

The College of Media at Illinois Presents

15th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival 2013

April 17-21, 2013

The Virginia Theatre

203 W. Park, Champaign, IL

Special Support Provided by Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance,
Steak 'n Shake and the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences



www.ewebfest.com

Image: Base Art Co

This year's festival is dedicated to Chicago's own

Haskell Wexler



Cinematographer, Director, Activist.

Still fighting the good fight!

Schedule of Events

Film Screenings

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

7:00 p.m. *Days of Heaven*
with Short Subject *I Remember*

Thursday, April 18, 2013

1:00 p.m. *Vincent: The Life and Death
of Vincent Van Gogh*
with Short Subject *To Music*

4:00 p.m. *In the Family*

9:00 p.m. *Bernie*

Friday, April 19, 2013

1:00 p.m. *Oslo, August 31st*

4:00 p.m. *The Ballad of Narayama*

8:30 p.m. *Julia*

Saturday, April 20, 2013

11:00 a.m. *Blancanieves*

2:00 p.m. *Kumaré*

5:00 p.m. *Escape From Tomorrow*

9:00 p.m. *The Spectacular Now*

Sunday, April 21, 2013

12 noon *Not Yet Begun to Fight*

Live On-air Interview

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Jim Turpin's (WDWS-AM 1400) Ebertfest Interview

Academic Panel Discussions

Illini Union

1401 W. Green Street, Urbana, IL

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

Free and open to the public

Thursday, April 18, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Sustaining a Career in Film

Moderated by **Nate Kohn**

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Reality or Illusion: A False Dichotomy?

Moderated by **Eric Pierson**

Friday, April 19, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Creative Independence in the Digital Age – How Real Is It?

Moderated by **Nate Kohn**

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Challenging Stigma Through the Arts

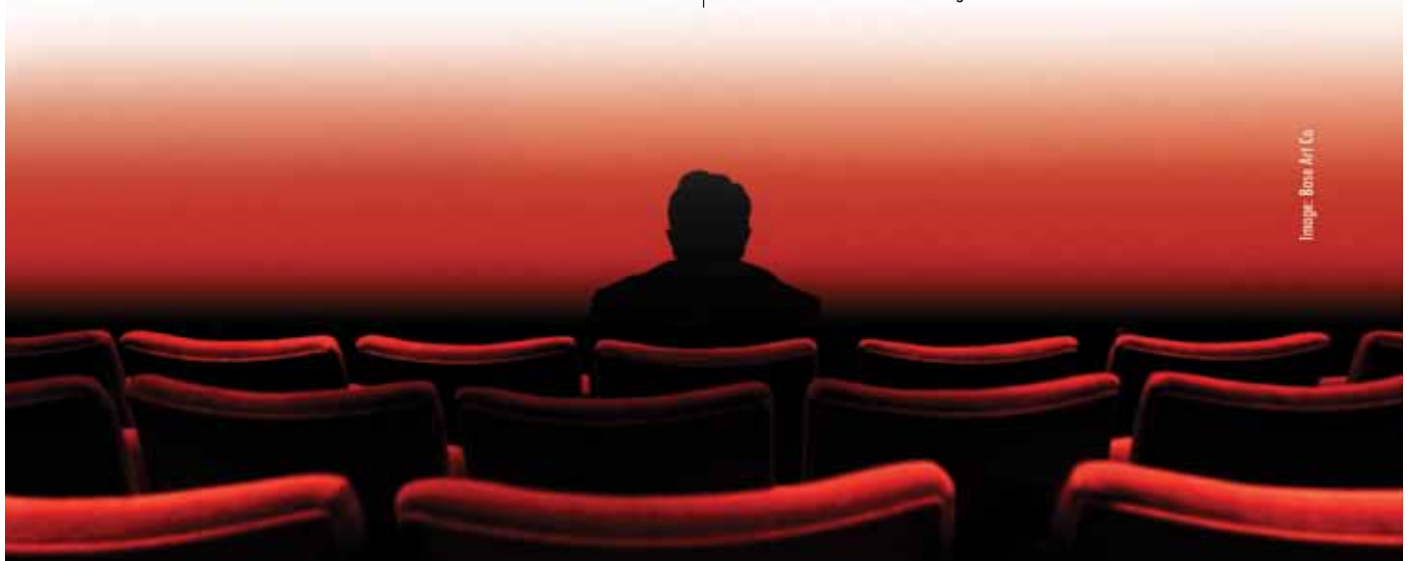
Moderated by **Deborah Townsend**

Saturday, April 20, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

The Art of the Video Essay: How to Speak Through Movies

Moderated by **Omer Mozaffar**



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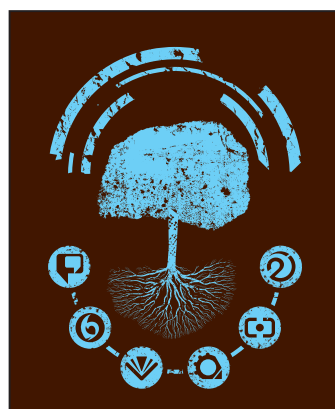
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Welcome

to the 15th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival

This year's festival is dedicated to Haskell Wexler

From Roger Ebert

Welcome to the 15th anniversary Ebertfest! The idea for this celebration began a year earlier, in an event at the Krannert Center to mark the birthday of HAL 9000, the computer in "2001: A Space Odyssey" — who, as HAL tells us itself, was born in Urbana. In an early demo of video chats, we were joined by Sir Arthur C. Clarke online from Sri Lanka, his face beaming down upon us.

At first this was called the "Overlooked Film Festival," and intended for films that "either have been, or will be, over-

*It is homeward I look again.
Orson Welles famously described a movie studio as "the greatest train set a boy ever had." Surely every movie critic desires his own film festival.*

looked." Some directors were reluctant to think of their films in such terms, and the current name took over. Our first selection was "2001," beginning a tradition of world-class big-screen projection masterminded by the experts

James Bond and Steve Kraus, and including not only 70mm but Dimension 70, top-rank digital formats, and even Todd-AO. Sadly, in recent years fewer prints are available in 70mm, as high-end digital formats take over.

This year includes the christening of the magnificently restored Virginia Theatre. I salute the Champaign Park District, and many local donors. Their generosity preserves this landmark, where my father saw Harry Houdini perform onstage. When Donald O'Connor appeared onstage here after an anniversary screening of "Singin' in the Rain," he told us, "I tap-danced on this stage!" Its stars included the Marx Brothers, and in college I saw Miriam Hopkins perform here in "Look Homeward, Angel."

It is homeward I look again. Orson Welles famously described a movie studio as "the greatest



Roger and Chaz welcoming the audience to the 2012 Festival.

train set a boy ever had." Surely every movie critic desires his own film festival. As a local boy I began in newspapers here at ground level, by delivering the Courier, and when I was not quite 16, I was trusted with a job by The News-Gazette. No, not an "internship." I covered what was one of the most important beats on the paper: Urbana High School sports! With the kindness and patience of such staffers as Harold Holmes, Bill Schmeltzle, Jari Jackson, Curt Beamer and the festival's dear friend Betsy Hendrick, I learned first hand from the best.

My own festival experience was altered greatly when illness overtook me in 2006, and I lost the ability to speak. That relieved audiences of the prospect of listening to Werner Herzog and me speak even later into the night. Ebertfest is honored this year by repeat visits from some of our favorite artists, including Paul Cox, Richard Linklater, Haskell Wexler and Tilda Swinton. Paul will be here with his remarkable film about his countryman Vincent van Gogh, which I first saw and loved at the 1972 Venice Film Festival.

In lovely symbolism, he will also introduce "To Music," a short film by Sophie Kohn, Nate's daughter. The next generation is advancing into place. On the opening-night rededication of the Virginia and observation of the 15th anniversary of Ebertfest and 25th anniversary of Terrence Malick's "Days of Heaven," we will show you "I Remember," by Grace Wang of Toronto, one of our Far-Flung Correspondents. Please carefully study your instructions about when to sing and listen during the opening ceremony; the sound bite from Orson Welles' "Falstaff" was used by Daniel Curley, a mentor and friend at Illinois, when he autographed one of his novels to me.

When I first began writing a blog, I quickly noticed how many of the best comments were coming from writers in distant places, and I had the inspiration of using them as FFCs. They come from Australia via the Philippines, Brazil, Canada, France, Mexico, South

Korea, Turkey, the UK and the US. Many have visited before. Many are back this year. They'll be seated among you. Have a chat. Join them at the Steak 'n Shake. Just don't try to discover the location of their secret Karaoke Night.

From day one, Urbana native and UI alum Nate Kohn, now professor at the University of Georgia, has been director of the Festival. This introduction usually includes a brief outline of the year's program, but we're still involved in trying to iron much of it out as I write this. You'll have to depend on the descriptions in this excellent program produced by The Daily Illini. But I can tell you who is coming with the films.

As mentioned above, Paul Cox is coming with his documentary on

dition to my Great Movies, Keisuke Kinoshita's Japanese classic "Ballad of Narayama" (1958). I suspect our good friend David Bordwell, of the University of Wisconsin, will be on stage afterwards. And as usual, the disclaimer: All these guests have agreed to be with us, but sometimes actual work, weather or the occasional volcano interferes and they have to cancel at the last minute.

My wife Chaz acts as our charismatic emcee, and is also my trusted advisor whose scouting at many film festivals recommended some of these titles to me. The tireless Mary Susan Britt makes everything run and answers emails at all hours. She heads a dedicated staff, including many volunteers whose smiling faces

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 15 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. 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, Steak 'n Shake and The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. We are proud to have Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance sponsor the film "In the Family" showing Thursday at 4:00 p.m., and Steak 'n Shake sponsor the film "Blancanieves" showing Saturday at 11:00 a.m.

And very special thanks to University of Illinois President Bob Easter and his wife Cheryl, and Chancellor Phyllis Wise, for their generous support.

And new this year will be our own Ebertfest iPad App from Shatterglass Studios that will contain every festival interview, photograph, review, panel discussion, link and artifact that we could find from the first fifteen Ebertfests. It will be available on iTunes and updated annually. Our thanks to Shatterglass for doing this and for the spectacular festival videos they do for us every year. Look for Luke and Brett, the Shatterglass guys, in the east lobby during the festival.

Fifteen years! It seems like only yesterday! I love it when I notice festival regulars greeting each other year after year. To paraphrase a well-known movie title, they're no longer strangers when they meet.

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I love it when I notice festival regulars
greeting each other year after year. To
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no longer strangers when they meet.

the life of Van Gogh, "Vincent;" Tilda Swinton with "Julia;" director of photography Haskell Wexler with Terrence Malick's "Days of Heaven;" director Patrick Wang with "In the Family;" director Richard Linklater and star Jack Black with "Bernie;" director Joachim Trier with "Oslo, August 31st;" director Pablo Berger with the silent Spanish film "Blancanieves;" director Randy Moore, producer Soojin Chung, and actor Roy Abramson with the Sundance hit "Escape from Tomorrow;" director James Ponsoldt and actor Shailene Woodley with the Sundance prize-winning "The Spectacular Now;" director Vikram Gandhi and producer Stephen Feder with the documentary "Kumaré;" and producer/co-director Sabrina Lee and Afghan war veterans Elliott Miller and Erik Goodge with "Not Yet Begun to Fight." Also showing, but so far without a guest, is my recent ad-

dition to my Great Movies, Keisuke Kinoshita's Japanese classic "Ballad of Narayama" (1958). I suspect our good friend David Bordwell, of the University of Wisconsin, will be on stage afterwards. And as usual, the disclaimer: All these guests have agreed to be with us, but sometimes actual work, weather or the occasional volcano interferes and they have to cancel at the last minute.

My wife Chaz acts as our charismatic emcee, and is also my trusted advisor whose scouting at many film festivals recommended some of these titles to me. The tireless Mary Susan Britt makes everything run and answers emails at all hours. She heads a dedicated staff, including many volunteers whose smiling faces

have become familiar over the years. I'd especially like to thank our guardian angel, Mary Frances Fagan of American Airlines, who arranges transportation here. Mary Frances is another C-U native, so you can see we haven't forgotten our roots.

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

Anti-Stigma

ALLIANCE

Challenging Disabilities Discrimination

Anti Stigma Events:

15th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival
April 17 through April 21, Virginia Theatre
Panel discussion:
"Challenging Stigma through the Arts"
Friday, April 19, 10:30-11:45AM
Illini Union Pine Lounge



CU Autism Network's Annual "Autism Walk"
Sunday, April 28

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week
May 5 through May 11
National Children's Mental Health Day
Thursday, May 9



Down Syndrome Network's Annual "Buddy Walk"
Saturday, October 5

Seventh Annual Disability Resource Expo
Saturday, October 12



NAMI Walk
Sunday, October 13 at Meadowbrook Park

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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

LARKIN'S PLACE
PROGRAMMING AT THE
STEPHENS FAMILY YMCA

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON
MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI)

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 working to address and challenge the negative impact of stigma. The Alliance has used the arts to promote dialogue about stigma and how it affects people with disabilities, their loved ones, and the community itself.

www.facebook.com/antistigmaalliance.com

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Greetings *from the University of Illinois*

Roger Ebert's vision leaves lasting impression

Dear Ebertfest fan,

Welcome to Ebertfest — a film festival like no other in the world. Stepping back from the cinematic magic that brings you and thousands of other fans here — it is also an event that transports our campus and our community to a different place for a couple of days each year. You bring an exhilaration and excitement to our streets that remind all of us that universities aren't just classrooms and labs — but living centers of learning and sharing and communication. They are places to experience life.

This week of films, lectures, appearances and debates among fans is something everyone on

this campus looks forward to all year long. It was one of the first events mentioned to me when I arrived here 16 months ago and it comes up in my conversations on a weekly basis. Roger Ebert's vision realized here has a tremendous and lasting impact on our arts scene in Champaign-Urbana. He is an amazing individual and we are so proud to claim him as one of the Illinois family.

I know you'll have a wonderful time at this year's festival and you attend because of the opportunity to see these films from new perspectives and hear about the stories behind them from different voices. But, I also want to thank you for your part in reminding the world that art, critical thought and creative

vision are just as important to the health and advancement of our society as the physical sciences and innovations in technology.

I believe that arts — whether expressed on film, in digital image, written language or in music — offer us all a common ground in a world where cultures and ideas can be so diverse and too often divisive. We need to advance efforts to expand these shared spaces and to translate these moments of connection we find in a darkened theater or a concert hall into global life.

Who knew you could change the world just by watching a great film?

Well, clearly, Roger Ebert did.

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



Phyllis Wise
Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Proud host College of Media thanks Ebert, festival organizers

Welcome to Ebertfest!

The College of Media is proud to be your host for Ebertfest and our pride is only intensified as we celebrate the crystal anniversary of the event. We are so grateful to Roger and Chaz for their loyalty and support. Thank you for keeping us near to your heart, and sharing your love of the movies and movie making with all of us. Your homecoming every April is an event like no other.

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.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to Mary Susan Britt and Dr. Nate Kohn who organize and direct this festival. It requires logistics that would humble ordinary humans. 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.

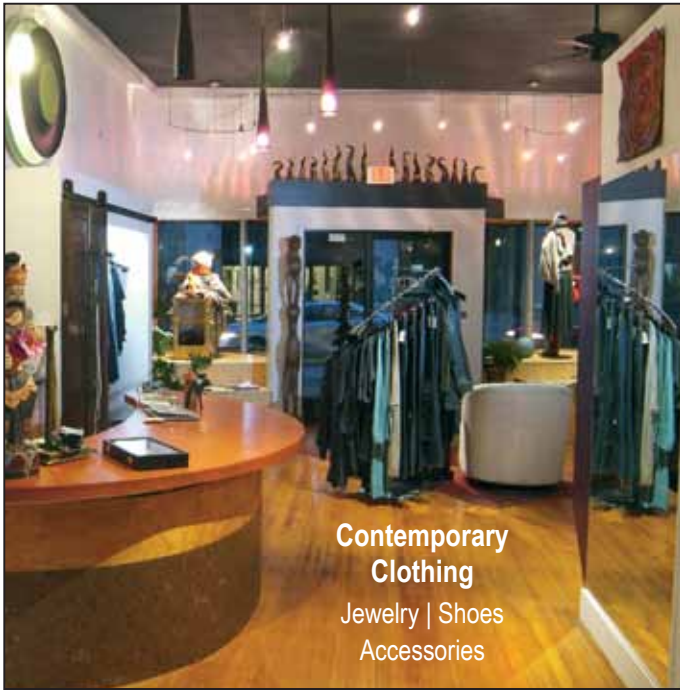
Finally, thanks to all of you — the movie lovers. Your love of the art of storytelling and filmmaking keeps us looking towards the future. Thank you for your support and for joining us for this annual tribute to great movies and to a great movie critic.

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.

Enjoy the show!



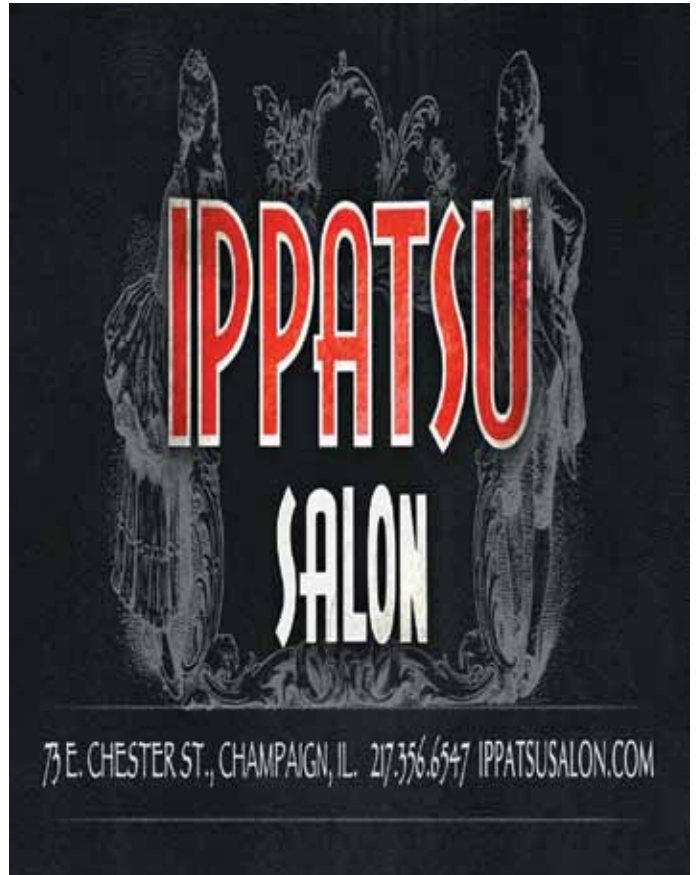
Jan Slater
Interim Dean, College of Media, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



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Join us! *from the Festival Director*

Vision of Ebertfest remains intact after 15 years of quality films

It is a great privilege to welcome you to the 15th 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.

We are celebrating our 15th anniversary at the festival this year, looking back on 15 amazing years and looking forward to many, many more!

We are also celebrating the newly renovated Virginia Theatre. The Champaign Park District closed the theatre for a year in order to accomplish this momentous task. They promised us the work would be completed in time for Ebertfest and so it is. We thank Bobbie Herakovich and Steven Bentz for all their hard work and for their unwavering commitment to the Virginia Theatre, one of the world's great movie palaces.

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 Paramount Pictures, Millennium Entertainment, Strand Releasing, Cohen Media

*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.*

Group, Filos Film Productions, A24 Films, Kino Lorber, Grace Wang, Magnolia Pictures, Janus Films, Shochiku Films, Mankurt Media LLC, Patrick Wang, Bill Banning & Roxie Releasing, Ultraviolet Projects and Story Road Films 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 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: The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Leone Advertising, Shatterglass Studios, L.A. Gourmet Catering, and The News-Gazette.

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. And I am more than thrilled that Steak 'n Shake has finally opened a restaurant where I live in Athens, Georgia. Only problem is the lines are way too long. But a double steakburger and fries is always worth the wait. Steak 'n Shake is sponsoring our showing of "Blancanieves" at this year's festival.

One of our most dedicated sponsors, the Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance, in addition to sponsoring our showing of "In the Family," is this year holding a panel discussion on Friday morning at the Illini Union. Please plan to attend this free event. 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 and Mrs. Bob 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

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS

Lyrics customized by Roger Ebert

(Please sing along when instructed to do so.)

Once upon a time there was a theater,
Where we used to see a film or two
Remember how we laughed away the hours
And dreamed of all the great things we would do

Those were the days my friend
We thought they'd never end
We'd sing and dance forever and a day
We'd live the life we choose
We'd fight and never lose
For we were young and sure to have our way.

Ebertfest's historic home debuts makeover

By Hannah Meisel, Daily Illini staff writer

Walking through the doors of Champaign's Virginia Theatre is a trip back in time to the venue's beginnings in the 1920s. The Virginia's most recent, aesthetic renovation was completed in April, just in time for Roger Ebert's 15th annual Film Festival.

