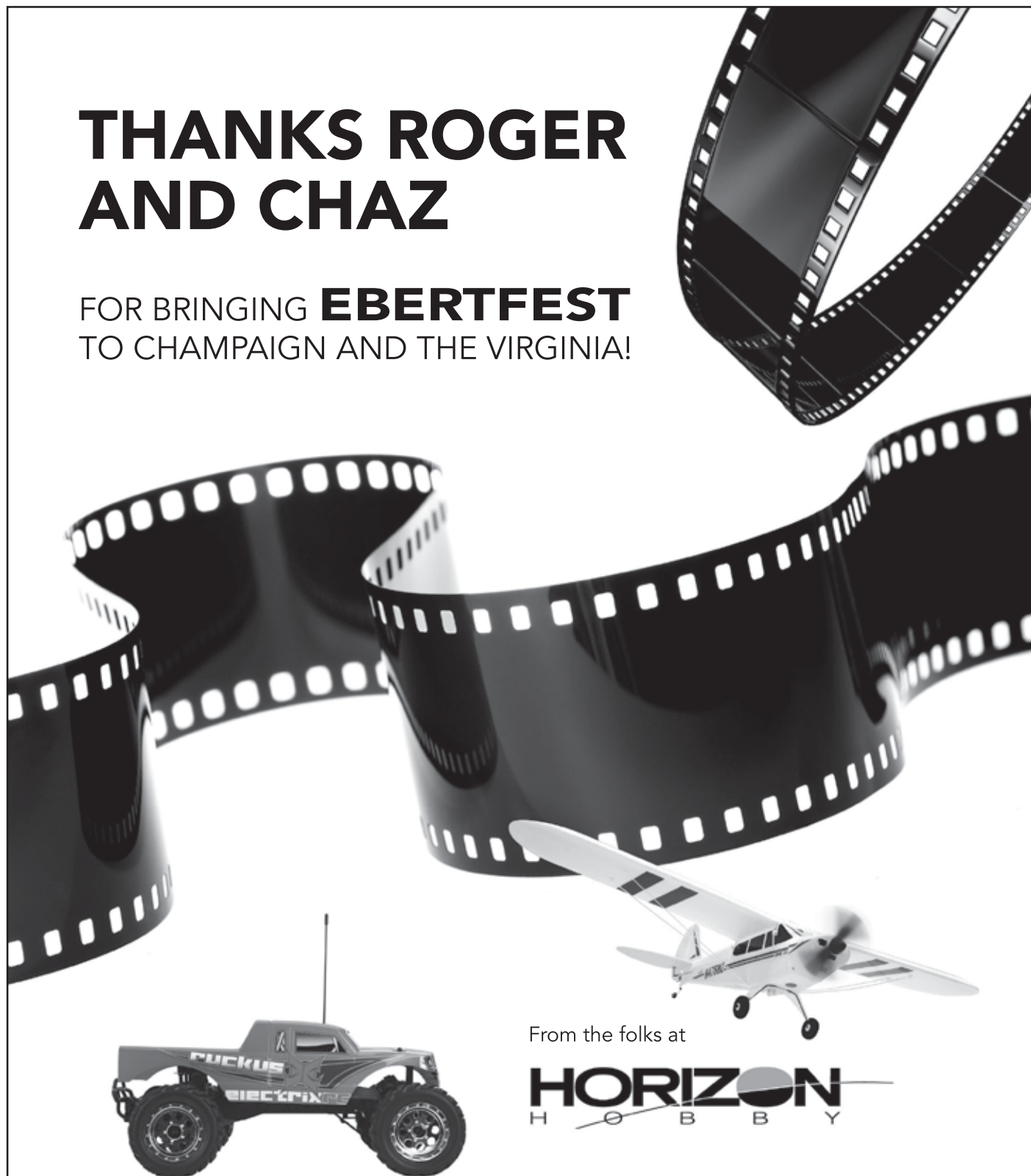
In films like "Shotgun Stories," William Friedkin's "Bug," Sam Mendes' "Revolutionary Road" and Werner Herzog's "My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done," Shannon has attracted the best directors with his uncanny power. His performance in the play "Mistakes Were Made," was one of the most amazing performances I've ever seen. Thinking again over what he does in "Take Shelter," I think an Oscar nomination for best actor would be well-deserved.