The Champaign Park District, which bought the theater in 2000, has spent the last 13 years fundraising for the project, the last in a series of improvements to the 92-year-old building, and a \$5.5 million endeavor. Champaign-based Broeren Russo Construction has taken the project through its stages, managing the overall structural components and contracting some finer points to restoration experts. These specialists led months of painstaking cleaning, repair and restoration for the building's historic artwork.

Though the preceding "life-safety" renovations, like bringing the Virginia up to building code, have done much to preserve the theater's life for years to come, Laura Auteberry, marketing director for the CPD, said this final restoration of the auditorium's interior was where the magic began to surface.

In late fall, painters were restoring the ceiling of the theater when they uncovered six of eight intricately painted canvasses, believed to be original to the 1921 opening of the Virginia. After stripping away the water-based paint that had covered the canvases for



The newly discovered original canvas painting is displayed on the ceiling of the Virginia Theatre's auditorium. The paintings were discovered in late fall as restorers cleaned the water-based paint from the ceiling. This canvas is one of six discovered nearly fully intact. Photo courtesy of the Champaign Park District

decades, the artwork discovered depicted male figures holding Spanish coats of arms, which aligns with the theater's Spanish-style influence.

"We were very surprised — thoroughly excited about the find," Auteberry said. "I'd seen many historic theaters, like those in Chicago, and I'd always thought ours was kind of 'blah.' But it really wasn't; (the beauty) was just covered up."

In addition to the canvasses, which have now been fully restored, painters also discovered extensive stenciling that had originally spanned the entire perimeter of the

auditorium. The restoration team was able to identify enough of the stencil pattern and original color to recreate what they believe is a near-exact iteration of the original artwork.

These pieces of the auditorium, along with large-scale Spanish-style murals, ornate plaster work, original Tiffany light fixtures, and gold and silver leaf detail, have all been carefully restored since the auditorium project began last May. The Virginia has been closed to the public for nearly a year. However, in the past, renovations have left the theater open. But this was a sacrifice, Auteberry said, necessary for the payoff at the grand reveal in April.

"(The aesthetic restoration) revealed a lot of the theater we didn't even know existed," Auteberry said. "She's even more grand than we thought."

The theater was originally commissioned in 1920 by local

contractor A.W. Stoolman. Stoolman named the theater after his daughter Elizabeth Virginia.

The Italian Renaissance-style exterior, coupled with the Spanish Renaissance interior, has played host to some of the biggest names in entertainment over the last century. In its early days, the Virginia saw such performers as Red Skelton and the Marx Brothers. When live shows declined, the theater became a movie house, which drew the interest of Urbana native and University alumnus Roger Ebert. Ebert's choice of locale for his annual film festival celebrates the historical significance of the theater, and puts Champaign on the map, said Auteberry.

But this year's Ebertfest will reveal the auditorium's true, original beauty for the first time to the annual fest-goers, she said. Complete restoration to all lobbies, basement dressing rooms and brand new seating

"(The restoration) revealed a lot of the theater we didn't even know existed. She's even more grand than we thought."

— Laura Auteberry —

in the auditorium were some of the heaviest financial hitters in the three-year project. The new seating, 1,420 plush red velvet theater-style chairs, is a nod to early 20th century. Old seats from the Virginia were sold last summer for \$50 per chair. Revenue from the chairs went right back into the project. Seats not sold were salvaged by Discount Seating Co. in Jackson, Tenn., so none of the Virginia's old seating would end up in a landfill, and history could have new life.

The theater welcomed back an old friend last March in its pipe organ, the original musical accompaniment to the theater's shows and silent movies. The Wurlitzer, an orchestral pipe organ, underwent a year of restoration at the hands of Champaign-based John-Paul Buzard Pipe Organ Builders.

Improvements to the instrument included a full restoration of pipes, many of which had been smashed

or otherwise damaged, and rebuilding the organ's console and keyboard. Added to the organ were electronics to replace its original wire mechanisms, as well as adding "special sound" capabilities inspired by a full orchestra, including drums and horns. But not everything about the instrument was modernized; in fact, the restorers stripped the organ of its white paint and gold details that had adorned the exterior in the latter half of the 20th century, and went back to the original mahogany finish.

And for more vintage charm, the Virginia still uses 1950s-era projectors: Two Norelco AA II projectors, specifically designed to run "Oklahoma!" Though the two projectors have lasted for the better part of a century, Auteberry said it's time for them to retire, and the CPD is currently searching for more funding for audio and visual equipment, as the Virginia looks toward a more digital future.



An artist paints the ceiling of the Virginia Theatre's auditorium, outside the outline of intricate stenciling that was restored to its near-original look.

Photo courtesy of the Champaign Park District

For now, festival-goers can sit back and enjoy an extended weekend of film in the newly transformed auditorium. As Ebertfest devotees may know, the fest's 15-year history is deeply entwined with the saving of the theater. It has been on the National Registry of Historic Places since December 2003, after the fifth Ebertfest, which

continued to grow business and opportunity for the theater.

"(The CPD) bought the theater to preserve it and eliminate the possibility of it being demolished," Auteberry said. "That's where it was heading."

But the Virginia is safe from that fate, and is now preserved for generations to come.



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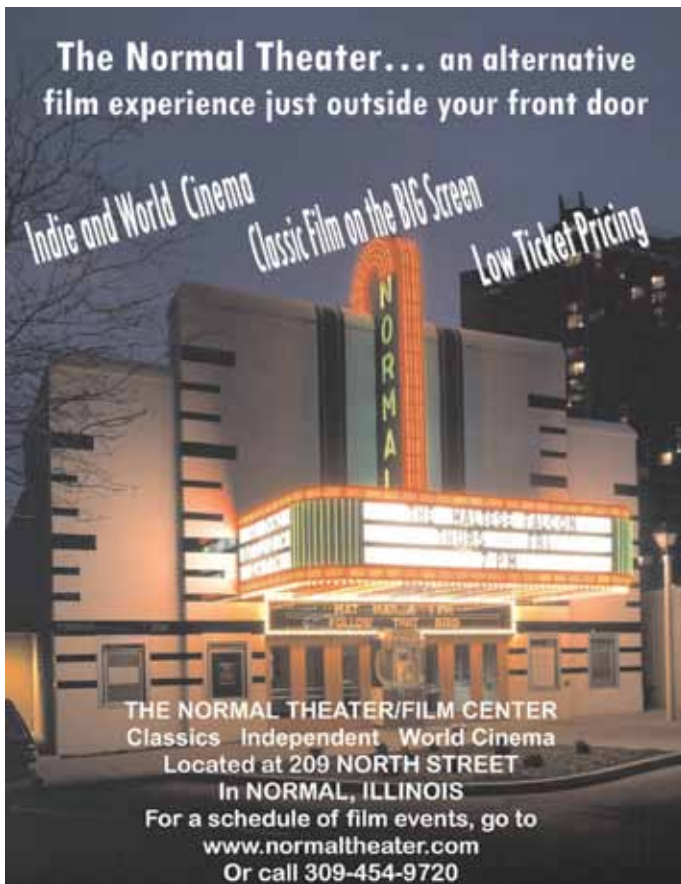
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Schedule

Roger Ebert's Film Festival

Presented by the College of Media April 17-21, 2013

FILM SCREENINGS

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

7:00 p.m. *Days of Heaven*
with Short Subject *I Remember*

Thursday, April 18, 2013

1:00 p.m. *Vincent: The Life and Death
of Vincent Van Gogh*
with Short Subject *To Music*

4:00 p.m. *In the Family*

9:00 p.m. *Bernie*

Friday, April 19, 2013

1:00 p.m. *Oslo, August 31st*

4:00 p.m. *The Ballad of Narayama*

8:30 p.m. *Julia*

Saturday, April 20, 2013

11:00 a.m. *Blancanieves*

2:00 p.m. *Kumaré*

5:00 p.m. *Escape From Tomorrow*

9:00 p.m. *The Spectacular Now*

Sunday, April 21, 2013

Noon *Not Yet Begun to Fight*

All films will be shown at the Historic Virginia Theatre, 203 W. Park, Champaign, IL. Roger and festival guests will appear on stage after each film to join the audience in discussions about the films. Festival passes (\$145). Individual tickets (\$14) / student & senior citizen tickets (\$12) on sale at the Virginia Theatre box office, 217-356-9063.

For more information contact:

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

LIVE WDWS ON-AIR INTERVIEW

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Wednesday, April 17, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Jim Turpin's (WDWS) Ebertfest Interview

ACADEMIC PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Illini Union

1401 W. Green Street, Urbana, IL

Free and open to the public

Thursday, April 18, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Sustaining a Career in Film

Moderated by **Nate Kohn**

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Reality or Illusion: A False Dichotomy?

Moderated by **Eric Pierson**

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

Friday, April 19, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Creative Independence in the Digital Age – How Real Is It?

Moderated by **Nate Kohn**

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Challenging Stigma Through the Arts

Moderated by **Deborah Townsend**

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

ACADEMIC PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Saturday, April 20, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

The Art of the Video Essay: How to Speak Through Movies

Moderated by **Omer Mozaffar**

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

Panel Description:

In the age of YouTube and Vimeo, one of the most exciting developments in film culture are online video essays that explore different aspects of the movies. These videos take footage from films and reconfigure them using editing, text, graphics and voiceover to reveal startling observations and insights, visualizing them in ways that text criticism can't. These videos are typically produced independently by using consumer-level equipment, demonstrating that just about anyone with a computer can be both a filmmaker and a critic. The only limits are those of imagination and intelligence.

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.



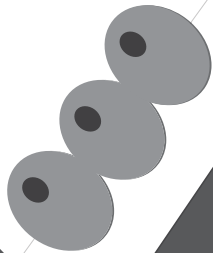
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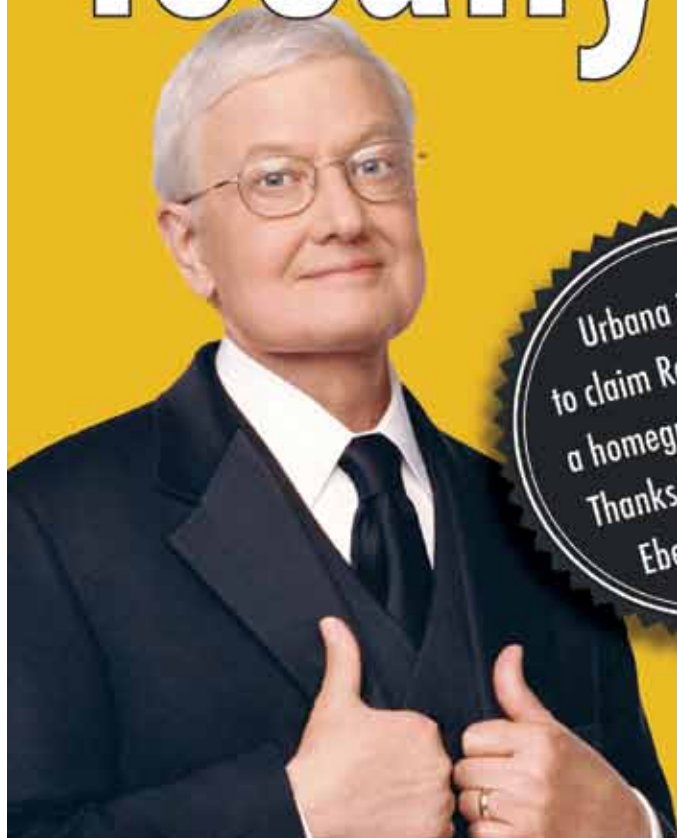
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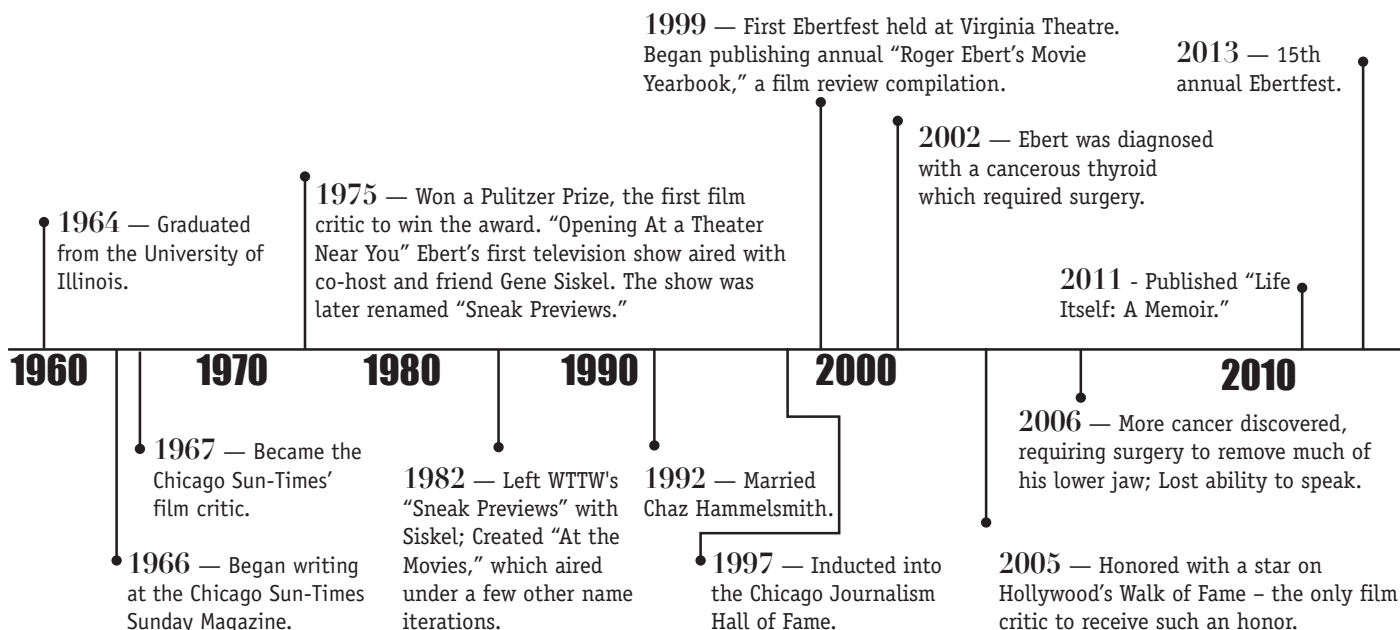
Roger's Mother, Annabel Ebert



Roger Ebert through the years

By Hannah Meisel, Daily Illini staff writer

Roger Ebert is one of Illinois' most noteworthy graduates. A native of Urbana, Ebert developed his love of writing throughout his school days, picking up a part-time job at The News-Gazette while writing for the newspaper at Urbana High School. Ebert wrote for The Daily Illini while at the University, ending his time at Illinois as editor-in-chief. From there, his writing took him all over the world.



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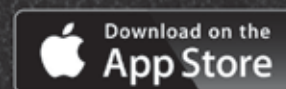
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Festival Info

Things you need to know

TICKET INFORMATION

- A Festival Pass to all 12 screenings is \$145.
- Individual tickets are \$14. Student and Senior Citizen tickets are \$12.
- 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.

- Thursday, April 18, 2013
- Friday, April 19, 2013
- Saturday, April 20, 2013

FESTIVAL UPDATES

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

THEATRE GUIDELINES

- Patrons may enter the theatre ONE HOUR prior to the FIRST screening of the day, with the VIP/Festival Passholders doors

opened first, and then individual ticket holders shortly thereafter.

- 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 and tickets cannot be exchanged, and no refunds can be issued.
- Smoking is prohibited in the Virginia Theatre.
- The newly-restored Virginia Theatre has updated all of its restrooms to be ADA-compliant and now includes transfer seating on both levels plus wheelchair-accessible seating on the auditorium's main floor. Up to 18 wheelchairs can be accommodated with one companion seat available per wheelchair. Tickets for accessible and companion seating may be purchased at www.thevirginia.org, by calling 217-356-9063, or by visiting the theatre's box office at 203 West Park Avenue, Champaign IL 61820. Please note that the Virginia's mezzanine and upper balcony seating are still accessible only via stairs.
- The theatre also features a wheelchair lift for guests accessing the stage from the auditorium, a LULA (Limited Use Limited Access) elevator allowing access from the stage to the downstairs dressing rooms, and an elevator allowing access to the building's upstairs lobby and restrooms.
- Assisted listening devices are available upon request. A single earpiece bud, ear speaker, or neck loop may be used by a guest to enhance their enjoyment of films, spoken word events and some live performances. Devices may be obtained at the box office before the show. A credit card, driver's license or other form of ID is required. For specific questions about the assisted listening devices, accessible seating or other accommodations, please call the box office at 217-356-9063.
- NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINK allowed inside the Virginia Theatre at any time.

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 ...

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Dining tips

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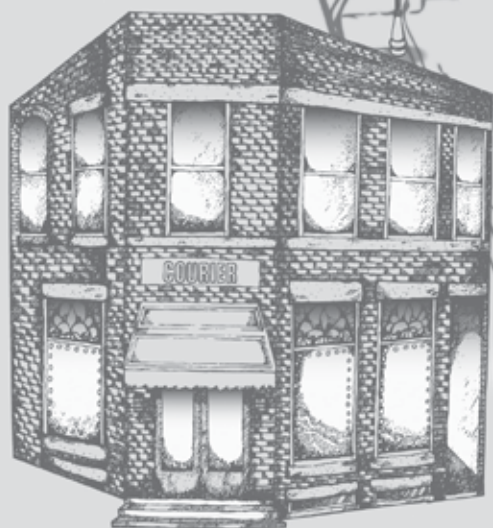
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Guests

A warm welcome to our **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.

Days of Heaven

Wednesday, April 17, 7:00 p.m.

HASKELL WEXLER, ASC (director of photography) is considered to be one of the most important cinematographers working in the film industry today. He has photographed a wide range of films, earning five Academy Award® nominations and two Oscars® for Best Cinematography. His nominations came for his work on his first feature documentary, *The Living City*; a short film, *T For Tumbleweed*; Milos Forman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*; John Sayles' *Matewan* and Touchstone Pictures' *Blaze*. He took home statuettes for his work on Mike Nichols' *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf* and Hal Ashby's *Bound For Glory*. Other films he shot for Ashby include *Coming Home*, *Second-Hand Heart* and *Lookin' To Get Out*.

Wexler's other credits include three films for Norman Jewison: *In The Heat Of The Night*, *The Thomas Crown Affair* and *Other People's Money*; George Lucas'

American Graffiti; Dennis Hopper's controversial hit *Colors*; Touchstone Pictures' hit comedy, *Three Fugitives*; *The Babe*, a Universal Picture; the Rolling Stones World Tour *At The Max*, a photographic breakthrough; a second John Sayles film, *The Secret Of Roan Inish*; Michael Moore's *Canadian Bacon*; two IMAX films, *IMAX: Mexico* and *IMAX: Hail Columbia*; the MGM/The Zanuck Co. film *Mulholland Falls*; *Rich Man's Wife*, and a third John Sayles film, *Limbo*; HBO's *61** directed by Billy Crystal, which received several Emmy® nominations including Outstanding Cinematography; a fourth John Sayles film, *Silver City*. Another outstanding Wexler credit is *A Sense Of Wonder* directed by Christopher Monger. This film is an intimate and poignant reflection of the life of Rachel Carson, the pioneering environmentalist. In 2009 the documentary *From Wharf Rats To Lords Of The Docks* was shown on PBS.

As a director, Wexler crafted two features, *Medium Cool*, a groundbreaking film shot during the Democratic convention in Chicago, and *Latino*, in Nicaragua, which received a special honor at Cannes. He has directed over 50 documentaries, rock videos and award-winning commercials, including *The Bus*, *Bus II* and *Bus Riders Union*; *Introduction To The Enemy*, shot in Vietnam with Jane Fonda; *Interview With My Lai Veterans*, which also won an Academy Award®; *No Nukes* with Barbara Kopple; *Bastards Of The Party*, HBO; and *Target Nicaragua: Inside A Secret War*. He made the documentary *Who Needs Sleep?*, a film about sleep deprivation and long hours in the motion picture business, which premiered at Sundance.

Wexler was elected by The Academy of Motion Picture Arts

and Sciences to the Board of Governors, Cinematographers Branch. Wexler has also received many honors: the American Society of Cinematographers' Lifetime Achievement Award, Belfast Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Award, Liberty Hill Foundation Upton Sinclair Award, Poland's Camerimage Lifetime Achievement Award, Eastman Kodak Outstanding Photographic Achievement for *Blaze* and *Matewan*, UCLA 2009 Prestige Medal Award, to name a few. He has received Honorary Doctorates from Columbia College, AFI and California Institute of the Arts, and the Brooks Institute of Photography Honorary Master of Science.

I Remember (short subject)

Wednesday, April 17, 7:00 p.m.

GRACE WANG (writer/director) is a writer, filmmaker, producer, lawyer, and contributing author to various publications including *rogerebert.com*, *The Spectator* arts blog, and the New York and Beijing editions of the *World Film Locations* book series. She was a programming associate and social media coordinator for the Toronto Film Festival. Her first short film, *I Remember*, premiered at the 2013 Berlin International Directors Lounge. Her second short film, currently in pre-production, is the winner of the 2012 Toronto Reel Asian Film Festival Pitch Competition. In her spare time Wang wanders down strange roads, daydreams on public transport, and has a weakness for red shoes and good people. She has lived and worked in 8 countries on 3 continents. Wang currently resides in Toronto, Canada.

JUNE KIM (director of photography) graduated from the University of Toronto in Cinema Studies & Visual Arts. With a keen interest in photography and cinematography, *I Remember* is her first project as director of photography. Kim has a background in film production from being in the art department, but mostly she has been associated with film festivals. These include the Reel Asian Film Festival, Hot Docs, Images Film Festival, Toronto Korean Film Festival, Scarborough Film Festival and Toronto Film Festival.

LILY HUANG (actor) was born in Guangzhou, China and, through a series of serendipitous events, found herself in Toronto as a practicing architect. She received her Masters of Architecture from the Harvard Design School in 2010 and her language certification from the Beijing Language and Culture University in 2011. Her work and interests have brought her around the world, but she will always be drawn back to the Pearl River Delta where the kapok blooms fiery red in the winter. *I Remember* is her acting debut.

Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent Van Gogh

Thursday, April 18, 1:00 p.m.

PAUL COX (director), born in Holland and settled 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. Cox has been the recipient of

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numerous special tributes and retrospectives at film festivals around the world including a major retrospective at the Lincoln Center in New York.

To Music (short subject)

Thursday, April 18, 1:00 p.m.

SOPHIE KOHN (co-director) is a Mass Media Arts & Sociology major at the University of Georgia. Set to graduate in May 2013, she has written, produced and directed films both as a part of her university life as well as outside of it. She has had several internships ranging from assistant producing at Robert Osborne's Classic Film Festival to Production Assistant on feature films and TV shows. In 2011 she started the production company SophieShorts under which she made the short film *Blink*. In the summer of 2012, in a special collaboration, she went to London to film an 8mm movie titled *The Liver*. Kohn has just finished writing her next project and plans to shoot it in March 2013. She is the director of GradyFest, her University's annual film festival.

FEIKE SANTBERGEN (co-director) of Arnhem, Netherlands, finished film school in 2010, with his 45-minute graduation film *Solely Here (Alleen Hier)*, a film about a young man's confrontation with inherent existence through loss.

In 2007 Santbergen interned with Dutch-Australian filmmaker Paul Cox (*Man of Flowers, Innocence, Molokai*). A lasting friendship emerged that remains an inspiration to Santbergen. After his internship, Santbergen made *Four Eyes (Vier Ogen)*, a personal film about the loss of his sister, who died in 2004.

After film school Santbergen co-founded Filos Film Productions with some peers, and wrote and directed several shorts produced with Filos, exploring subjects like transience, human connection and men's inner being. His films have screened at many

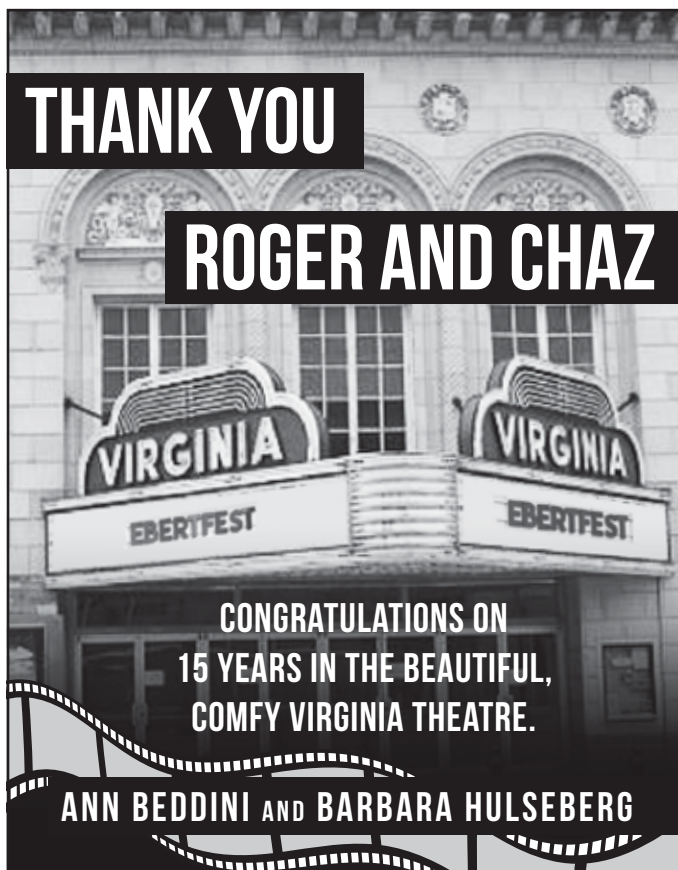
international film festivals. His French-Dutch short *Corps Accords* was selected for Best Debut Completion in the 2011 Dutch Film Festival. Santbergen's spontaneous little film *To Music*, co-directed with Sophie Kohn, was selected for Ebertfest 2013. Whether with Filos Film or others, Santbergen intends to keep producing independent films about love, loss, life and the rich human spirit.

In the Family

Thursday, April 18, 4:00 p.m.

PATRICK WANG (director/actor) graduated MIT with a degree in Economics and a concentration in Music and Theatre Arts. As an economist, he has studied energy policy, game theory and income inequality. As a theater director, he has specialized in classical verse drama and new works. A collection of his short drama was published as *The Monologue Plays*. His performance in *M. Butterfly* was the subject of Leah Hager Cohen's book, *The Stuff of Dreams*. His first film, *In the Family*, was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award and was a critic's pick of the *New York Times*, *Time Out Chicago*, *Chicago Reader*, *Time Out New York*, *New York Magazine*, *Flavorpill* and *NOW Magazine*. Wang received film site *Hammer to Nail's* 2011 Golden Hammer award, was one of *Instinct Magazine's* Leading Men of 2012, and was featured in *Filmmaker Magazine's* 2012 list of 25 New Faces of Independent Film.

TREVOR ST. JOHN (actor) attended Whitworth College on a jazz performance scholarship. As a percussionist, he has played with Marshall Royal (Count Basie Orchestra), Slide Hampton and Bill Berry (Duke Ellington Orchestra) and Gene Harris. His first major acting role was opposite Glenn Close in the TV movie *Serving in Silence*. Other television credits include *One Life to Live*, *The Client List*, *Murder, She Wrote*, *Sequest*, *Pacific Blue*, *Diagnosis Murder*, *Nash Bridges*,



and *Just Shoot Me*. Film credits include *The Bourne Ultimatum*, *The Kingdom*, *My Soul To Take*, *Payback*, *Crimson Tide*, *Dogtown* and *Higher Learning*.

Bernie

Thursday, April 18, 9:00 p.m.

RICHARD LINKLATER (director) has directed 17 feature films. He also serves as the Artistic Director for the Austin Film Society, which he founded in 1985 to showcase films from around the world that were not typically shown in Austin. The Austin Film Society has given out over \$1,000,000 in grants to Texas filmmakers and in 1999, received the DGA Honor which was given by the Directors Guild of America in recognition of its support of the arts.

JACK BLACK (actor), collaborating once again with *School of Rock* director, Linklater, earned a Golden Globe® and Independent Spirit Award nominations for his turn as Bernie. David Denby of *The New Yorker* called his performance a "...fine, disciplined piece of acting" and Peter Travers called it "award-caliber."

In 2012, Black also returned as Po in *Kung Fu Panda 2* for Paramount Pictures. In 2011, he starred in *The Big Year* with Academy Award® winner Anjelica Huston and a comedy super cast of Steve Martin, Owen Wilson, Jim Parsons, Rashida Jones and Joel McHale. He was also seen in the surprise box-office hit *The Muppets*, written by his *Gulliver's Travels* co-star, Jason Segel.

In 2010, Black released the highly anticipated *Gulliver's* remake. Black, who produced the film, starred as Lemuel Gulliver opposite Academy Award® nominated Emily Blunt, Segel and Amanda Peet. In 2009, Black voiced video game character Eddie Riggs (modeled after him) in the widely popular *Brutal Legend*. The game follows roadie Riggs into a fantasy world of heavy metal. Black was nominated for and won for best voice at the 2009 Spike Video Game Awards.

2008 proved a busy year for Black, who lent his voice as the lead in Paramount Pictures' animated film *Kung Fu Panda*. That summer, Black found himself on top of the box office again for the Paramount release of *Tropic Thunder*. Directed and written by Ben Stiller, who also starred in the film, Black was joined by a star studded cast including Robert Downey Jr., Jay Baruchel, Brandon T. Jackson, Tom Cruise and Matthew McConaughey.

School of Rock (2003), from producer Scott Rudin, director Linklater and writer Mike White, was revered by filmgoers and critics alike. Black received a Golden Globe® nomination for best actor in a musical or comedy. In 2006 Black reunited with White to release *Nacho Libre*, the first production under Black & White Productions, formed in late 2004 by White and Black. In 2005, Black was seen in the Academy Award® winning film *King Kong*. Directed by Peter Jackson, it opened at #1 and remained on top for three weeks in a row.

Black's other screen credits include the comedies *Bob Roberts*, *High Fidelity*, *Saving Silverman*, *Shallow Hal*, *Orange County*, *Envy*, *Shark Tale*, *The Holiday*, and the independent dramas *Jesus' Son* (2000) and *Margot at the Wedding* (2007).

Proving he is a true multi-hyphenate, Black is also the lead singer of the rock-folk comedy group Tenacious D, which he created with longtime friend and collaborator Kyle Gass. Their self-titled album was released in 2001 with Epic Records and was quickly certified at gold-selling status. The band had a variety series on HBO in 1999. The duo completed their first feature film together, *Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny* in 2006, about which two documentaries were subsequently released. The first, directed and produced by Black, *The Making of 'The Pick of Destiny'*, is a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the film. The second, *D Tour: A Tenacious Documentary* focused on the band's world tour in support of their film and soundtrack. Most

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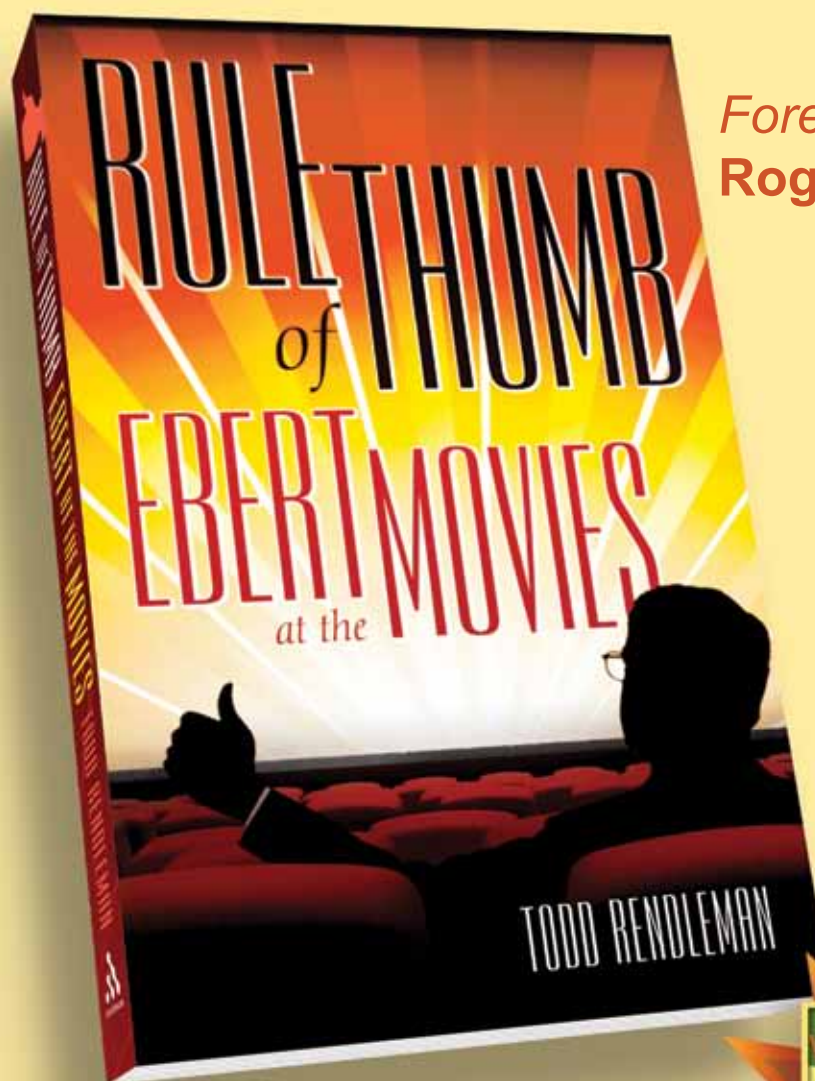


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Foreword by
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“Todd Rendleman’s book on **Roger Ebert** is a remarkable achievement—biography, cultural history, astute appreciation and analysis of the critic’s methods and values, and on top of all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

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

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recently, Tenacious D released *Rize of the Fenix*, for which they toured domestically and internationally. The band will continue their tour throughout Australia, New Zealand and Europe this spring and summer <http://www.tenaciousd.com/events>.

Black resides in Los Angeles with his wife, Tanya and their two sons.

Oslo, August 31st

Friday, April 19, 1:00 p.m.

JOACHIM TRIER (director), born in 1974, had his feature film debut in 2006 with *Reprise*, which has received a number of international awards, including the Karlovy Vary 2006 best director award, Toronto 2006 Discovery award, Variety 10 Directors to Watch, Sundance 2007, three Amanda awards at Haugesund, Norway 2007 (best film, best director and best screenplay), as well as international recognition with prizes at festivals including Istanbul, Rotterdam and Milano. His second feature *Oslo, August 31st* (2011) enjoyed equally great success. It was invited to Cannes-Un Certain Regard, Toronto and Sundance, among other festivals, and received several awards such as the Nordic Council Film Prize 2011, the Istanbul Film Festival 2011 Special Jury prize and, most recently, a prestigious French César nomination for Best Foreign Film 2013, with over 160,000 admissions at the theatres in France.

Trier started filmmaking in 1995, writing and directing several short films, which won him a good dozen international prizes, while he was attending film schools in Denmark and the National Film & TV School in Beaconsfield, England.

The Ballad of Narayama

Friday, April 19, 4:00 p.m.

DAVID BORDWELL (film historian) is retired from teaching at the University of Wisconsin Madison. He has

written several books on film aesthetics and history, most recently *Poetics of Cinema* (2007), *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (2nd edition, 2011), and *Pandora's Digital Box: Films, Files, and the Future of Movies* (2012). He and Kristin Thompson, who 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).

Julia

Friday, April 19, 8:30 p.m.

TILDA SWINTON (actor) A native of Scotland, Swinton started making films with the English director Derek Jarman in 1985, with *Caravaggio*. They made seven more films together, including *The Last of England*, *The Garden*, *War Requiem*, *Edward II* (for which she was named Best Actress at the 1991 Venice International Film Festival), and *Wittgenstein*, before Mr. Jarman's death in 1994. She gained wider international recognition in 1992 with her portrayal of *Orlando*, based on the novel by Virginia Woolf under the direction of Sally Potter.

She has established rewarding ongoing filmmaking relationships with Lynn Herschman-Leeson, with whom she made *Conceiving Ada*, *Teknolust* and *Strange Culture*; with John Maybury, with whom she made *Man 2 Man* and *Love is the Devil*; with Jim Jarmusch (*Only Lovers Left Alive*, *Broken Flowers* and *The Limits of Control*); and Luca Guadagnino, with whom she made *The Protagonists*, *The Love Factory* and, most recently, the widely applauded *I Am Love*, which she co-produced over the span of a decade.

In 1995 she conceived and performed her acclaimed live-art piece *The Maybe*, in which she presents herself lying asleep in a glass case for 8 hours a day

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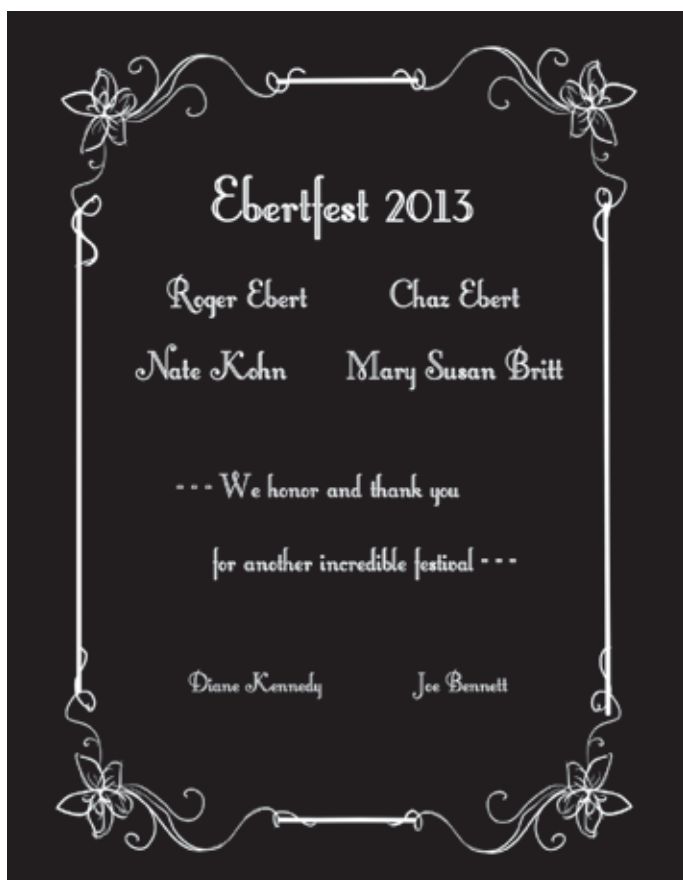
One thing which separates us from our brother animals is the fact that we can send messages down through the generations. We can send greetings to a world unborn. The means by which this is done is art.

—LORADO TAFT, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ALUMNUS—

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over seven days, which was performed at The Serpentine Gallery in collaboration with an installation she devised with Cornelia Parker. 22,000 people saw *The Maybe* there, making it the most popular exhibition of its time. The following year, in collaboration with the French artists Pierre et Gilles – and for comparable numbers of visitors – she performed the piece at the Museo Barocco in Rome.

Swinton has also appeared in Spike Jonze's *Adaptation*; David Mackenzie's *Young Adam*; Mike Mills' *Thumbsucker*; Francis Lawrence's *Constantine*; Béla Tarr's *The Man from London*; Andrew Adamson's two blockbusters *The Chronicles of Narnia* tales; Tony Gilroy's *Michael Clayton*, for her performance in which she received both the BAFTA and Academy Awards® for Best Supporting Actress of 2008; and Erick Zonca's *Julia*, which received its world-premiere at the 2008 Berlin International Film Festival and which, on its release in the UK, won for Swinton the Evening Standard's Best Actress award.

In the summer of 2008, Swinton launched the Ballerina Ballroom Cinema of Dreams film festival in her hometown of Nairn, Scotland. In 2009 the festival not only curated a Scottish Cinema of Dreams edition in Beijing, but in August, returned as a mobile cinema that travelled – and was bodily pulled – from Kinlochleven on the west coast of Scotland to Nairn on the east coast. All three festivals became events of international interest.

In 2010 Swinton launched, along with Mark Cousins, their 8 and a Half Foundation, which seeks to establish a new birthday for children – the 8 and a halfth – for the celebration of a magical introduction to the wide company of cinema fandom. Inaugurated first in Scotland, two thousand children have benefitted from the first two years of this initiative to date.

In May 2010 Swinton completed filming *We Need To*

Talk About Kevin with Lynne Ramsay directing. *We Need To Talk About Kevin* went into the main competition of Cannes 2011 to huge critical acclaim.

Swinton worked with Wes Anderson on the movie *Moonrise Kingdom* in 2011 and has recently finished working with Anderson on *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Swinton also features in the upcoming titles, *Snowpiercer*, directed by Bong Joon Ho and *Only Lovers Left Alive*, by Jarmusch, both of which will be released this year.

She is preparing to direct the second of two essay films she has written about the English writer John Berger, the first of which, *Ways of Listening*, was completed last year.

Blancanieves

Saturday, April 20, 11:00 a.m.

PABLO BERGER (director)

began his directorial career with the cult film *Mama* (1988). After winning numerous awards, he received a scholarship from the Basque Government to attend NYU, where he earned an MFA in film. While at NYU he directed the film *Truth And Beauty*, which was nominated for the College Emmys. Berger has taught film courses at Cambridge, Princeton, Yale, La Sorbonne and La Fémis and served as a lecturer at New York Film Academy.