A scene from "Take Shelter" starring Michael Shannon. The movie is the second collaboration between Shannon and director Jeff Nichols.

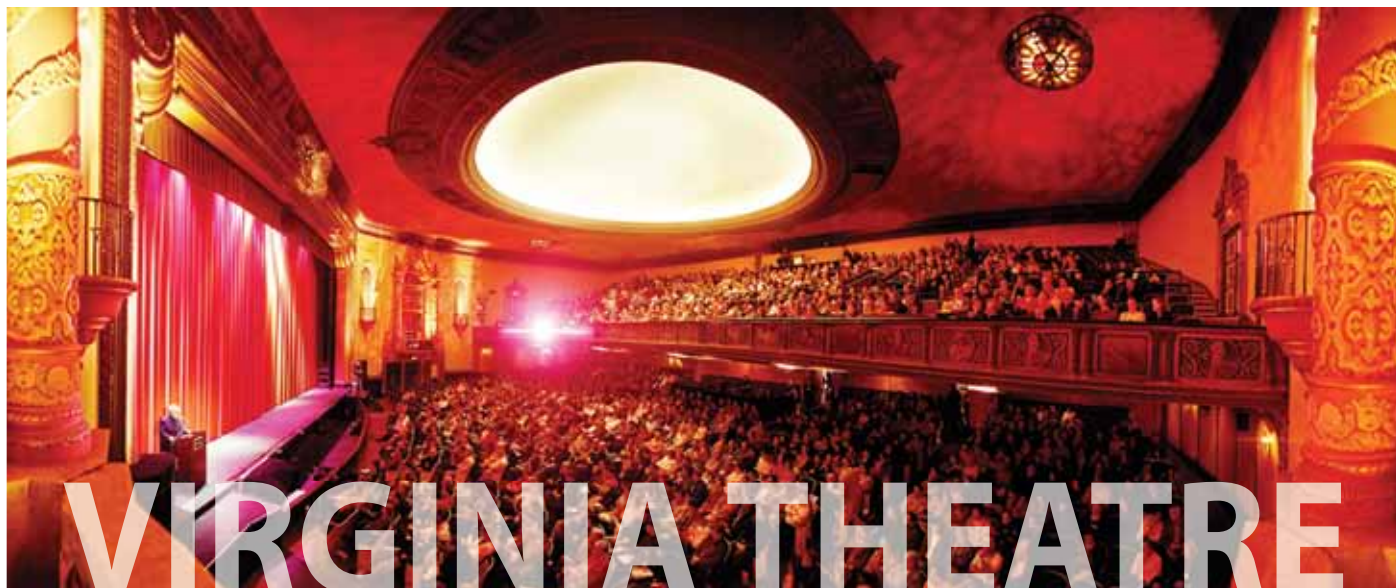
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During their February Regular Board meeting, the Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners approved completing the Virginia Theatre restoration as one large project, closing down in mid May of 2012 and reopening in April of 2013 for the 15th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival, with any remaining work to be completed after May of 2013. This will become the largest project yet on the theatre since the Park District took over ownership in 2000 and will finally complete the restoration of this grand facility.

Total costs for the renovation are estimated to be \$5 million so your help is needed now more than ever. Funds have been allocated, but every dollar collected in donations means one less dollar of tax support needed. Help us finish the job and bring the Virginia Theatre back to the grandeur of her glory days! For more information about the specifics of the restoration or how you can help, contact Laura Auteberry at laura.auteberry@cparkdistrict.com or (217) 819-3839.



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Citizen Kane

Giving a new voice to an old classic

By Roger Ebert

I assume every Ebertfest audience member has seen "Citizen Kane" at least once, perhaps many times. I'm including it in this year's Ebertfest for a personal reason. I recorded the video commentary track for the DVD, and it has been retained in the magnificently restored new 70th anniversary edition of the film from Warner Bros., released last autumn. The track had some success, and was named commentary of the year by Variety. The last year I was able to speak was at Ebertfest 2006. So Ebertfest 2012 is also an anniversary of sorts, and it occurred to me to present the film with the commentary track, so that one more time my voice can be heard in this lovely theater.