Torremolinos 73, his debut feature, premiered at the 2003 Malaga Film Festival, where it received awards for Best Actor, Best Film, Best Director and Best Actress. *Torremolinos 73* was one of the top box office successes in Spain in 2003-2004, and at the 2004 Spanish Film Academy Goyas was nominated for Best Screenplay, Best New Director, Best Actor, and Best Actress.

The international premiere of *Torremolinos 73* at the Edinburgh Film Festival was a great success, as were screenings at Toulouse Film Festival, Palm Springs Film Festival and many others. *Torremolinos 73* was internationally released

in the US, Canada, Australia, France, Belgium, UK, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Israel, Mexico, Brazil and Taiwan. In 2008 a Chinese remake was successfully released.

Kumaré

Saturday, April 20, 2:00 p.m.

VIKRAM GANDHI (director) is an award-winning director of narrative and documentary films. He grew up consuming equal parts ancient Indian mythology and American movies. After graduating from Columbia University, he began working as a filmmaker for hire. He's since worked as a video journalist covering terrorism, natural disasters, and social unrest throughout Asia and as a cinematographer and producer on documentaries, TV and narrative films. He now directs commercial campaigns, music videos, branded content, and films through his New York-based production company, Disposable. Over this time, Gandhi documented the emergence of the yoga industry in the US by interviewing spiritual leaders around the country until he decided to become one himself. In 2010, Gandhi combined his passion for mythology and documentary to create *Kumaré*. Gandhi lives in Brooklyn, and *Kumaré* is a manifestation of his ideal self.

STEPHEN FEDER (producer) is a proud graduate of UI's College of Media (2002). He subsequently went on to receive his MSc from the London School of Economics. Among his accomplishments, Feder recently ran production and served as executive producer for the independent film *Kumaré*, which took home the SXSW® Audience Award in 2011. He was also instrumental in coordinating and producing films with Sacha Baron Cohen, working for several years on both *Bruno* and *The Dictator*, each opening at the top box office position. He has developed and produced TV

comedies such as the Showtime series *La La Land* with British Comedian Marc Wootton and NBC's *Sports Action Team*, starring members of Chicago's famed Second City and IO. His producing experience is most certainly varied, beginning in Chicago and covering both New York and Los Angeles.

Feder is now permanently based in LA and is a film executive for Annapurna Pictures (*The Master*, *Zero Dark Thirty*). He lives in Hollywood with his fiancé Sarah (a Hawkeye... nobody's perfect).

Escape From Tomorrow

Saturday, April 20, 5:00 p.m.

RANDY MOORE (director) was born in Lake Bluff, Illinois, a small town known for its famous hotdog joint, Scooters, and its role smuggling alcohol during Prohibition. Moore studied filmmaking at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Columbia College, Chicago, and Full Sail University in Winter Park FL, where he graduated valedictorian. Over the years he's worked as a story editor in LA. *Escape from Tomorrow* is his first feature film.

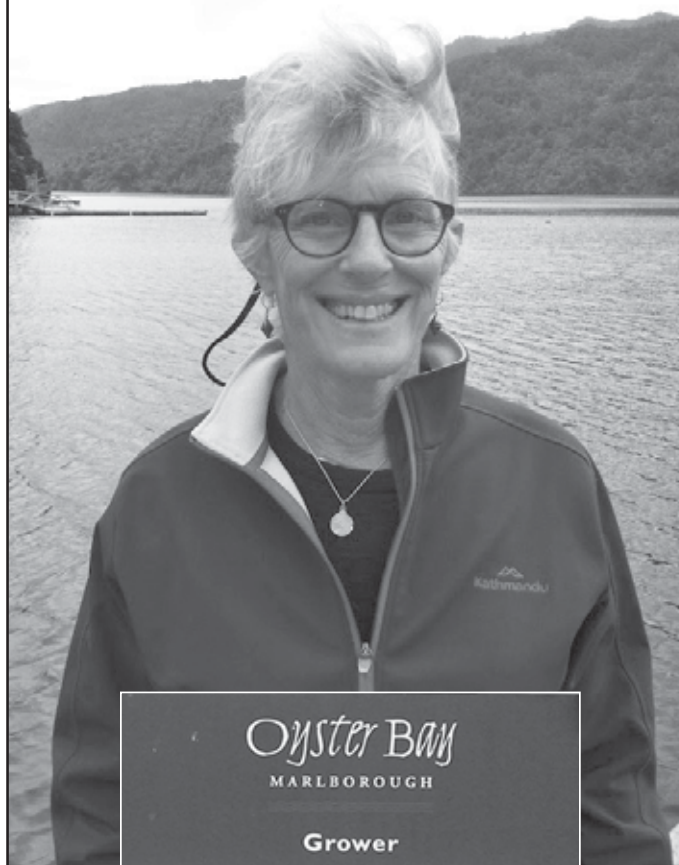
SOOJIN CHUNG (producer/ editor) was born in South Korea, and has worked on 8 major feature films as a production editor, including Park Chan-Wook's Venice Film Festival winner *Lady Vengeance*. She has used her experience to help produce and edit numerous award-winning short films such as *The 8th Samurai* and *Portrait For Leonore*. These films have gone on to win over 50 awards at various film festivals worldwide.

She also recently produced her first feature film *Escape From Tomorrow*, which had its premiere at Sundance 2013. Chung is a member of Motion Picture Editors Guild and received her MFA for editing from the AFI Conservatory. She was awarded

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Thanks again, Roger & Chaz!

– Marsha



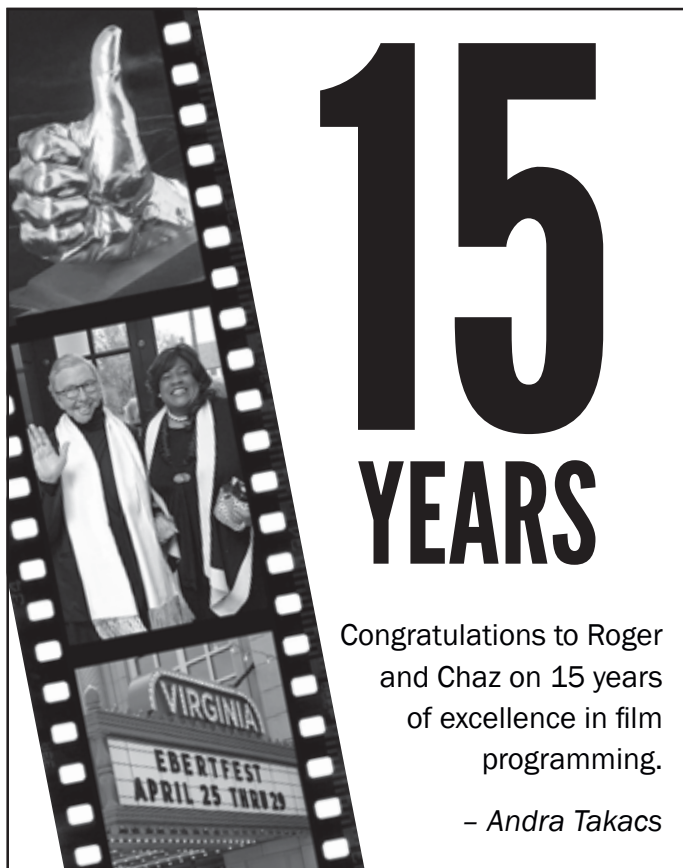
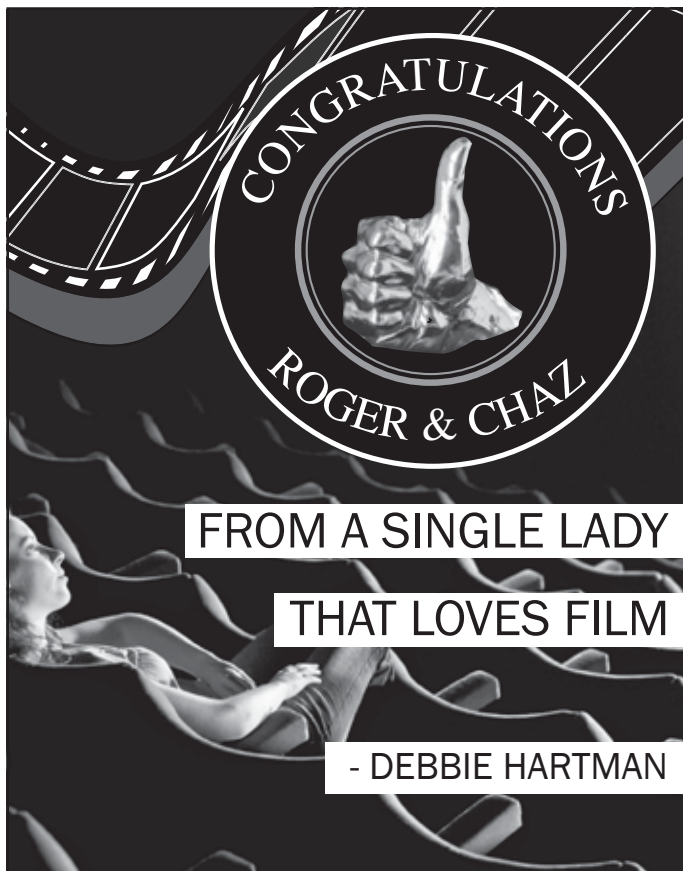
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the American Cinema Editor's Eddie award and was nominated for Best Editor at the Show Off Your Shorts Film Festival. Chung continues to work as an editor, including Universal Picture's soon-to-be-released *Dead In Tombstone*. As producer, she co-founded a production company, Forerunner Films, and has several projects in various stages of development.

ROY ABRAMSOHN (actor) is an LA-based actor who has worked for the past 25 years in film, TV and theater throughout the US and abroad – from San Francisco and New York City to Hong Kong and Cannes. Also a trained pianist, Abramsohn originated the leading role in the two-man, Pulitzer-nominated drama *Old Wicked Songs* at the historic Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, where he also played the dual role of Chico and Harpo Marx in *Groucho: A Life in Revue* with the original Broadway cast. *Groucho* was taped live at the Westport Country Playhouse in Connecticut and has aired on PBS. Other stage credits include 2 years at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, *Dirty Blonde* at Portland Center Stage, the West Coast Premiere of acclaimed playwright Israel Horovitz's *Lebensraum* (Fountain Theatre, Hollywood), the recent revival of *As Is* (New American Theater (Hollywood), *Gunmetal Blues* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (San Jose Stage), *Trumbo*, with Tony Award-winner Joe Mantegna at Garry Marshall's Falcon Theater in LA, and the West Coast Premiere of *Taking Sides* and *A Chorus of Disapproval* at the Odyssey Theatre, also in LA. He recently did the world premiere of *Hijacking the Northern Star* with an international cast at the Shouson Performing Arts Center in Hong Kong.

Abramsohn attended the Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music, where he studied theater and piano. He hosted a Young People's Concert for Romantic Music with the New York Philharmonic in Avery Fisher Hall in New York City and played piano with the orchestra.

He has appeared in over 200 commercials, TV shows and films including *Without a Trace*, *American Dream*, *The Parkers*, *Medium* and *Weeds*, where he was a recurring character last season. Feature films include *The Dukes*, with Peter Bogdanovich and Chazz Palminteri, a starring role in the cult horror-flick *Creepshow 3*, and *The Amazing Spiderman*.

The Spectacular Now

Saturday, April 20, 9:00 p.m.

JAMES PONSOLDT's (director) first feature, *Off the Black*, premiered at Sundance 2006; his second feature, *Smashed*, won a Special Jury Prize at Sundance and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award; and his third feature, *The Spectacular Now*, premiered at Sundance 2013, where it won a Special Jury Prize, and will be released theatrically by A24 this summer. Ponsoldt also writes for *Filmmaker* magazine.

SHAILENE WOODLEY (actor) most recently starred opposite George Clooney in the Academy Award® nominated film *The Descendants* from writer/director Alexander Payne. Among the many accolades she received for her work in the film were a 2012 Independent Spirit Award for best supporting actress, the National Board of Review Award for best supporting actress, a Golden Globe® nomination and a Critics Choice Award nomination. *Variety* said of her performance, "Woodley is a revelation in the role of Alex, displaying both the edge and the depth that the role demands." A.O. Scott of the *New York Times* agreed, saying Woodley gives, "one of the toughest, smartest, most credible adolescent performances in recent memory."

Woodley's performance in *The Spectacular Now* was honored at Sundance 2013 with a Special Jury Award for best acting alongside her co-star Miles Teller. She has just completed work on *White Bird in a Blizzard* for director Gregg Araki, and

The Amazing Spiderman 2, in which she will play the role of Mary-Jane. She is currently shooting *Divergent*, in which she will play the main character, Tris. Following that she will film the female lead in the film adaptation of the popular YA novel *Fault in Our Stars*. Woodley also stars on the hit ABC Family drama *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, which will end its run this spring.

Woodley began her career at the age of 5 when an agent recognized her potential and signed her on the spot. She has been working ever since. She started in commercials and then got her first TV role in the 1999 MOW *Replacing Dad*, which starred two-time Oscar® nominee Mary McDonnell. Other roles include the lead in the popular WB movie *Felicity: An American Girl Adventure*, which was produced by Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas and Julia Roberts, and recurring roles on *Crossing Jordan* (as a young Jill Hennessy), *The O.C.*, and *Jack & Bobby*. She also had a lead role opposite Ann Margaret and Matthew Settle in the TV movie *A Place Called Home*.

When she is not on set Woodley spends as much time outdoors as possible, thinking of ways she can help keep the environment beautiful and healthy for future generations. She has started a charitable organization called All It Takes, which is dedicated to all things that help the environment and people's lives in general. She also puts time in working with various charities that benefit children, including St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric Aids Foundation.

Not Yet Begun to Fight

Sunday, April 21, 12 noon

SABRINA LEE (producer/co-director), a professional modern dancer and choreographer for almost a decade, turned her artistic eye toward documentary filmmaking in 2005 upon seeing a

hand-painted sign that read "Hip Hop Show Tonight" planted in a roadside cow pasture. She was then inspired to create *Where You From*, the award-winning feature documentary about rural rap. Soon after, she collaborated with Shasta Grenier to produce and co-direct *Not Yet Begun To Fight*, an intimate and unconventional look at the impact of war, which was completed in 2012. Lee completed her BA at Duke University, where she studied film (without her father's consent) and graduated Phi Beta Kappa. She lives in Montana with her husband and two children, breathing plenty of fresh air and encountering the occasional wild animal.

SHASTA GRENIER (co-director/editor) only discovered the proverbial worth of the picture after a long history with words. But she always draws from her roots in bread and butter narrative (MA English, University of British Columbia). With a knack for finding stories in mounds of footage, Grenier is mesmerized by the siren call of the unexpected and the overlooked. Those sirens have been variously incarnated as small town basketball players, forgotten musical pioneers, and orphaned owlets. By gratefully and respectfully appropriating stories and regularly losing sleep, she has earned numerous Emmy®, CINE Golden Eagle, Telly and film festival awards.

ELLIOTT MILLER (subject), Navy SEAL (ret.), worked as a sniper and combat medic until he sustained severe injuries from an RPG attack and subsequent IED in Iraq in 2006. He and his wife, April, live in San Diego.

ERIK GOODGE (subject), Sergeant and former Forward Observer in the Marine Corps (ret.), was injured in Afghanistan in 2009. He lives in Indiana with his girlfriend, Becca, and their two dogs. He is applying to college and plans to pursue a career in marketing.

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2013 Panelists & Special Guests

DAN ARONSON is Chairman & CEO of Fandor, an online movie service that provides access to a curated global library of independent films. Dan has been at the forefront of technology since the 1980s, when he began building supercomputers at Thinking Machines Corporation. Prior to founding Fandor, he was an early employee at WAIS, the first internet search engine company, and went on to help manage AOL's servers following its acquisition of WAIS. Dan co-founded anti-spam company Brightmail and internet incubator Campsix. He has served on the boards of City Car Share and networked music player company Slim Devices.

MICHAEL BARKER, Co-President and Co-Founder of Sony Pictures Classics (with Tom Bernard), which celebrated its 20th anniversary this past year, has distributed (and quite often produced), some of the finest independent movies over the past 30 years. Previously he was an executive at United Artists (1980-1983) and went on to co-found Orion Classics (1983-1991) and Sony Pictures Classics.

Over the span of his career, Barker's films have received 135 Academy Award® nominations including several for Best Picture: *Amour*; Woody Allen's most successful film of all time, *Midnight In Paris*; *An Education*; *Capote*, for which Philip Seymour Hoffman won the Academy Award® for Best Actor; *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, recognized as the highest grossing foreign film of all time in North America; and *Howards End*. His company's Academy Award® nominations resulted in 29 wins including five for Best Documentary Feature, most recently for *Inside Job* and *Fog of War*, and 12 for Best Foreign Language Film, which include *Babette's Feast*, *All About My Mother*, *The Lives Of Others*, and *A Separation*. Other notable award wins include 35 Independent Spirit Awards and 18

Golden Globe® Awards.

Barker has collaborated with some of the world's finest filmmakers including Woody Allen, Pedro Almodovar, Louis Malle, and Zhang Yimou, all of whom he's worked with on multiple occasions, as well as Robert Altman, Michelangelo Antonioni, Suzanne Bier, Ingmar Bergman, Francis Coppola, David Cronenberg, Guillermo del Toro, the Dardenne brothers, Jonathan Demme, R W Fassbinder, Michael Haneke, Nicole Holofcener, Akira Kurosawa, Norman Jewison, Ang Lee, Richard Linklater, David Mamet, Errol Morris, Roman Polanski, Sally Potter, Francois Truffaut and Wim Wenders.

Over the years, Barker has released features from American masters (*Rachel Getting Married*, *Sweet And Lowdown*) and new American filmmakers (*Take Shelter*, *Pollock*, *Slacker*, *Welcome To The Dollhouse*, *Frozen River*); cutting edge films (*Kung Fu Hustle*, *Moon*, *Orlando*, *Run Lola Run*, *The Raid: Redemption*); animated features (*The Triplets Of Bellville*, *Persepolis*, *Waltz With Bashir*); feature documentaries (*Dogtown And The Z Boys*, *Crumb*, *Winged Migration*, *It Might Get Loud*) and foreign films (*Ran*, *A Prophet*, *White Ribbon*, *Talk To Her*, *Central Station*, *Wings Of Desire*).

He and his colleagues have also restored and theatrically reissued some of the great films of the past, including *The Passenger*, *The Garden Of The Finzi Continis*, *Murmur Of The Heart*, and the classic films of Indian master Satyajit Ray.

Barker has been recognized for his work, and has received the Honors Award from the Directors Guild of America, the insignia of Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French government, the FINDIE Spirit Award in LA, the GLAAD Media Award, a retrospective at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, and the Gotham Industry Lifetime Achievement Award from the Independent Feature Project in New York. Additionally, under his leadership Sony Pictures Classics

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received the Special Recognition Award from the Sony Corporation CEO (1999 and 2000).

He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Museum of the Moving Image, the Entertainment Media and Technology Dean's Advisory Board at the NYU Stern School of Business, the Visiting Committee to the Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago, and has served as Adjunct Professor at the Columbia University School of the Arts Graduate Film Program. He has a BSc from the University of Texas.

Recent releases include *Rust And Bone*, *West Of Memphis*, *Amour*, *Hysteria*, *To Rome With Love*, *Neil Young Journeys*, *Searching For Sugarman*, *Celeste And Jessie Forever*, *No, The Gatekeepers*, and *Smashed* (James Ponsoldt).

Upcoming releases include *I'm So Excited*, *At Any Price* (Ramin Bahrani), *The Company You Keep*, *Wadjda*, *The Patience Stone*, *Fill The Void* and *Blue Jasmine*. At Sundance 2013, Sony Pictures Classics most recently acquired *Kill Your Darlings*, *Austenland*, and *Before Midnight* (Richard Linklater).

STEVEN BOONE, official blogger of Ebertfest 2013, is a writer at large for *Capital New York* and reviews movies for RogerEbert.com. He contributes to such video essay/film commentary sites as *Press Play*, *Keyframe* (Fandor), as well as his own strange web experiment, *Hentai Lab*.

DAVID BORDWELL is retired from teaching at the University of Wisconsin Madison. He has written several books on film aesthetics and history, most recently *Poetics of Cinema* (2007), *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (2nd edition, 2011), and *Pandora's Digital Box: Films, Files, and the Future of Movies* (2012). He and Kristin Thompson, who collaborated on *Film Art: An Introduction* (10th edition, 2012), write about film regularly at *David Bordwell's website on cinema*. 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).

C.O. "DOC" ERICKSON, an executive producer, has over fifty 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*.

KEVIN B. LEE is a film critic, filmmaker, and producer of over 100 video essays on film and TV. He is founding editor and chief video essayist at Fandor Keyframe and founding partner of dGenerate Films. Kevin has contributed to *Ebert Presents*, *Sight & Sound*, and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. He tweets at @alsolikelife.

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.

SHEILA O'MALLEY received a BFA in theater from the University of Rhode Island and a Master's in acting from the Actors Studio MFA Program. She writes film

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reviews and essays on actors for *Capital New York*, *Fandor*, *Press Play*, *Noir of the Week*, and *The House Next Door*. Her work has appeared in *Salon.com* and *The Sewanee Review*, where her essay about her father was featured in an Irish literature issue.

Sheila has performed her one-woman show *74 Facts and One Lie* all over Manhattan. She has read her personal essays at the prestigious Cornelia Street Cafe Writers Read series. Sheila writes about actors, movies, books, and Elvis Presley at her popular personal site, *The Sheila Variations*. Her first play, *July and Half of August*, recently had public readings at Theater Wit in Chicago and the Vineyard Theatre in New York. She is currently working on her second play, as well as a book about Elvis Presley in Hollywood.

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," appears in the book *Watching While Black: Centering the Television of Black America*, which published 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 graduate of UI 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*.


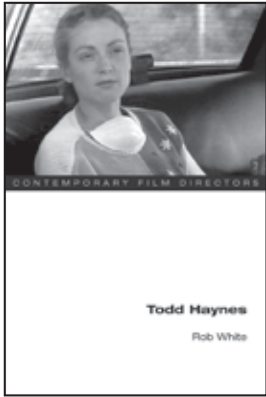
STEVE PROKOPY is the Chicago editor for *Ain't It Cool News*, where he has contributed film reviews and interviews under the alias 'Capone' since 1998. He is also a frequent guest on Chicago Public Radio's *Filmspotting* movie review show. Steve received a BA in Journalism from Northwestern University in 1990.

MATT ZOLLER SEITZ is the TV critic for *New York Magazine* and *Vulture.com* and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in criticism. He is the founder and original editor of influential blog *The House Next Door*, now a part of *Slant Magazine*, and the founder and publisher of *Press Play*. Matt has written, narrated, edited or produced over 100 hours' worth of video essays about cinema history and style for The Museum of the Moving Image, The L Magazine, *Vulture* and *Press Play*, among other outlets. His 5-part 2009 video essay *Wes Anderson: The Substance of Style* was later spun off into the hardcover book *The Wes Anderson Collection*, which will be published in October 2013 by Abrams Books. Matt is the director of the romantic comedy *Home*, several short films, and a forthcoming science fiction epic that will be shot in his apartment. He is currently writing a memoir about his marriage titled *All the Things that Remind Me of Her*. He lives in Brooklyn with his two children.

KRISHNA BALA SHENOI is a 19-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 7 or 8, 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 studies at Srishti School of Art, Design and

continued on next page

CONTEMPORARY FILM DIRECTORS

Other directors in the series include: Philip Kaufman, Jim Jarmusch, Richard Linklater, Jerry Lewis, David Lynch, Lars von Trier, Michael Haneke and Wong Kar-wai



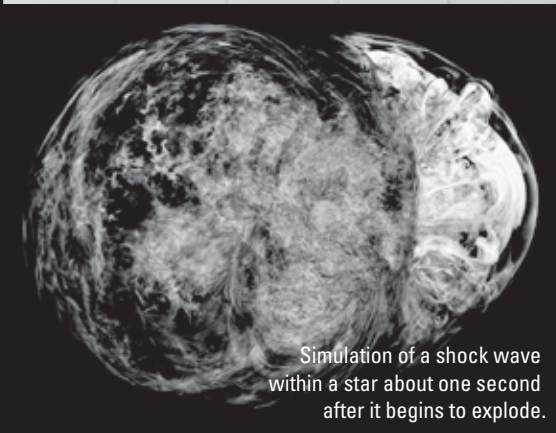
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Technology in Bangalore, and still creates short films, animations, paintings and digital art, all of which you can see on his website, krishnabalashenoi.wordpress.com. He is extremely proud, and slightly intimidated, to be Roger Ebert's youngest FFC and will be coming to Illinois from Bangalore along with his mother for his third Ebertfest.

MATT SINGER is a Webby-award-winning writer and podcaster. He currently runs the *Criticwire* blog on *Indiewire*, reviews films for *ScreenCrush.com*, and co-hosts the *Filmspotting: Streaming Video Unit* podcast. For 5 years, he was the on-air host of the *IFC News* and a regular contributor to its website. His criticism has appeared in the pages of *The Village Voice* and *Time Out New York* and on *Ebert Presents*. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife, dog, and a prop sword from the movie *Gymkata*. Follow him on Twitter @mattsinger.

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 twelve editions. Since 2009 Gerardo has been writing essays for *RogerEbert.com*, and for the last two years has been writing a daily blog on Mexico's *Cine-Premiere Magazine*.

PABLO VILLACA, a writer, filmmaker and a film critic since 1994, wrote for many Brazilian movie magazines. In 2002, he became the first Latin-American critic to of the Online Film Critics Society, and was elected its first non-English-speaking Governing Committee member in 2011.

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*. He is also currently the film critic of *Cinema em Cena*, the oldest Brazilian movie website (which he created back

in 1997) and also teaches Film Theory, Language and Criticism courses all over Brazil, having taught more than 1,500 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 2011, he wrote and directed his second short film, *Blind Death*. He tweets at @pablovillaca. "Um grande abraço e bons filmes!"

GRACE WANG is a writer, producer, and one of Roger's FFCs. 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 Film Festival and Toronto Reel Asian 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 8 countries on 3 continents. She currently resides in Toronto, Canada.

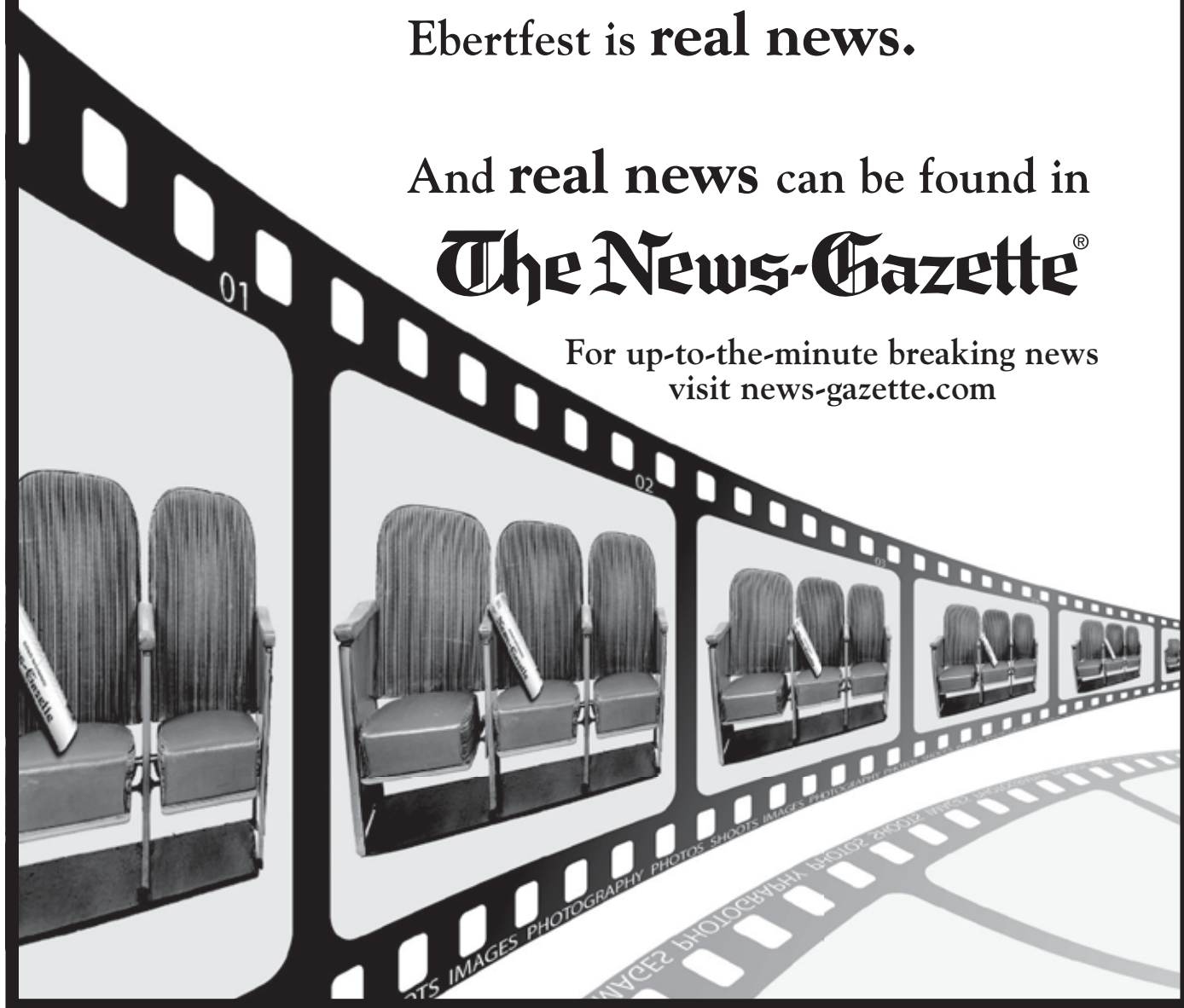
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“Melissa Merli covers
Ebertfest like the dew.”
– Roger Ebert

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Days of Heaven

Film director tells story of loss in curious way

By Roger Ebert, Dec. 7, 1997

Terence Malick's "Days of Heaven" has been praised for its painterly images and evocative score, but criticized for its muted emotions: Although passions erupt in a deadly love triangle, all the feelings are somehow held at arm's length. This observation is true enough, if you think only about the actions of the adults in the story. But watching this 1978 film again recently, I was struck more than ever with the conviction that this is the story of a teenage girl, told by her, and its subject is the way that hope and cheer have been beaten down in her heart. We do not feel the full passion of the adults because it is not her passion: It is seen at a distance, as a phenomenon, like the weather, or the plague of grasshoppers that signals the beginning of the end.

The film takes place during the years before World War I. Outside Chicago, Bill (Richard Gere) gets in a fight with a steel mill foreman and kills him. With his lover Abby (Brooke Adams) and his kid sister Linda (Linda Manz), he hops a train to Texas, where the harvest is in progress, and all three get jobs as laborers on the vast wheat field of a farmer (Sam Shepard). Bill tells everyone Abby is his sister, and gets in a fight with a field hand who suggests otherwise.

The farmer falls in love with

Abby and asks her to stay after the harvest is over. Bill overhears a conversation between the farmer and a doctor, and learns that the farmer has perhaps a year to live. In a strategy familiar from "The Wings of the Dove," he suggests that Abby marry the farmer — and then, when he dies, he and Abby will at last have money enough to live happily. "He was tired of livin' like the rest of 'em, nosing around like a pig in a gutter," Linda confides on the soundtrack. But later she observes of the farmer: "Instead of getting sicker, he just stayed the same; the doctor must of give him some pills or something."

The farmer sees Bill and Abby in tender moments together, feels that is not the way a brother and sister should behave and challenges Bill. Bill leaves, hitching a ride with an aerial circus that has descended out of the sky. Abby, the farmer and Linda live happily for a year, and then Bill returns at harvest time. All of the buried issues boil up to the surface again, against a backdrop of biblical misfortune: a plague of grasshoppers, fields in flame, murder, loss, exile.

"Days of Heaven" is above all one of the most beautiful films ever made. Malick's purpose is not to tell a story of melodrama, but one of loss. His tone is elegiac. He evokes the loneliness



Richard Gere in a scene from "Days of Heaven."

and beauty of the limitless Texas prairie. In the first hour of the film there is scarcely a scene set indoors. The farm workers camp under the stars and work in the fields, and even the farmer is so besotted by the weather that he tinkers with wind instruments on the roof of his Gothic mansion.

The film places its humans in a large frame filled with natural details: the sky, rivers, fields, horses, pheasants, rabbits. Malick set many of its shots at the "golden hours" near dawn and dusk, when shadows are muted and the sky is all the same tone. These images are underlined by the famous score of Ennio Morricone, who quotes Saint-

Saens' "Carnival of the Animals." The music is wistful, filled with loss and regret: in mood, like "The Godfather" theme but not so lush and more remembered than experienced. Voices are often distant, and there is far-off thunder.

Against this backdrop, the story is told in a curious way. We do see key emotional moments between the three adult characters. (Bill advises Abby to take the farmer's offer. The farmer and Abby share moments together in which she realizes she is beginning to love him, and Bill and the farmer have their elliptical exchanges in which neither quite states the obvious.)

"Days of Heaven" is above all one of the most beautiful films ever made. Malick's purpose is not to tell a story of melodrama, but one of loss.



WEDNESDAY 7 p.m.

CAST AND CREDITS

DAYS OF HEAVEN
(1978) Rated PG

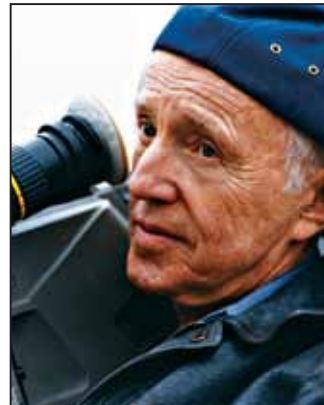
Written and directed by
Terrence Malick
Photographed by **Nestor Almendros and Haskell Wexler**

Cast:

Richard Gere as Bill
Brooke Adams as Abby
Linda Manz as Linda
Sam Shepard as Farmer
Robert J. Wilke as Farm Foreman
Jackie Shultis as Linda's Friend
Stuart Margolin as Mill Foreman
Gene Bell as Dancer
Richard Libertini as Vaudevillian

Running time: 95 minutes

Print Courtesy:
Paramount Pictures



Haskell Wexler, director of photography.

But all of their words together, if summed up, do not equal the total of the words in the voiceover spoken so hauntingly by Linda Manz.

She was 16 when the film was made, playing younger, with a face that sometimes looks angular and plain, but at other times (especially in a shot where she is illuminated by firelight and surrounded by darkness) has a startling beauty. Her voice tells us everything we need to know about her character (and is so particular and unusual that we almost think it tells us about the actress, too). It is flat, resigned, emotionless, with some kind of quirky Eastern accent.

The whole story is told by her. But her words are not a narration so much as a parallel commentary, with asides and footnotes. We get the sense that she is speaking some years

after the events have happened, trying to reconstruct these events that were seen through naive eyes. She is there in almost the first words of the film ("My brother used to tell everyone they were brother and sister," a statement that is more complex than it seems). And still there in the last words of the film, as she walks down the tracks with her new "best friend." She is there after the others are gone. She is the teller of the tale.

This child, we gather, has survived in hard times. She has armored herself. She is not surprised by the worst. Her voice sounds utterly authentic; it seems beyond performance. I remember seeing the film for the first time and being blindsided by the power of a couple of sentences she speaks near the end. The three of them are in a boat on a river. Things have

not worked out well. The days of heaven are over. She says: "You could see people on the shore, but it was far off and you couldn't see what they were doing. They were probably calling for help or something — or they

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SHORT SUBJECT

I Remember

By Roger Ebert

"I Remember," our 15th anniversary short subject, has a special significance for me because it is by Grace Wang of Toronto, one of the very first few Far-Flung Correspondents. When she first contributed to the FCCs, Grace was employed in the legal field.

She since began working for the Toronto International Film Festival, and served as assistant to its director, Cameron Bailey, on his film-finding trip to China and Hong Kong. Since then she has been a TIFF programming

associate, and now here is her premiere work as a director, which was selected for rotation in the Berlin International Directors Lounge. Its dreamy and haunting realism embodies the poetic feeling of many of her FCC pieces.

In a special tribute to the 15th anniversary Ebertfest, Grace will gather with me, Chaz, Nate, Mary Susan, the attending FCCs and our VIP guests on stage as they join the audience in singing "Those Were the Days." Which they surely have been.

A special guest will be her friend and mine, Joan Cohl of Toronto, whose husband Dusty co-founded TIFF — which in many ways was an inspiration for Ebertfest. Dusty and Joan have attended from our first year, and Joan continues after Dusty's passing.

Grace will introduce her film. Then please remain attentive for a very brief film clip I have selected. Then will come the song. Allow it to finish. To the very end.

— Roger



Lily Huang (top) stars in "I Remember." Grace Wang (bottom) is the director of the film.



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Days of Heaven

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were trying to bury somebody or something."

That is the voice of the person who tells the story, and that is why "Days of Heaven" is correct to present its romantic triangle obliquely, as if seen through an emotional filter. Children know that adults can be seized with sudden passions for one another, but children are concerned primarily with how these passions affect themselves: Am I more or less secure, more or less loved, because there has been this emotional realignment among the adults who form my world?

Since it was first released, "Days of Heaven" has gathered legends to itself. Malick, now 53, made "Badlands" with newcomers Sissy Spacek and Martin Sheen in 1973, made this film five years later and then disappeared

from view. Because the film made such an impression, the fact of his disappearance took on mythic proportions. He was, one heard, living in Paris. Or San Francisco. Or Montana. Or Austin. He was dying. Or working on another film. Or on a novel, or a play. Right now Malick is back at work, with two projects, "The Thin Red Line," with Sean Penn, and "The Moviegoer," with Tim Robbins and Julia Roberts. Perhaps the mysteries will clear.

"Days of Heaven's" great photography has also generated a mystery. The credit for cinematography goes to the Cuban Nestor Almendros, who won an Oscar for the film; "Days of Heaven" established him in America, where he went on to great success. Then there is a small credit at the end: "Additional photography by

What is the point of "Days of Heaven" — the payoff, the message? This is a movie made by a man who knew how something felt, and found a way to evoke it in us.

Haskell Wexler." Wexler, too, is one of the greatest of all cinematographers. That credit has always rankled him, and he once sent me a letter in which he described sitting in a theater with a stopwatch to prove that more than half of the footage was shot by him. The reason he didn't get top billing is a story of personal and studio politics, but the fact remains that between them, these two great cinematographers created

a film whose look remains unmistakably in the memory.

What is the point of "Days of Heaven" — the payoff, the message? This is a movie made by a man who knew how something felt, and found a way to evoke it in us. That feeling is how a child feels when it lives precariously, and then is delivered into security and joy, and then has it all taken away again — and blinks away the tears and says it doesn't hurt.



Vincent:

The Life and Death of Vincent Van Gogh

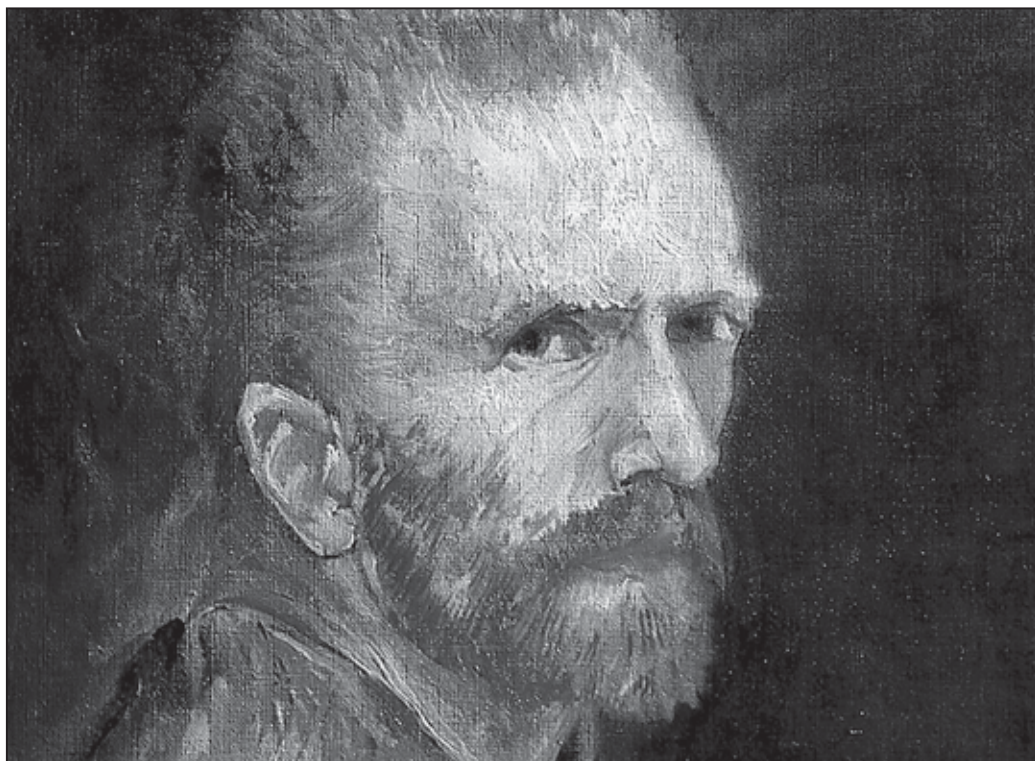
Poetic, thoughtful man portrayed in documentary

By Roger Ebert, Jan. 6, 1989

How rich art is! If only one can remember what one has seen. - Van Gogh in a letter to his brother.