"I don't think any word can explain a man's life," says one of the searchers through the warehouse of treasures left behind by Charles Foster Kane. Then we get the famous series of shots leading to the closeup of the word "Rosebud" on a sled that has been tossed into a furnace, its paint curling in the flames. We remember that this was Kane's childhood sled, taken from him as he was torn from his family and sent east to boarding school.

Rosebud is the emblem of the security, hope and innocence of childhood, which a man can spend his life seeking to regain. It is the green light at the end of Gatsby's pier; the leopard atop Kilimanjaro, seeking nobody knows what; the bone tossed into the air in "2001." It is that yearning after transience that adults learn to suppress. "Maybe Rosebud was something he couldn't get, or something he lost," says Thompson, the reporter assigned to the puzzle of Kane's dying word. "Anyway, it wouldn't



Orson Welles wrote, directed and starred in "Citizen Kane." The movie is widely considered one of the greatest of all time.

have explained anything." True, it explains nothing, but it is remarkably satisfactory as a demonstration that nothing can be explained. "Citizen Kane" likes playful paradoxes like that. Its surface is as much fun as any movie ever made. Its depths surpass understanding. I have analyzed it a shot at a time with more than 30 groups, and together we have seen, I believe, pretty much everything that is there on the screen. The more clearly I can see its physical manifestation, the more I am stirred by its mystery.

It is one of the miracles of cinema that in 1941 a first-time director; a cynical, hard-drinking writer; an innovative cinematographer, and a group of New York stage and radio actors were given the keys to a studio and total

control, and made a masterpiece. "Citizen Kane" is more than a great movie; it is a gathering of all the lessons of the emerging era of sound, just as "Birth of a Nation" assembled everything learned at the summit of the silent era, and "2001" pointed the way beyond narrative. These peaks stand above all the others.

The origins of "Citizen Kane" are well known. Orson Welles, the boy wonder of radio and stage, was given freedom by RKO Radio Pictures to make any picture he wished. Herman Mankiewicz, an experienced screenwriter, collaborated with him on a screenplay originally called "The American." Its inspiration was the life of William Randolph Hearst, who had put together an empire of newspapers, radio stations, magazines and

Rosebud is the emblem of security, hope and innocence of childhood, which a man can spend his life seeking to regain.



SUNDAY 12:00noon

The structure of "Citizen Kane" is circular, adding more depth every time it passes over the life.

news services, and then built to himself the flamboyant monument of San Simeon, a castle furnished by rummaging the remains of nations. Hearst was Ted Turner, Rupert Murdoch and Bill Gates rolled up into an enigma.

Arriving in Hollywood at age 25, Welles brought a subtle knowledge of sound and dialogue along with him; on his Mercury Theater on the Air, he'd experimented with audio styles more lithe and suggestive than those usually heard in the movies. As his cinematographer he hired Gregg Toland, who on John Ford's "The Long Voyage Home" (1940) had experimented

with deep-focus photography--with shots where everything was in focus, from the front to the back, so that composition and movement determined where the eye looked first. For his cast Welles assembled his New York colleagues, including Joseph Cotten as Jed Leland, the hero's best friend; Dorothy Comingore as Susan Alexander Kane, the young woman Kane thought he could make into an opera star; Everett Sloane as Mr. Bernstein, the mogul's business wizard; Ray Collins as Gettys, the corrupt political boss, and Agnes Moorehead as the boy's forbidding mother. Welles himself

played Kane from age 25 until his deathbed, using makeup and body language to trace the progress of a man increasingly captive inside his needs. "All he really wanted out of life was love," Leland says. "That's Charlie's story--how he lost it."

The structure of "Citizen Kane" is circular, adding more depth every time it passes over the life. The movie opens with newsreel obituary footage that briefs us on the life and times of Charles Foster Kane; this footage, with its portentous narration, is Welles' bemused nod in the direction of the "March of Time" newsreels then being produced by another media mogul, Henry Luce. They provide a map of Kane's trajectory, and it will keep us oriented as the screenplay skips around in time, piecing together the memories of those who knew him.

continued on next page

BEHIND THE SCENES

CITIZEN KANE
(1941) Rated PG

Written and Directed by
Orson Welles

Cast:

Orson Welles as Charles Foster Kane

Dorothy Comingore as Susan Alexander Kane

Agnes Moorehead as Mary Kane

Joseph Cotten as Jedediah Leland

Ruth Warrick as Emily Monroe Norton Kane

Ray Collins as James W. Gettys

Erskine Sanford as Herbert Carter

Running time: 119 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Warner Bros.**



George Coulouris, Harry Shannon, Agnes Moorehead and Buddy Swan in a scene from "Citizen Kane." The film is known for its use of deep-focus cinematography.