"Dear Theo," the letters always began, and there were more than 750 of them written by Vincent Van Gogh to his brother. The painter spoke of his life, his finances, his health, his prospects, his opinions of the art world — but most of all he spoke about his paintings and about the discoveries he was making. To read the letters while looking at the paintings (as you can do if you have the book "Vincent by Himself") is like having Van Gogh take you by the hand and lead you through an exhibit of his work. Few other painters have left such a moving and honest personal correspondence.

If you only read the letters and look at the works, however, you will miss something: the look of the everyday world that Van Gogh was transforming into his paintings. What Paul Cox has done in "Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent Van Gogh" — the best film about a painter I have ever seen — is to



Vincent Van Gogh, the world-renowned painter who confided in his brother.

take his camera to some of the places Van Gogh painted and to re-create some of the others in his imagination. This is not, however, one of those idiotic "art appreciation" films in which we see the windmill and then we see the painting of the windmill; Cox knows too much about art to be that simplistic. Instead, he adopts the role of a disciple of the painter, a man who wants to stand in the same places and see the same things as a simple act of love toward Van Gogh's work.

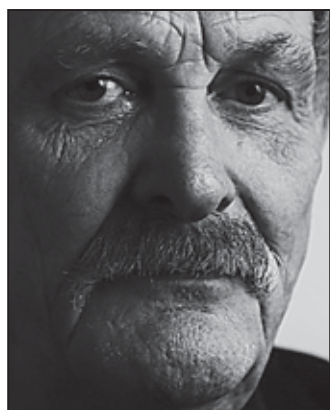
All of the words on the soundtrack are from Vincent's letters to Theo, read by the British actor John Hurt. On the screen, we see landscapes such

as Van Gogh might have seen, and we visit some of the places where he painted. But there are fictionalized, created sequences as well; scenes of farmers in their fields, or peasants walking down country lanes, or shadows sweeping across fields of sunflowers. And there is a magical sequence in which the people in a room go about their daily business until they arrange themselves, seemingly by accident, into a reproduction of a painting.

Sometimes Cox makes no effort to photograph specific things that Van Gogh might have seen or been influenced by. Instead, his camera visits woods

and fields and watches birds and flowers, and meanders down alleyways populated with people who seem to harbor some of the weariness and fear of so many of Van Gogh's models. The words continue over these images as well, creating the illusion that the painter is narrating the film himself.

The best parts of the film are the most specific. Cox uses closeups to show the smallest details of some of the paintings, while the narration describes the painter's technical discoveries and experiments. There are times when we almost seem to be looking at the very brushstroke that Van Gogh is describing in a



Paul Cox, director of "Vincent."



THURSDAY 1 p.m.

CAST AND CREDITS

VINCENT: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF VINCENT VAN GOGH
(1987) Not rated

Directed by **Paul Cox**
Words by **Vincent Van Gogh**
Read by **John Hurt**

Running time: 99 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Bill Banning & Roxie Releasing**

There are times when we almost seem to be looking at the very brushstroke that Van Gogh is describing in a letter. These moments create a sense of the specific.

letter. These moments create a sense of the specific. We aren't looking at stars in the sky, or fields of flowers, or a portrait of the artist; we're looking at frozen moments in time when Van Gogh's brush moved just

such a way in response to his feeling and his craft. The strokes seem enormous, on the big movie screen, and they call our attention to the detail, to the way that Van Gogh's paintings were not about their subjects

but about the way he saw his subjects.

So much of the popular image of Van Gogh is crude and inaccurate, fed by the notion that he was "mad," fueled by the fact that he cut off his ear. There is an entirely different Vincent here, a poetic, thoughtful man who confides everything to his brother, who is not mad so much as completely open to the full range of his experience, including those parts that most of us prudently suppress. "Vincent" is the most romantic and yet the most sensible documentary about a painter I have ever seen.

SHORT SUBJECT

To Music

By *Paul Cox*

A part from being an ode to the music of life, "To Music" is also an ode to the process of filmmaking. I felt privileged to be able to watch the making of this film from the very moment of conception to the first screening.

We were in the South of France with Sophie Kohn and Feike Santbergen. Both are keen filmmakers. They came for a little holiday after the madness of the Cannes Film Festival. When they heard that maestro Tamás Vásáry, a world-renowned pianist, and his dancer wife Henriett Tunyogi were coming for the weekend, they could not sit idle any longer. "Talent must not be wasted," a film needed to be made! A camera and lights came from Holland, a tripod from nearby Avignon and a dolly was constructed out of pipes, nuts and

bolts, bought in a township nearby.

Feike and Sophie frantically started to write their screenplay. During the day they would sit on the grass in front of the house; when it rained they disappeared into the attic; and when the temperature dropped at night they would huddle in front of the fire. We watched their enthusiasm and excitement with delight and offered our help as production assistants and actors.

I was asked to play the depressed protagonist but declined this opportunity. A little too close to the bone! Absurd characters like the lusty village priest are more in my range! Fortunately, my friend Roger Glanville-Hicks, the finest lute player in the South of France, offered to play the lead and Tamás and Henriett were stand-

ing by. Meanwhile Sophie and Feike had convinced Roger's wife Michele that her house was the perfect location — a beautiful 16th century house, with a small tower, right in the heart of the village. Her 92-year-old father was also recruited.

It was a delight to watch two people on a roll! They had little time, little money but great passion and ingenuity. Feike's homemade dolly performed miracles and Sophie's boom/fishing rod embraced the marvelous soundscape of the French countryside.

"To Music" is a beautiful short film. There are no special effects or digital manipulations. It's beautiful because it's honest and humane and shows us how music, good music that is, can heal the body and spirit and bring people together.



Feike Santbergen (top) and Sophie Kohn (bottom) are the co-directors of "To Music."

In the Family

Film screening sponsored by: Champaign County Anti-Stigma Alliance

One man courageously demonstrates the meaning of family

By Roger Ebert

"In the Family" centers on one of the notable performances I've seen — if, indeed, it is a performance. Perhaps Patrick Wang is exactly like that. Then he must be a very good man. He wrote, directed and stars in the film, but it's not a one-man show. It is about the meaning of "family." This is his first feature, and may signal the opening of an important career.

Wang plays Joey Williams, a Chinese-American man who has been living happily for about five years with Cody Hines (Trevor St. John) and Cody's 6-year-old son, Chip (Sebastian Banes). Chip's mother died in childbirth. Some months after that, to his own surprise, Cody fell in love with Joey, and they're raising Chip. This household is given enough screen time to establish it as a happy, healthy place.

Then Cody is killed in an accident. Chip stays with Joey, whose treatment of him is a study in wisdom and love. The boy is so irrepressibly joyous that we sense what a happy life he has led. But Cody's sister Eileen (Kelly McAndrew) reveals that her brother left a will years ago, granting her all of his prop-



Peter Hermann, Kelly McAndrew, Eugene Brell, Patrick Wang, Brian Murraray and Marsha Waterbury in a scene from "In the Family."

erty and custody of his child. This will, written after the death of Cody's wife and before he met Joey, has never been updated.

On Thanksgiving Day, Joey drops the boy off at the sister's house and never sees him again. A lawyer in his Tennessee town tells him flatly he doesn't have a child custody case, and no judge in the state will rule in his favor. Neither this lawyer nor anyone else ever uses the words "homosexual" or "gay." It isn't in any sense a "gay rights" film,

nor is it an "Asian-American" film. It is about a father and son who have been separated against their wishes.

Its objectivity in these terms is possible because of Wang's extraordinary performance. I've been unable to discover any details about him, but he speaks in a relaxed, natural Tennessee accent and creates Joey as a particularly convincing character, a contractor who drives a red pickup truck. (Cody was a schoolteacher.) His own parents died when he was very young. He was adopted by foster parents, who gave him their name, and who died when he was a teenager. As a man of Asian birth who has been raised apart from other Asians, as an orphan and a foster child who for years had no family, we sense how important stability and continuity are to him.

And there is something else.

Without ever making a point of it, he has been treated as an outsider. Wang, as director, indicates this by several scenes with the back of the character's head to the camera, so that we see the other characters from his POV, instead of seeing Joey mixed in visually. He is not a hothead, not neurotic, not psychologically damaged, but in this crisis, the entire basis of his being has been challenged. Having seen Cody, we can feel certain he would have granted custody to Joey if he had ever made another will. Cody's sister doesn't see it that way. What does she think about homosexuality? She never says.

Joey's case looks hopeless. Friends try to console him, but helplessly. He's working on a house for a local attorney who has an ornate law library, and he reveals his skills in bookbinding — an art learned from his

Patrick Wang wrote, directed and stars in the film, but it's not a one-man show. It is about the meaning of "family." This is his first feature, and may signal the opening of an important career.



THURSDAY 4 p.m.

CAST AND CREDITS

IN THE FAMILY
(2011) Not rated

Written and directed by
Patrick Wang

Cast:

Patrick Wang as Joey Williams
Trevor St. John as Cody Hines
Sebastian Banes as Chip Hines
Lisa Altomare as Betsy
Brian Murray as Paul Hawks
Park Overall as Sally Hines
Peter Hermann as Dave Robey
Kelly McAndrew as Eileen Robey

Running time: 169 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Patrick Wang**



Patrick Wang, writer, director and star of "In the Family," is one of this year's Festival guests.

*What a courageous first feature this is, a film that sidesteps shopworn stereotypes and **tells a quiet, firm, deeply humanist story about doing the right thing.***

foster father. This attorney, Paul Hawks (the authoritative and wise Brian Murray), offers his help and observes there may be no help within the court system but there may be a more human path around it.

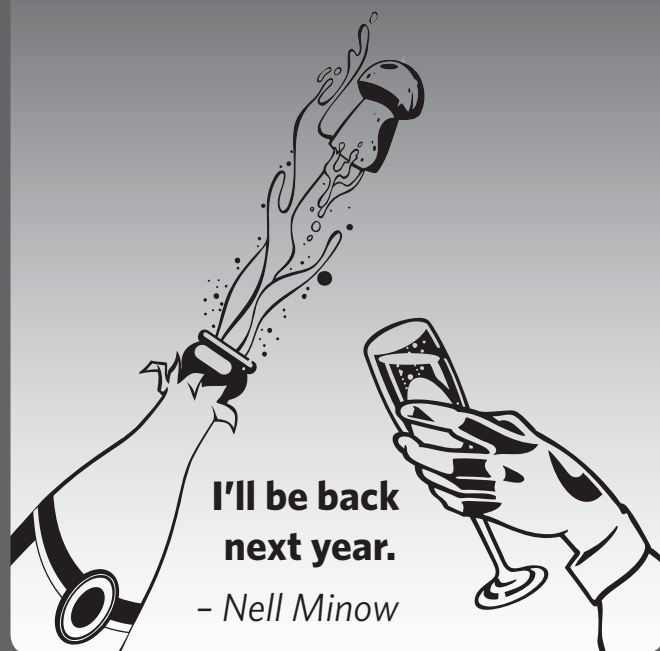
Then follows a scene of legal depositions, during which Patrick Wang's performance, in long takes that feel entirely spontaneous, recounts his life story. Joey's response to the offensively hostile attorney for the other side is masterful: He

humiliates the other man simply by being a good person and telling the truth.

"In the Family" is a long film, and truth to tell, could have been made shorter. (One dimly lit confrontation between Joey and a key participant seems unnecessary.) That said, I was completely absorbed from beginning to end. What a courageous first feature this is, a film that sidesteps shopworn stereotypes and tells a quiet, firm, deeply humanist story

about doing the right thing. It is a film that avoids any message or statement and simply shows us, with infinite sympathy, how the life of a completely original character can help us lead our own.

Cheers to all at Ebertfest!



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Bernie

Jack Black ‘miraculous’ as murderous funeral director

By Roger Ebert

I would buy a used coffin from this man. In Richard Linklater's droll comedy "Bernie," Jack Black plays an east Texas funeral director named Bernie Tiede, and it is surely one of the performances of the year. I had to forget what I knew about Black. He creates this character out of thin air, it's like nothing he's done before, and it proves that an actor can be a miraculous thing in the right role.

Black is not a giant. He stands 5'6". Yet the word for Bernie Tiede is "hovering." He seems to hover above even those taller than him. He is solicitous, gentle, tactful. When Marjorie Nugent's husband dies, he is the angel at her shoulder, creating the impression that no client has ever touched him quite so much as she has. That's a triumph because Marjorie (Shirley MacLaine) is the most disliked woman in Carthage, Texas.

Bernie Tiede's story is factual, based on a celebrated Texas Monthly article titled "Midnight in the Garden of East Texas" by Skip Hollandsworth. The late Mr. Nugent, apparently a prince of a fellow, owned the local bank. Marjorie took over after his passing and started throwing loan applications into the waste basket and otherwise offending the locals.



Shirley MacLaine and Jack Black in a scene from "Bernie."

Was it her money that attracted Bernie? No one can say. Bernie was known and liked by almost everyone, sang in the church choir, served on charity boards, organized civic functions, provided a sympathetic shoulder. His origins were obscurely in Arkansas, but his manner was such that he got the job at the Carthage funeral home almost just by presenting himself. Among his many abilities was the tact to convince mourners he believed they had selected precisely the right coffin.

Bernie's courtship of Marjorie is a masterpiece of social delicacy. In the odd dance between the two, he never seems

to want anything in particular. Not sex, certainly; there were those in Carthage who assumed Bernie was gay and rumored to be a few who knew. Nor was he boldly after her money, although he suggested purchases which in embellishing her lifestyle did nothing to diminish his. Surely Marjorie knew she was hated in the town and surely she enjoyed being paid tribute; MacLaine allows the slightest of smiles to sometimes shine out from a fixed frown. They began to be seen around town, especially at the theatrical and artistic events that Bernie supported and sometimes performed in. They shared such sublimated sexual experiences as holding

hands while having simultaneous massages in a (respectable) local spa.

There are flat-footed ways this story could have been told. Linklater finds a tricky note difficult to define. "Bernie" never declares itself a comedy; often when we laugh we're thinking, "I can't believe I'm seeing this." An unspoken compact grows between Bernie and Marjorie in which neither one declares exactly what's going on, but the fiction is maintained that Bernie believes her worthy of his kindest attentions, and she believes that at last a man has gotten her right. But a relationship this problematic can't last forever, and eventually



Matthew McConaughey in a scene from "Bernie."



THURSDAY 9 p.m.

CAST AND CREDITS

BERNIE

(2011) Rated PG-13

Directed by **Richard Linklater**
Written by **Skip Hollandsworth**

Cast:

Jack Black as Bernie
Shirley MacLaine as Marjorie
Matthew McConaughey as Danny
Brandon Smith as Sheriff

Running time: 98 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Millennium Entertainment**



Jack Black, star of "Bernie" is one of this year's Festival guests.

I had to forget what I knew about Black. He creates this character out of thin air, it's like nothing he's done before, and it proves that an actor can be a miraculous thing in the right role.

Bernie shoots Marjorie four times in the back.

Now Linklater surpasses himself. Bernie's attempts to conceal the death is based on the ability of many good funeral directors to know instinctively what people really think about each other. In Marjorie's case, no one liked her, and she isn't particularly missed. Bernie redoubles his charity efforts and continues to lead his

accustomed lifestyle. Only a curious district attorney named Danny Buck Davidson (Matthew McConaughey) eventually sniffs out something wrong, and even as he comes under suspicion, Bernie remains a man who knows exactly how to behave in difficult situations.

Richard Linklater has made all kinds of movies, most of them very good. They have little else in common: He worked with

Black in a completely different mode in "School of Rock." Why did he make "Bernie"? I suspect he read the magazine article and knew it was a natural movie. Anyone could have seen that. His genius was to see Jack Black as Bernie Tiede.

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Oslo, August 31st

One day changes everything

By Roger Ebert

“Oslo, August 31st” is about a day, a city and a 34-year-old man named Anders, who is on release from a drug rehab center so he can go to a job interview. The film opens with his memories of growing up in Oslo, described in snatches of dialogue and shown in glimpses of film. Here he was happy. Almost every street and turning is familiar.

Are we seeing a dream as it unwinds? Anders (Anders Danielsen Lie) awakens in a hotel room next to a woman we never meet, walks nearby to a wooded stream, fills his pockets with rocks and walks into the water. After an uneasy time, he pops up sputtering and climbs back on the shore. He changes clothes and goes for his interview at an avant-garde magazine and makes a good start. He has impressive writing credits.

Asked for his critique of the magazine, he is pithy and sounds on the money. The editor is friendly and open. Then he questions a gap of some years in Anders' resume, and Anders accounts for it: drug addiction.



Anders Danielsen Lie (Anders) and Ingrid Olava (Rebecca) share a moment in “Oslo, August 31st.”

Cocaine, heroin, whatever. He stands up and walks out of the room.

This is a turning point. Anders cannot be the first addict the editor has ever met or perhaps even hired. It is Anders himself who terminates the meeting, in anger or despair. He walks through the lonely summer streets, makes calls to a former

girlfriend who doesn't pick up, meets an old friend named Thomas (Hans Olav Brenner) for coffee. They sit on a bench overlooking the city and have a casual but actually intense conversation. Thomas is more worried than he will say. Anders has greater reasons to worry than he will admit.

He has been clean and sober for something like a year. In rehab, he will have been told they aren't the same thing. It is one thing to be drug and alcohol free and another thing to be sober. Anders is on very thin ice.

“Oslo, August 31st” is quietly, profoundly, one of the most observant and sympathetic films I've seen. Director Joachim Trier and actor Anders Danielsen Lie, working together for the second time, understand something fundamental about their character. He believes the ship has sailed without him. He screwed up. He lost years in addiction and recovery. Life has moved on. His old friends like

Thomas have stayed on board the ship, and Anders feels adrift. Even the much-loved city that surrounds him is an affront, a reminder of the days not lived, the experiences missed. How can he begin again? Above all, Anders is angry with himself and in despair, although he's so inward as he tries to conceal that.

He used drugs again and again and again until there was nothing else left for him to do. Even today he could easily use drugs and feel whatever it was that he felt. But we sense he's stranded. He can't go back and he can't go forward.

As evening comes, he falls into a pattern that must have been routine for him in the old days. He wanders into a club. He goes to a party. Someone hands him a glass of wine, and he drinks it. This decision doesn't surprise him. It was written in some kind of inevitable script he has been following all day. That's what they mean when they say you



Anders Danielsen Lie in a scene from “Oslo, August 31st.”



FRIDAY 1 p.m.

*There can come a point in life when you swim so far away from the shore **that it is too late to turn back.***

can be dry but not sober.

He meets a nice girl, Rebecca, at the party. She knows nothing of his past. She likes him. She invites him to come along with some friends, and on one of those bright Nordic mornings, they go skinny-dipping in a pool. All but Anders, who smiles and nods but doesn't jump in. He knows what will happen before long. He knows the script.

What a sad, true film. How knowledgeable. He could continue with Rebecca (Ingrid Olava), but how would she deal with his missing years? More to

the point, how would he? There can come a point in life when you swim so far away from the shore that it is too late to turn back.

I know what he should do. He should leave Oslo, even Norway. With the English that all Norwegians speak, he could live anywhere. He could take any kind of a job, no matter what, and cast his past adrift. His memories of Oslo only inspire regrets. His old friendships are all over. Day after day, he could rebuild his interest in things. The drugs haven't destroyed his



Joachim Trier, writer and director of "Oslo, August 31st" is one of this year's Festival guests.

body but they have taken away his hope. He could walk and walk and walk, and one day even pick up a book or go to a movie. But Anders has no faith in a new beginning. The last sound we hear from him is a sigh.

CAST AND CREDITS

OSLO, AUGUST 31st
(2011) Not Rated

Written and directed by
Joachim Trier

Cast:
Anders Danielsen Lie as Anders
Hans Olav Brenner as Thomas
Ingrid Olava as Rebecca

Running time: 95 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Strand Releasing**

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The Ballad of Narayama

Matter-of-fact narrative tells heartbreaking tale of cruelty

By Roger Ebert

“**T**he Ballad of Narayama” is a Japanese film of great beauty and elegant artifice, telling a story of startling cruelty. What a space it opens up between its origins in the kabuki style and its subject of starvation in a mountain village! The village enforces a tradition of carrying those who have reached the age of 70 up the side of mountain and abandoning them there to die of exposure.

Keisuke Kinoshita’s 1958 film tells its story with deliberate artifice, using an elaborate set with a path beside a bubbling brook, matte paintings for the backgrounds, mist on dewy evenings, and lighting that drops the backgrounds to black at dramatic moments and then brings up realistic lighting again. Some of its exteriors use black foregrounds and bloody red skies; others use grays and blues. As in



Keisuke Kinoshita’s visually remarkable “The Ballad of Narayama” was filmed almost entirely on studio sets. Inspired by kabuki theater, the director intentionally created an air of stagelike artifice. Designed by Kisaku Ito and Chiyoo Umeda.

kabuki theater, there is a black-clad narrator to tell us what’s happening.