A scene from "Citizen Kane."

Citizen Kane

continued from previous page

Curious about Kane's dying word, "rosebud," the newsreel editor assigns Thompson, a reporter, to find out what it meant. Thompson is played by William Alland in a thankless performance; he triggers every flashback, yet his face is never seen. He questions Kane's alcoholic mistress, his ailing old friend, his rich associate and the other witnesses, while the movie loops through time. As often as I've seen "Citizen Kane," I've never been able to firmly fix the order of the scenes in my mind. I look at a scene and tease myself with what will come next. But it remains elusive: By flashing back through the eyes of many witnesses, Welles and Mankiewicz created an emotional chronology set free from time.

The movie is filled with bravura visual moments: the towers of Xanadu; candidate Kane addressing a political rally; the doorway of his mistress dissolving into a front-page photo in a rival newspaper; the camera swooping down through a skylight toward the pathetic Susan in a nightclub; the many Kanes reflected through parallel mirrors; the boy playing in the snow in the background as his parents determine his future; the great shot as the camera rises straight up from Susan's opera debut to a stagehand holding his nose, and the subsequent shot of Kane, his face hidden in shadow, defiantly applauding in the silent hall.

Along with the personal story is the history of a period. "Citizen Kane" covers the rise of the penny press (here Joseph Pulitzer is the model), the Hearst-supported Spanish-American War, the birth of radio, the power of political



Welles was heavily influenced by the history of journalism in the early 1900s. He based portions of his story on the rise of the penny press and Joseph Pulitzer, and also the life of William Randolph Hearst.

machines, the rise of fascism, the growth of celebrity journalism. A newsreel subtitle reads: "1895 to 1941. All of these years he covered, many of these he was."

The screenplay by Mankiewicz and Welles (which got an Oscar, the only one Welles ever won) is densely constructed and covers an amazing amount of ground, including a sequence showing Kane inventing the popular press; a record of his marriage, from early bliss to the famous montage of increasingly chilly breakfasts; the story of his courtship of Susan Alexander and her disastrous opera career, and his decline into the remote master of Xanadu ("I think if you look carefully in the

west wing, Susan, you'll find about a dozen vacationists still in residence").

"Citizen Kane" knows the sled is not the answer. It explains what Rosebud is, but not what Rosebud means. The film's construction shows how our lives, after we are gone, survive only in the memories of others, and those memories butt up against the walls we erect and the roles we play. There is the Kane who made shadow figures with his fingers, and the Kane who hated the traction trust; the Kane who chose his mistress over his marriage and political career, the Kane who entertained millions, the Kane who died alone.

There is a master image in

"Citizen Kane" you might easily miss. The tycoon has overextended himself and is losing control of his empire. After he signs the papers of his surrender, he turns and walks into the back of the shot. Deep focus allows Welles to play a trick of perspective. Behind Kane on the wall is a window that seems to be of average size. But as he walks toward it, we see it is further away and much higher than we thought. Eventually he stands beneath its lower sill, shrunken and diminished. Then as he walks toward us, his stature grows again. A man always seems the same size to himself, because he does not stand where we stand to look at him.

"Citizen Kane" knows the sled is not the answer. It explains what Rosebud is, but not what Rosebud means. The film's construction shows how our lives, after we are gone, survive only in the memories of others, and those memories butt up against the walls we erect and the roles we play.



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*Eileen
and Chuck*

Last year

A look back at the 2011 Festival

*Photos courtesy of
Thompson McClellan*



Audience members during a showing of "Life, Above All" at the Virginia Theatre on April 30, 2011.



Roger and Chaz arrive at the Ebertfest Opening Reception hosted by President and Mrs. Michael Hogan.



Roger, Chaz and Tilda Swinton at last year's Festival.



Festival director Nate Kohn (left) talking on stage with Chaz Ebert (right) and Hilde Back (far right).



Tilda Swinton on stage following the screening of "I Am Love" at the 2011 Festival.



Guests from the movie "Louder Than a Bomb," which closed out the 2011 Festival.



David Call, one of the stars of "Tiny Furniture," discusses his role following the screening.



Hilde Back, the subject of "A Small Act," at the Festival.



Richard Linklater, director, discusses his film "Me and Orson Welles" with Ali Arikan (left), Ignatiy Vishnevetsky (right) and the Festival audience after the screening.



Turner (left) and Bill Ross (right) receive their Golden Thumb awards after the screening of "45365" at the 2011 Festival.



Lamar Jordan performs after the screening of "Louder Than a Bomb" at the close of the 2011 Festival.



Roger and Chaz present Norman Jewison, the director of "Only You," with the Golden Thumb award on stage after his movie.



Chaz and panelists after the panel discussion "Ebert Presents: Reinventing the TV Show in the Digital Age."



Roger and Chaz with Rachael Harris and Robbie Pickering of "Natural Selection" at the Ebertfest Opening Reception.



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Ebertfest Encore Schedule

Before and during Ebertfest, The Art Theater will be encoring a film 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 (4/20):

The New Art Film Festival
a free festival of locally made films
Part of the Boneyard Arts Festival
5:00 PM - 12:00 Midnight

SATURDAY (4/21)

1:00 - 3:30 PM – *"Trees are Good"*
free Arbor Day matinee
4:30 PM - *The Band's Visit* (Ebertfest 2008)
7:30 PM - *California 90420* (New documentary on marijuana culture)
10:00 PM - *Synecdoche, New York* (Ebertfest 2010)

SUNDAY (4/22)

1:00 PM - *Rigoletto* (Opera, from the Royal Opera House)
4:30 PM - *Trouble the Water* (Ebertfest 2009)
6:30 PM - *Battleship Potemkin* (Ebertfest 1999)
8:00 PM - *Metropolis* (Ebertfest 2011)

MONDAY (4/23)

Feminist Film Festival
Hosted by the U of I's Women's Resources Center

TUESDAY (4/24)

7:30 PM - *The Band's Visit* (Ebertfest 2008)
9:30 PM - *Battleship Potemkin* (Ebertfest 1999)

WEDNESDAY (4/25)

1:00 PM - *Play Time* (Ebertfest 2005)
4:00 PM - *Rigoletto* (Opera, from the Royal Opera House)
7:30 PM - *Metropolis* (Ebertfest 2011)

Thursday (4/26)

7:30 PM - *I Am Love* (Ebertfest 2011)
10:00 PM - *Big Fan* (Ebertfest 2012)