This artifice supports a story that contains great emotional charge. Kinuyo Tanaka plays Orin, a 70-year-old widow whose

resignation in the face of her traditional fate is in stark contrast with the behavior of her neighbor Mata (Seiji Miyaguchi), who protests violently against his destiny. Their family attitudes are similarly opposed; while Orin’s

son Tatsuhei (Teiji Takahashi) loves his mother and doesn’t have any desire to carry her up the mountainside, Mata’s family has already cut off his food, and he wanders the village as a desperate scavenger; Orin invites him in and



A still from the film “The Ballad of Narayama.”



FRIDAY 4 p.m.

CAST AND CREDITS

THE BALLAD OF NARAYAMA (1958) Not rated

Directed by **Keisuke Kinoshita**

Written by

Shichirō Fukazawa (stories)

Keisuke Kinoshita (writer)

Cast:

Kinuyo Tanaka as Orin

Teiji Takahashi as Tatsuhei

Yūko Mochizuki as Tamayan

Danshi Ichikawa as Kesakichi

Seiji Miyaguchi as Mata

Running time: 98 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Shochiku Films & Janus Films**

He made dramas, thrillers, musicals, anything, but [Keisuke Kinoshita] never made another film like "The Ballad of Narayama."

In its matter-of-fact juxtaposition of fate and art, it leaves an indelible impression.

offers him a bowl of rice, which he gobbles hungrily.

In contrast with her resignation and her son's reluctance to carry out her sentence, Orin's vile grandson Kesakichi (Danshi Ichikawa) can't wait to be done with the old woman, and begins singing a song mocking the fact that she retains, at 70, all 33 of her original teeth. This is taken up by the villagers, who materialize as a vindictive chorus, their song implying she kept her teeth because of a deal with demons. Eager to qualify for her doom, Orin bites down hard on a stone and when they see her again her mouth reveals bloody stumps.

This harsh imagery contrasts with the way the film is structured around song and dance. Although presented in the kabuki style, it isn't based on an actual kabuki play but on a novel. Kinoshita is correct, I believe, in presenting his story in this stylized way; his form allows it to become more fable than narrative, and thus more bearable.

His sets and backdrops reflect the changing seasons with lush beauty: Spring, summer, the red leaves of autumn, then the wintry snows on the slopes of Narayama. On the mountaintop, blackbirds perch on snowy crags as the camera uses lateral moves to sweep across the desolate landscape. Finally depositing his mother in an empty place on the mountain, Tatsuhei greets the snow with relief: She will freeze more quickly. This he can sing only to himself, because

the journey up the mountain has three strict rules: (1) you must not talk after starting up Narayama; (2) be sure no one sees you leave in the morning; (3) never lookback. His adherence is in contrast with the adventures of the fearful neighbor Mata, who appears soon after bound head and foot, dragged protesting by his son ("Don't do this!").

Orin's goodness and resignation are at the center of the story. In particular, notice her kind welcome for Tama (Yuko Mochizuki), a 40-year-old widow she has decided will be the ideal new wife for her widower son. Known for her ability to catch trout when no one else can, she leads Tama through the forest on a foggy night and reveals a secret place beneath a rock in the brook where a trout is always to be found. This secret was never revealed to her first daughter-in-law. She even wants to die before her first grandchild arrives. She wants to rid the village from a hungry mouth.

Some will find Orin's behavior strange. So it is. Perhaps, in the years soon after World War II, she is intended in praise of the Japanese ability to present acceptance in the face of the appalling. You can attach any set of parallels to Kinoshita's parable and make them work, but that seems to fit.

Kinoshita (1912-1998) is of the same generation as Akira Kurosawa. Saying that ideas sprang quickly into his mind, he moved between periods and

genres, and made 42 films in the first 23 years of his career. He was immediately attracted to motion pictures; a film was shot in his hometown when he was in high school and he ran away to a studio in Kyoto. His family made him return home, but later dropped its opposition to his career plans. Without a college education, he started humbly as a set photographer, and worked his way up, sending in one screenplay after another to the studio chief.

He made dramas, thrillers, musicals, anything, but he never made another film like "The Ballad of Narayama." In its matter-of-fact juxtaposition of fate and art, it leaves an indelible impression. Tatsuhei's second bride Tama tells him: "When we turn 70, we'll go together up Narayama."

"The Ballad of Narayama" is a new DVD release in the Criterion Collection. Thanks to Wikipedia for some of the research in this article.



A still from the film "The Ballad of Narayama."

Julia

A new side to the ever-fascinating Tilda Swinton

By Roger Ebert, July 1, 2009

Tilda Swinton is fearless. She'll take on any role without her ego, paycheck, vanity or career path playing a part. All that matters, apparently, is whether the movie interests her, and whether she thinks she can do something interesting with the role. She almost always can. She hasn't often been more fascinating than in "Julia," a nerve-wracking thriller with a twisty plot and startling realism.

We have not seen this Tilda before — but then, we haven't seen most of the Tildas before. This one is an alcoholic slut who lacks what we are pleased to call normal feminine emotions. She's just been fired from another job. Her pattern is to get sloppy drunk every night and drag a strange man to bed. She needs money. Her neighbor Elena (Kate del Castillo) comes to her with an offer. Her young son is now living with his millionaire grandfather, who won't allow her to see him. She needs somebody to help her kidnap the child.

This is the beginning of Julia's nightmare journey through a thorny thicket of people you do not want to meet. If there's one thing that's consistent about her behavior, it's how she lies to all of them. This is not one of those tough heroines you sort of like. You don't like her. She makes not the slightest effort to be liked. She doesn't give a damn.



Tilda Swinton, star of "Julia," is one of this year's Festival guests.

Photo courtesy of Brigitte Lacombe

She cuts back on the drinking, however, perhaps because she is constantly fleeing — both away from, and toward.

You have to give a lot of credit to Erick Zonca, the 53-year-old French director who co-wrote the film with Aude Py. He makes it move relentlessly. He skillfully buries it in seedy American and Mexican locations that never, ever, feel like sets. He uses a child actor and uses him well. He makes no attempt to sentimentalize the kid, who is spoiled

and hostile. He puts Swinton at the center of this, and she plays Julia as a tough broad who is in way over her head, and desperately invents stories to mislead those who want the money involved — which starts out at \$50,000 before she cheats her way up to \$2 million.

The plot of "Julia," with its twists and turns and surprises and rotten luck, is, shall we say, not very plausible. I believed it. That's because everything that happens seems inevitable, not contrived — the inescapable outcome of what has gone before, growing out of the greed and evil of the characters, which Julia, who is herself greedy and evil, is blindsided by. I could summarize the plot for you in one sentence, but I don't think I will, and when you see the film,

you will understand why.

Do we hate this woman Julia? When you see how she treats the boy Tom (Aidan Gould), we want to, except that she's all that stands between Tom and much worse things, including death. No matter what her motives for keeping him alive, there comes a moment when she shields him with her body from a man with a gun, and an utterly amoral woman would have made a deal.

Oh, she offers lots of deals. She's not to be trusted. There are times here when only her quick powers of invention keep her and the boy alive, and Swinton does a magnificent job with a tough acting challenge: letting us see how desperate she is without another character being able to tell. This movie lives on the edge all the way through, right up

Tilda Swinton is fearless. She'll take on any role without her ego, paycheck, vanity or career path playing a part.



FRIDAY 8:30 p.m.

CAST AND CREDITS

JULIA

(2008) Rated R

Directed by **Erick Zonca**

Written by **Aude Py** and

Erick Zonca

Cast:

Tilda Swinton as Julia

Saul Rubinek as Mitch

Aidan Gould as Tom

Kate del Castillo as Elena

Bruno Bichir as Diego

Running time: 140 minutes

Print Courtesy:

Magnolia Pictures



Tilda Swinton stars as Julia in "Julia."

***This one is an alcoholic slut
who lacks what we are pleased to
call normal feminine emotions.***

until an astonishing final scene on the median strip of a super-highway. What she does then shows that she's a better woman than she was when she started out, but you can't call it a false happy ending, because it's more wrung out than happy, and, after all, what choice did she have?

"Julia" should have a big ad campaign and be making a lot of noise, stirring up word-of-mouth. It's being treated as an art film.

It's good enough to be an art film, but don't let anyone pigeon-hole it for you. It's one doozy of a great thriller. And the acting here is as good as it gets — not just from Swinton, but from Saul Rubinek as her one remaining friend, and by Bruno Bichir as Diego, who she meets in Tijuana. You want to be careful who you meet in Tijuana.

Swinton here is amazing. She goes for broke and wins big time.

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Nathan Lerner, *Light Experiment, Wooden Dowels* (detail), 1939. Silver gelatin print
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SATURDAY 11 a.m.

Blancanieves

Film screening sponsored by: Steak 'n Shake

Film quietly proves excitement of silent films

By Roger Ebert

It's too soon to declare a trend, but a new silent film once again seems likely to become a success in the fall movie season. "Blancanieves," a striking new Spanish feature, premieres here Monday at the Toronto Film Festival. Although the story draws on the Brothers Grimm and the legend of Snow White, it is anything but a children's film. It is a full-bodied, visually stunning silent film of the sort that might have been made by the greatest directors of the 1920s, if such details as the kinky sadomasochism of the Evil Stepmother could have been slipped past the censors.

The delightful "The Artist," which slipped away with 2011's Academy Award for best picture, cheated a little by having tongue-in-cheek fun with its silence, and even allowing a few words to sneak in. Pablo Berger's "Blancanieves" exploits the silent medium for its strengths, including the fact that it can so easily deal with fantasy. This is as exciting, in many of the same ways, as the greatest traditional silent masterpieces. It's a Spanish film, but of course silent films speak an international language.

The story opens with a famous matador, Antonio Villalta, who is filled with swaggering ego.

The silents offer experiences and dimensions different from talking pictures.



A still scene photo from "Blancanieves," the word for Snow White in Spanish.

All goes wrong for him. He is paralyzed in the ring, and his beloved wife dies in childbirth. Their daughter, Carmen, is raised by her grandmother until Antonio unwisely marries the heartless Encarna, who wants only his money, ignores him in a wheelchair in his room, and adopts Carmen only to give her a room in the barn and put her to work at hard labor. Encarna, meanwhile, dominates her male assistant in classic boot-and-whip style, and Carmen is able to sneak into the mansion and bond lovingly with her father.

Carmen is forced to escape, wanders in the forest, and is discovered by a troupe of dwarves who travel between cities staging bullfights. They name her Blancanieves, Spanish for Snow White. When one of them is wounded during a fight, she leaps into the ring and distracts the bull, using matador skills she learned from her father. Eventually she, too, becomes a famed matador.

This film is a wonderment, urged along by a full-throated

romantic score. Blancanieves is performed lovably by the angelic Sofia Oria when she is a child, and as an adult Macarena García. As with "The Artist," I believe audiences will discover they like silent films more than they think they do. The silents offer experi-

ences and dimensions different from talking pictures. I believe "Blancanieves" has a fair shot at the festival's all-important Audience Award.

The film doesn't yet have an American release date.



Pablo Berger, director, and Maribel Verdu, actress, in "Blancanieves."

CAST AND CREDITS

BLANCANIEVES
(2012) Rated PG-13

Written and directed by
Pablo Berger

Cast:
Maribel Verdu as Encarna
Daniel Giménez Cacho as Antonio Villalta
Sofia Oria as Young Carmen
Macarena García as Adult Carmen

Running time: 104 minutes

Print Courtesy:
Cohen Media Group

Kumaré

Depicting the ‘real’ gurus of Hindi beliefs

By Roger Ebert

Growing up in New Jersey, Vikram Gandhi was a typical American kid who resented the way his family tried to enforce Hindu beliefs and practices. He found it ironic that Americans began to popularize gurus and yoga just at the time he was growing away from such things. On a trip to India, he says, he found that “real” gurus were no more real than the American frauds who copied them.

That led him into the deliberate deception that he filmed in “Kumaré.” He grew a long beard and a pony-tail, exchanged his shoes for sandals, switched his slacks and suits to flowing orange robes, and started carrying an ornate walking stick. Then he moved to Arizona, hired an expert to teach him yoga and a PR woman to promote him as a guru, and began to attract followers in meetings at shopping malls, community centers and around the swimming pools of his affluent clients. His accent was modeled on the way his grandmother spoke English. His teachings were deliberate gibberish: talk of inner blue lights, “finding the guru within,” and chants of fabricated mantras.

At this point in the film, it takes an odd turn. Kumaré’s followers believe him without question. They share their deepest secrets with him and visibly appear to benefit from him. These people are not dummies. Mostly middle-aged, they take their



Vikram Gandhi, the director of “Kumaré” is one of this year’s Festival guests.

health seriously, are somewhat skilled at yoga and follow schedules of meditation. “Kumaré” seems to establish that a guru can be a complete fraud and nevertheless do a certain amount of good, because what matters is not the sincerity of the guru but

that of his followers.

Gandhi seems typecast for the role of Kumaré. Tall, thin, bending forward to listen better, he speaks warmly and encouragingly, and makes deep eye contact. He smiles easily. He never pushes too far. He seems as real as any guru and more real than some. His teaching of yoga seems within the ability of his followers to accomplish. He narrates the documentary (in an ordinary American voice), introduces us to followers he’s grown close to, and begins to believe he may

have started something that was out of his control.

He tells his followers the time has come for him to leave them. Now they are on their own. He returns to New Jersey, cuts his hair, shaves his beard, and begins to practice a speech in the mirror: “I am not who you think I am.” Whether he ever says this, and how the movie ends, I will leave for you to discover.

It seems to me that “Kumaré” reflects a truth that is often expressed in three words: “Act as if.” If you can act as if some-

It seems to me that “Kumaré” reflects a truth that is often expressed in three words: “Act as if.”



SATURDAY 2 p.m.

thing is true, in a sense that makes it true. It doesn't matter if a teacher's spiritual teachings have any basis. It doesn't matter if the supernatural even exists (Gandhi believes it does not). His followers benefit by acting "as if."

When I first heard this film described, I assumed it would be a satirical, snarky comedy like Sacha Baron Cohen's "Borat." Not so. Gandhi seems to be essentially a good man, and he learns things of value to himself in his experiment. In a sense, the deception he practices on his followers is contemptible, but in another sense, they're all in it together. The film's implication seems to be: It doesn't matter if a religion's teachings are true. What matters is if you think they are.

The film's implication seems to be: It doesn't matter if a religion's teachings are true. What matters is if you think they are.



Stephen Feder, executive producer of "Kumaré" is one of the Festival guests.

CAST AND CREDITS

KUMARÉ

(2011) Not rated

Directed by **Vikram Gandhi**
Executive Producer **Stephen Feder**

Cast:

Vikram Gandhi as himself
Purva Bedi as herself
Kristin Calgaro as herself

Running time: 86 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Kino Lorber**



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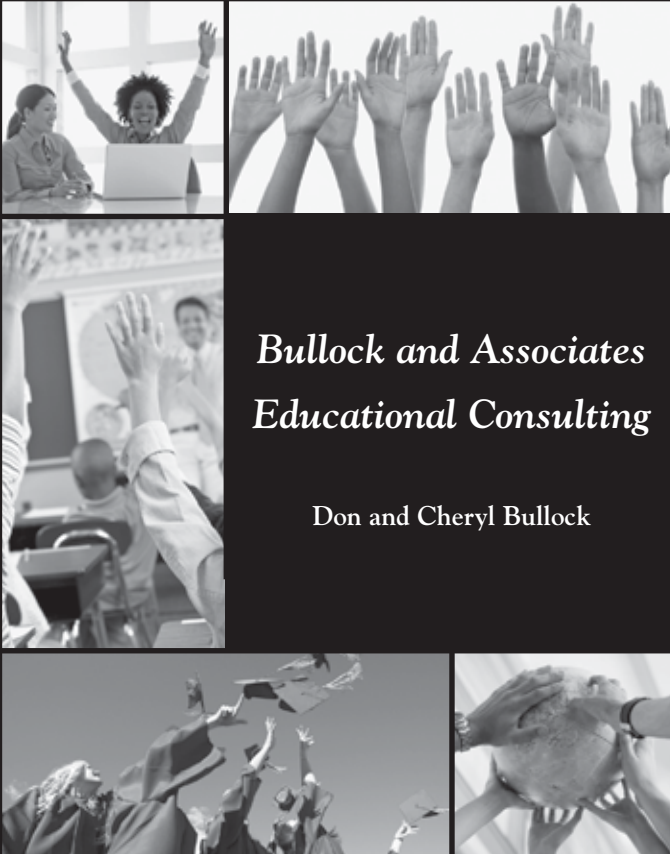
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Escape From Tomorrow

Journey to the dark underside of the happiest place on earth

By Michał Oleszczyk

The Disney mystique is a secular religion so global, powerful and self-contained — not to mention litigious — that it practically courts desecration. Randy Moore's "Escape from Tomorrow," which just premiered at Sundance and is unlikely to come to a theater near you any time soon, is the boldest act of cinematic violation at least since the "Mickey Mouse Club" finale of Stanley Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket" (in which scores of American soldiers in Vietnam adopted the show's anthem as a deranged battle cry).

Shot guerilla-style almost entirely at Disney World in Florida, Moore's film offers an immersion into the alternative reality of constant amusement. Having visited Disney World myself a mere week before arriving in Park City, I was struck by how astutely the director rendered the sheer strangeness of the place. From the opening shots of Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, scored to sweeping, melancholy music, the film sets to render the ubiquitous "magic" unfamiliar and weird — and it certainly helps that it's shot in black and white,



Danielle Safady and Annet Mahendru in a scene of "Escape from Tomorrow."

with many instances of quaint rear projection.

Taking its cue from the ultimate Disney promise of "dreams coming true," the film then becomes a realization of a parental nightmare. As the freshly laid-off Jim (Ray Abramoohn) takes his wife and kids for a theme park weekend, the world (or World)

around him starts to disintegrate. Obsessed with a couple of sexy French tourists (or are they "cast members"?), Jim gets caught up in the dark underside of the surrounding kingdom. The repressed returns, with a vengeance: the Epcot dome blows up, fairies turn into whores, and as Jim is soarin' along with the park's most spectacular ride, shots of naked babes get superimposed over luscious California vistas.

Whatever its shortcomings (and it could use some condensing), one simply has to admire

the film's effrontery. Unlike Jia Zhang Ke's "The World," which turned a Beijing theme park into a hollow setting of everyday sadness, "Escape from Tomorrow" is a fun paranoia ride, shot in a style reminiscent of Tom Schiller's long-shelved "Nothing Lasts Forever" (and quite likely to share its fate). It's too early to say, given all the positive buzz at Sundance, but it seems no movie that uses a miniature Epcot dome as an interrogation device (nor one that equals Disney enchantment with a bad case of cat flu) can get a pass from Tinker Bell.



Roy Abramoohn cringes in a scene in "Escape From Tomorrow."

"You can't be happy all the time,"
says a Lucifer-like rebellious princess after
inadvertently hugging a tot to death.



SATURDAY 5 p.m.

Given Disney's stress on happiness and smile, this may be Moore's ultimate, unforgivable heresy.

Ultimately, the film is about the terror of ubiquitous entertainment. "You can't be happy all the time," says a Lucifer-like rebellious princess after inadvertently hugging a tot to death. Given Disney's stress on happiness and smile, this may be Moore's ultimate, unforgivable heresy. Whoever visited the Great Laughing Place (as Uncle Remus would have called it), can testify to a strange phenomenon: as much fun as it is, whenever Disney magic

breaks and glitches, it quickly becomes unbearable.

When Odie Henderson and me — my Disney World companion and enabler, not to mention excellent contributor to this website — got stuck in the middle of Toy Story Midway Mania!, the looped synthesized version of "You've Got a Friend in Me" and Woody's placating message got under our skin in a matter of minutes. By the end of the ride we were tempted to shout back at the



Roy Abramsohn stars as Jim in "Escape from Tomorrow." He is one of this year's Festival guests.

song: "The hell you do!" It's around that rebellious impulse that "Escape from Tomorrow" has been constructed.

CAST AND CREDITS

ESCAPE FROM TOMORROW

(2013) Not Yet Rated

Written and directed by
Randy Moore

Cast:

Roy Abramsohn as Jim
Elena Schuber as Emily
Danielle Safady as Sophie
Annet Mahendru as Isabelle

Running time: 103 minutes

Print Courtesy:
Mankurt Media LLC

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The Spectacular Now



Shailene Woodley and Miles Teller star in *"The Spectacular Now."* Woodley is one of this year's Festival guests.

Photo courtesy of Wilford Harewood

Brimming with real characters, 'The Spectacular Now' shines

By Roger Ebert

Here is a lovely film about two high school seniors who look, speak and feel like real 18-year-old middle-American human beings. Do you have any idea how rare that is? They aren't crippled by irony. They aren't speeded up into cartoons. Their sex lives aren't insulted by scenes that treat them cheaply. The story requires them to make love, but it doesn't insist we see her tits. Sutter and Aimee are smart, but they make dumb mistakes. They're more confident on the outside than on the inside. They're very serious about life, although Sutter, the boy, makes an effort to conceal that.

He lives with his mom. His dad isn't in the picture. Sutter has a little buzz on most of the time, carrying a monogrammed flask to spike his fast-food sodas. He drives while drinking. One morning he's sprawled on the lawn of a house he's never seen before.