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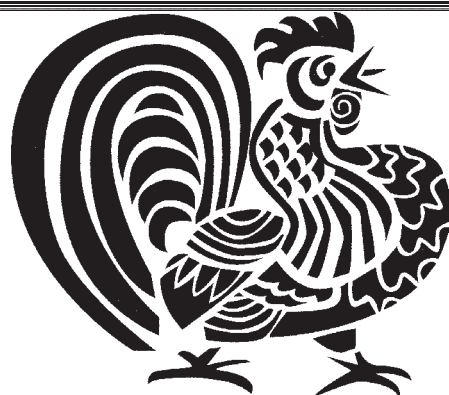
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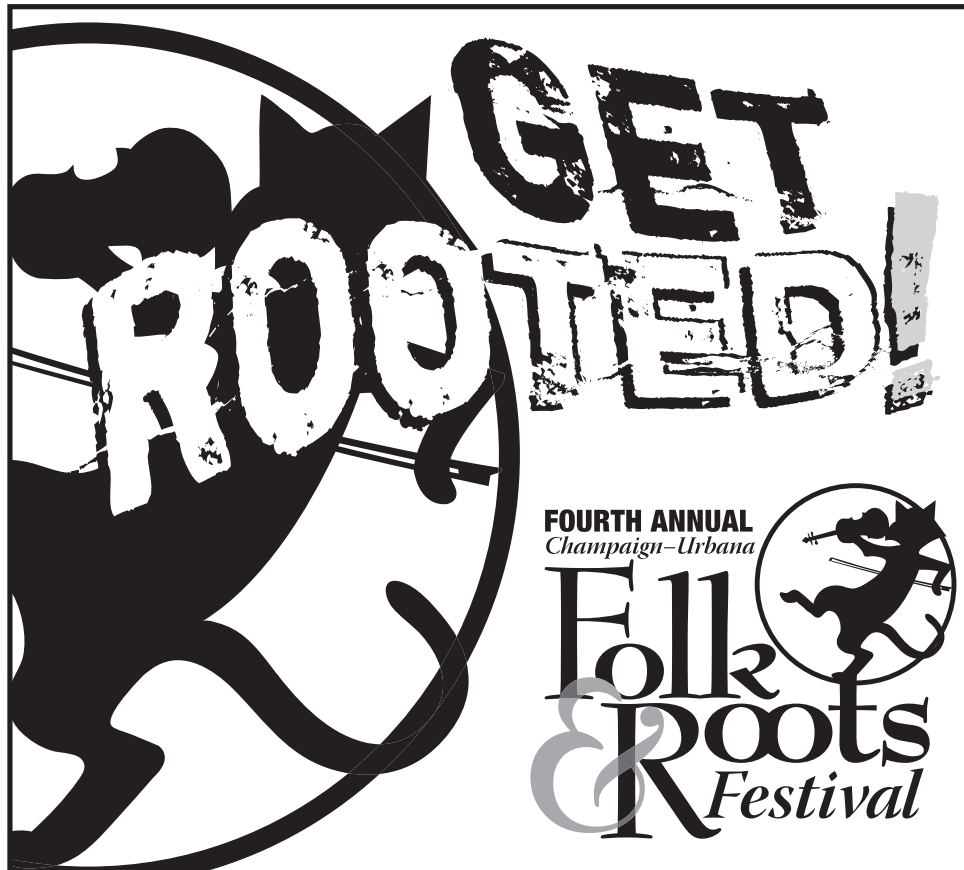
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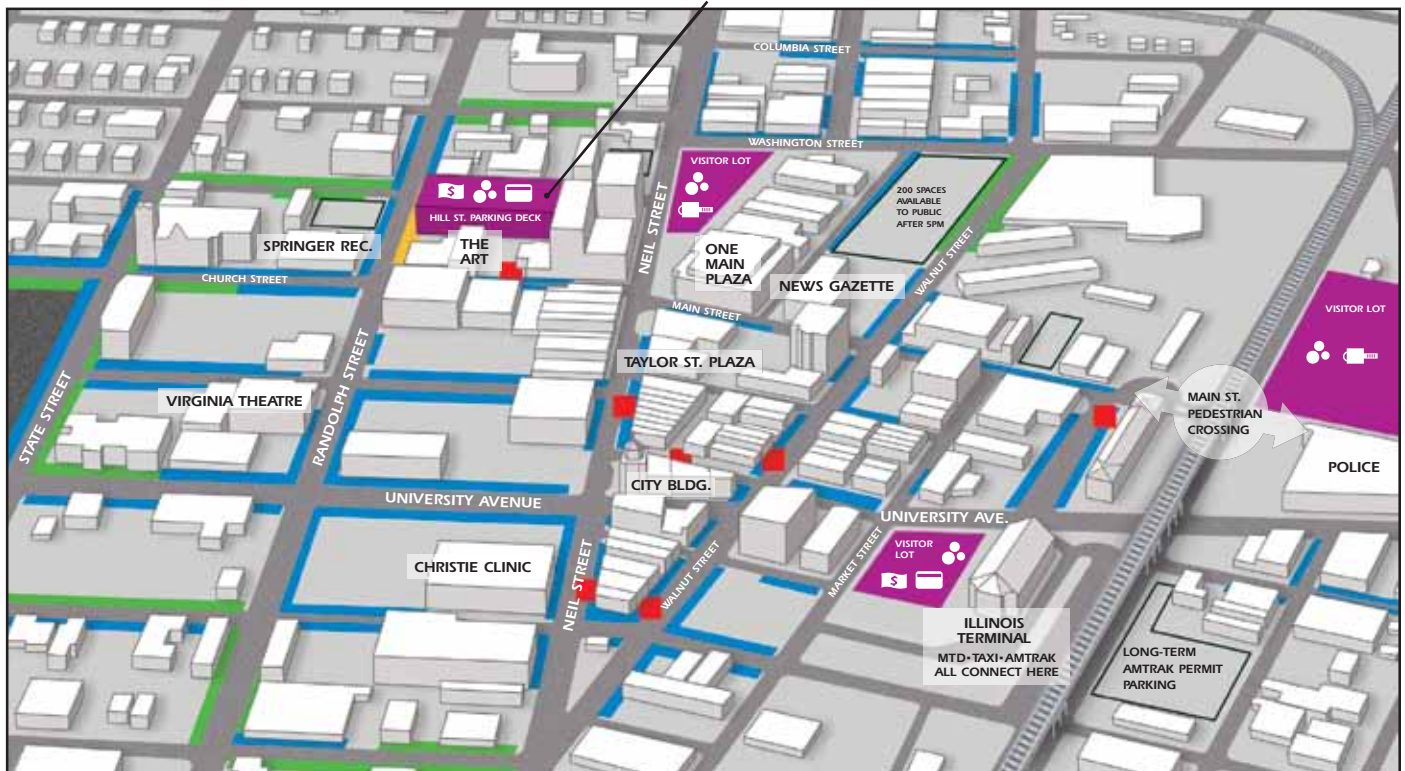
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“Borrowed” friendship runs deep

By Rosie Powers, Daily Illini Staff Writer

Though every Ebertfest is dedicated to a special member of the film community, not all can claim to have travelled over 15,000 miles to get to the annual festival.

This year's Ebertfest has been dedicated to Paul Cox, an Australian filmmaker. One of the films featured in the festival, “On Borrowed Time,” directed by Australian director David Bradbury, is a summary of Cox's professional and personal life.

Cox, who is Dutch, moved to Australia in his 20s. He is now based in Melbourne, Australia, and has made 22 films over the past 40 years. The film serves as an ongoing narrative about Cox's journey through his career in these years, and looks at filmmaking as an art form.

Though the film was not made by Cox himself, this is not his first time attending Ebertfest. In fact, Karyn Yee, production coordinator for Illumination Films, said Cox has been to the festival a few times for screenings of his own films.

“Cox met Roger Ebert many years ago, and throughout the years they have reunited at various festivals. He considers Ebert a much-respected friend,”

Everything you do with your heart and soul is a self-portrait of sorts. If you are a painter and paint portraits of people, each one of those should be a self-portrait.

- Paul Cox -

Yee said.

Though Cox has made several films throughout his career, he claims that many of his films are self-inspired in one way or another.

“Everything you do with your heart and soul is a self-portrait of sorts,” Cox said. “If you are a painter and paint portraits of people, each one of those should be a self-portrait. You can't express your sincerity and personal voice when you accept the fact that you're constantly forced to bend to commercial demands.”

Yee said each of Cox's films represents a different period in his life.

“Each film represents stages in Paul's life, as his films are a means of self-expression,” Yee said.

Yet “On Borrowed Time,”

though not Cox's film, might be the most personal of them all. The film also focuses on Cox's diagnosis with cancer, and how the illness has shaped his way of thinking both in his personal and professional lives.

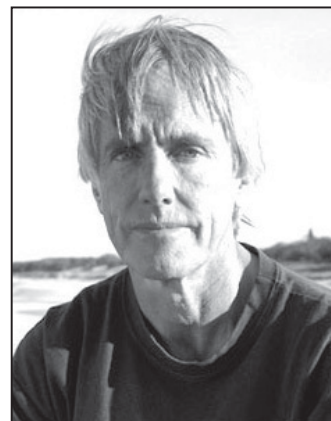
Though a horrific realization to have, the film portrays Cox's acceptance of death from the viewpoint of human mortality. Essentially, Cox comes to the realization of living in the moment, for the fact that a disease or misfortune could befall anyone at any time.

“We all live on borrowed time,” Cox said. “We're transient beings.”

“On Borrowed Time” is scheduled to appear during the festival on Friday, April 27 at 1:00 p.m. at the Virginia Theatre.



Paul Cox is an Australian filmmaker. This year's festival is dedicated to him.



David Bradbury directed “On Borrowed Time.”



“On Borrowed Time” is a documentary that chronicles Paul Cox's life. Cox comes to the realization that one must live in the moment, since a disease or misfortune could befall anyone at any given time.



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