That's the Meet Cute. He's awak-

ened by Aimee (Shailene Woodley), who says he'd never recognize her from their school. They start talking, and stroll through a wooded area nearby. Bird song. Sun through the leaves. It's one of those time-outs licensed by youth, where there doesn't have to be a reason: They're young, they're awake, he's so hung over he goes into one of those fuzzy trances that run on fumes.

This is a conversation that will continue in one way or another for the whole film. Emotionally it begins at zero and arrives at 60, with some negative numbers along the way, but Sutter wouldn't know that; he wants her to help with his geometry homework. Geometry, the most entertaining branch of math, and the most advanced one I ever mastered. Would you believe I was online the other day, looking for the sophomore geometry textbook I had at Urbana High? I had this goofy notion to get a protractor,

a mechanical pencil and a plastic triangle working through some proofs. More fun than a crossword puzzle.

Sutter isn't looking for a girlfriend. Aimee has never had a boyfriend. Sutter got so really drunk after splitting up with Cassidy (Brie Larson). She's not one of your bitch queens you so often see as the Other Woman in teenager movies. Can she tell there's no future with Sutter as long as he keeps on drinking like this? His teacher (Andre Royko) has the same thoughts. Sutter is screwing up just when he should be filling out an application for college. Sutter and the teacher, who can't be 10 years older than Sutter, have a serious sit-down after class. The teacher asks Sutter how he expects to get what he deserves out of life. "Have you?" Sutter asks him.

The movie's first hour continues on a, I dunno, realistic or naturalistic tone. It makes no point of

it. It just looks at these two. They get to enjoy hanging out, and although Sutter says he has no intention of getting serious with Aimee and the friend says he has his back, damned if he doesn't ask her to the Prom. It's not even that they fall in love; they just intensely enjoy one another's company.

When they make love the scene is handled perfectly by the director, James Ponsoldt. Neither is a virgin, neither is experienced. They perform the task seriously and with care, Aimee hands Sutter a condom and he puts in on and enters her carefully and they look solemnly into each other's eyes. None of that wild thrashing about that embarrasses older actors, who doth protest too much.

They reach that intent state where they want to help each other. She wants her mother to give her more freedom. He says he lied when he told her his dad was a pilot. Actually, his dad walked



SATURDAY 9 p.m.

CAST AND CREDITS

THE SPECTACULAR NOW
(2013) Not rated

Directed by **James Ponsoldt**
Story by **Tim Tharp**
Screenplay by **Scott Neustadter**
and **Michael H. Weber**

Cast:

Miles Teller as Sutter Keely
Shailene Woodley as Aimee
Finicky
Mary Elizabeth Winstead as
Holly Keely
Brie Larson as Cassidy
Kyle Chandler as Mr. Keely

Running time: 95 minutes

Print Courtesy: A24 Films

*What an affecting film this is. It respects its characters and doesn't use them for its own shabby purposes. **How deeply we care about them.** Miles Teller and Shailene Woodley are so there.*



James Ponsoldt, director of "The Spectacular Now."

out. His older sister has the phone number, now revealed to him. Sutter makes her promise to stand up to her mom. Aimee makes him promise to get the number from his sister and call it.

Now comes the place the movie was building toward all of his time. Not a "climax," nothing real exciting, only an experience that helps explain Sutter's life up until now, and points toward his future. He takes her along to

meet his dad (Kyle Chandler). A lot of the meaning here is in long shots. Sutter says the hell with it. Insults Aimee.

What an affecting film this is. It respects its characters and doesn't use them for its own shabby purposes. How deeply we care about them. Miles Teller and Shailene Woodley are so *there*. Being young is a solemn business when you really care about someone. Teller has a touch of John

Cusack in his "Say Anything" period. Woodley is beautiful in a real person sort of way, studying him with concern, and then that warm smile. We have gone through senior year with these two. We have known them. We have been them.



Shailene Woodlaey and Miles Teller get close in a scene of "The Spectacular Now."

Photo courtesy of Wilford Harewood

Not Yet Begun to Fight

The therapy of catch and release

By Omer M. Mozaffar

Marine Colonel Eric Hastings, a quiet man of wide smile and thin hair, stands knee-deep in a whispering river, several decades and thousands of miles removed from the brutal chaos of the Vietnam war. As head of the group “Warriors and Quiet Waters,” he now brings damaged young veterans of more recent conflicts to his Montana ranch in hopes that the tranquility of fly-fishing will help relieve their stress disorders. In this touching documentary, the wounds of the past are soothed by flowing waters.

These are men of broken body. Until the camera moves, we would not know, because they seem frank and reflective, with no indication of damage. But, almost every participant is missing an eye, or leg, or more. Then, as they speak, we notice some awkwardness in their conversation. Some remember the blasts that shattered them. Others remember

their hospital beds. One paraplegic warrior, in a deadpan tone, narrates a list of his injuries, seen in jump-cuts. A Navy SEAL with steel eyes speaks through his iPad’s computer voice, typing long sentences with one finger. When he plays his message, he remains in a posture of meditation for long moments after his text runs out. As he silently struggles through frustrating rounds of rehabilitation, learning to walk with a prosthetic leg, we wonder how many stories his frozen expression hides. But he finds light in the support of his wife of seven months. There are, however, others whose afflictions are hidden from us. A reserved man in sunglasses and collared shirt looks like a forty-year-old employee of the ranch. But, he is only 28, former bomb technician who lived on adrenaline. When his trainer apologizes for touching him, we anticipate some serious revelations about his



Sabrina Lee, producer and co-director of “Not Yet Begun to Fight.”



Editor and co-director Shasta Grenier.

deep wounds. He compares his six-year Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to a leech that slowly crept up on him until it started biting. Now he keeps his distance from people, trying not to recall the vile, disgusting violence he associates with all humanity. At the ranch, he accepts that there are people in the world who do care for veterans like himself.

Soon, he is able to accept their hugs. These are men of broken soul. The hope of Quiet Waters is that the patient, careful fly-fishing repetitions will teach the vets new, healthy behaviors, dissolving away harmful old habits. But Colonel Hastings does not let them hang on to their conquests: When a soldier catches a fish, he can celebrate, but he has to return the creature to its waters. The point is, these fighters know bloodshed too well; now Hastings teaches them to value life itself. The quiet Montana sky, lush forests, and distant mountains also help. Nevertheless, those grins from catching fish are captivating and priceless. Movies often tell us about the camaraderie of soldiers. Here, despite their wounds, some of these soldiers long to return to service. One wounded warrior in eye-patch believes he is perfectly designed for deployment. He longs to return to Afghanistan. Another soldier feels himself responsible for his unit members’ deaths. Hastings explains that a person will not ever get past those feelings, and must learn to live despite them.



Navy SEAL Elliott Miller (retired) gets a casting lesson from guide Collin Brown.



SUNDAY Noon

CAST AND CREDITS

NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT (2012) Not Rated

Produced by **Sabrina Lee**
Co-directed by **Sabrina Lee**
and **Shasta Grenier**
Edited by **Shasta Grenier**
Director of Photography
Justin Lubke

Cast:

Navy SEAL Elliott Miller (ret.)
as himself
Sergeant Erik Goodge (ret.)
as himself
Colonel Eric Hastings (ret.)
as himself

Running time: 60 minutes

Print Courtesy: **Ultraviolet Projects & Story Road Films**



Sergeant Erik Goodge (retired) on the set of "Not Yet Begun to Fight."

And go fly-fishing. Perhaps fly-fishing gained most prominence in Robert Redford's "A River Runs Through It." While "Not Yet Begun to Fight" might lack the beautiful cinematography of that film, it still manages to capture the serene terrain above and below water. In Redford's film, the main character felt constrained by the forced precision of the process. Here, though, the goal is freedom from a deep prison. Running only an hour, this documentary is as emotionally heavy as almost anything twice as long. Watching the soldiers in life beyond the group, we feel joy learning of some of their successes, along with the pains of their disappointments. As we watch Colonel Hastings, we cannot help but feel for him. His eyes well as he sympathizes with these young men. Occasionally, he sheds tears of gratitude watching them accomplish their small, but meaningful victories. With the grace of a cellist, he swings his own fishing pole back and forth. He soon catches a fish with his bare hands, caresses its body and tail, and lets it swim away

*Until the camera moves, we would not know,
because they seem frank and reflective,
with no indication of damage.
But, almost every participant is
missing an eye, or leg, or more.*



Marine Colonel Eric Hastings (retired) fishes in a favorite spot on the Gallatin River.

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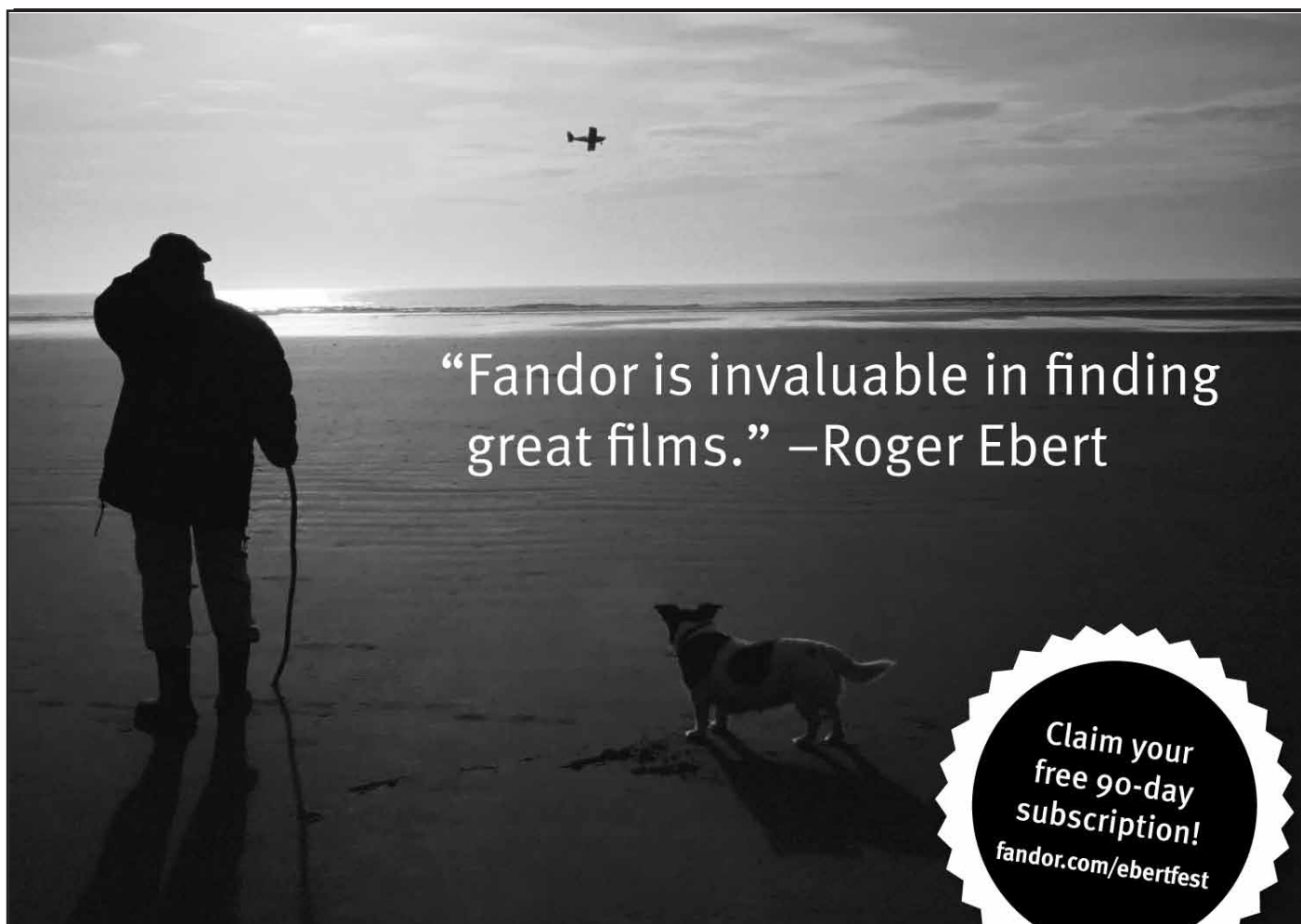
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In the spring of 2012, the Champaign Park District launched the largest renovation project yet for the Virginia Theatre since taking ownership of the historic facility in 2000. Major components of the current project include restoration of the auditorium paint and plasterwork, installation of an elevator to transport patrons between the main and mezzanine level lobbies, upgrades of the electrical and stage systems, replacement of the seats and complete renovation of the basement dressing rooms.

This is an enormous undertaking for the park district and like any project involving a building that is nearly 100 years old, there are often surprises. One of the nicest surprises was the discovery of 24k gold leaf around the proscenium that has now been restored. Another well kept secret of the Virginia's past was revealed while workers were cleaning and preparing the auditorium ceiling for painting. Their careful work around light fittings on each side of the dome exposed four canvases depicting coats of arms from Spain supported by two male figures. Each of the figures is holding a shield, adorned with different devices. In addition, we uncovered large areas of stenciled decoration around the dome, the ornamental plaster, the light fittings and the proscenium. This was truly a treasure uncovered.

At the Champaign Park District, we're making decisions every day for the Virginia that will reflect the quality of our previous efforts in her lobbies, concessions and other public spaces. We are confident that those who love and value Champaign's *great lady* will help support our efforts and will be thrilled by the results. Our commitment to restoring

this beloved facility is apparent to all who walk through her doors, and we pledge that same level of quality workmanship will continue with everything we do. Please go to www.champaignparkdistrict.com/foundation.htm and donate today so we can continue our efforts to ensure the Virginia Theatre remains a vital part of our community for generations to come.



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Champaign Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit providing philanthropic support for the Champaign Park District.

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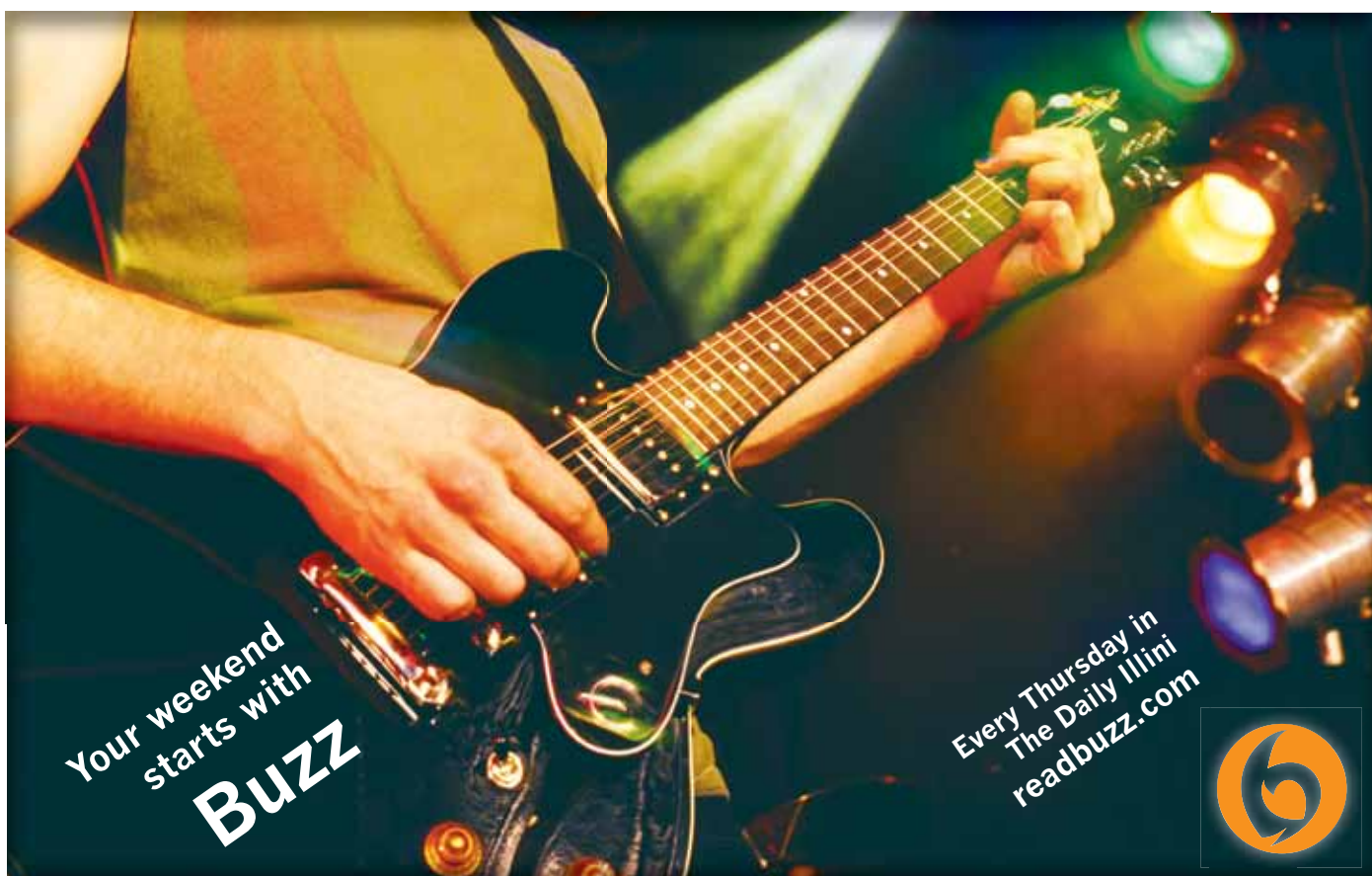
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Last year

A look back at the 2012 Festival

Photos courtesy of Thompson McClellan



Chaz introduces a film during the 2012 Festival.



Paul Cox on stage following the screening of "On Borrowed Time." The 2012 Festival was dedicated to Mr. Cox.



Chancellor Wise making remarks at the Opening Reception hosted by President and Mrs. Robert Easter.



Champaign Mayor Don Gerard presents Roger with a key to the city during the Opening Night Reception hosted by President and Mrs. Robert Easter.



Darren Dean, producer, Deatra Harris, co-producer, Ishmael Ntiabose and Alrick Brown, director, on stage after the screening of "Kinyarwanda."



Roger, Chaz and Michael Shannon, actor, in the Green Room during the 2012 Festival.



Michael Barker, Sony Pictures Classics distributor, Carolyn Briggs, writer, and Nell Minow, moderator, on stage after the screening of "Higher Ground."



Festival sponsors having a great time in the Green Room at the 2012 Ebertfest.



The marquee of The Virginia Theatre.



Omer Mozaffar moderating the Far Flung Correspondents panel discussion during the 2012 Ebertfest.



Alrick Brown, director, discussing "Kinyarwanda" with the audience at the 2012 Ebertfest.



Nate Kohn, Festival director, and guests from the movie "Patang" following the screening at the 2012 Festival.



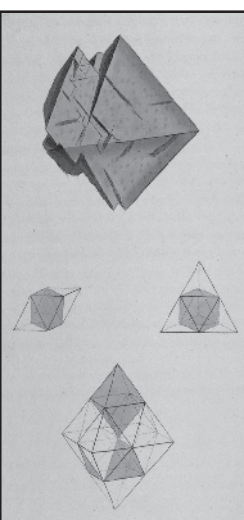
Michael Shannon, actor, Jeff Nichols, director, and Michael Barker, Sony Classics distributor, sharing a laugh on stage after the screening of "Take Shelter."



Ali LeRoi, comedian, and Raymond C. Lambert, producer, on stage following the screening of "Phunny Business."

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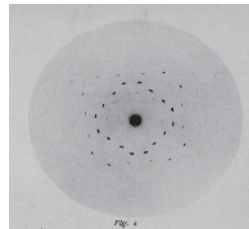
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Paul Cox
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Vikram Gandhi
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Shasta Grenier
Lily Huang
June Kim
Sophie Kohn
Kevin B. Lee
Sabrina Lee
Richard Linklater
Elliott Miller
Randy Moore
Omer Mozaffar
Sheila O'Malley
Michael Phillips
Eric Pierson
James Ponsoldt
Steve Prokopy
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Krishna Sheno
Trevor St. John
Matt Singer
Tilda Swinton
Joachim Trier
Gerardo Valero
Pablo Villaca
Grace Wang
Patrick Wang
Haskell Wexler
Shailene Woodley

FESTIVAL STAFF

Festival Programmer and Host
ROGER EBERT

Festival Director
Nate Kohn

Festival Producer and Co-Host
Chaz Ebert

Associate Festival Director
Mary Susan Britt

Conspirator in Chief
Lady Joan Cohl

The Master
Andrew Stengele

Director, Virginia Theatre
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Festival Program
Sammie Kiesel
The Daily Illini

VOLUNTEERS

Roger Ebert's Film Festival thanks all of its loyal and hard-working volunteers. Without you, the Festival would not be possible. We are deeply grateful for your dedication, time and commitment – not only during the Festival, but all year round.

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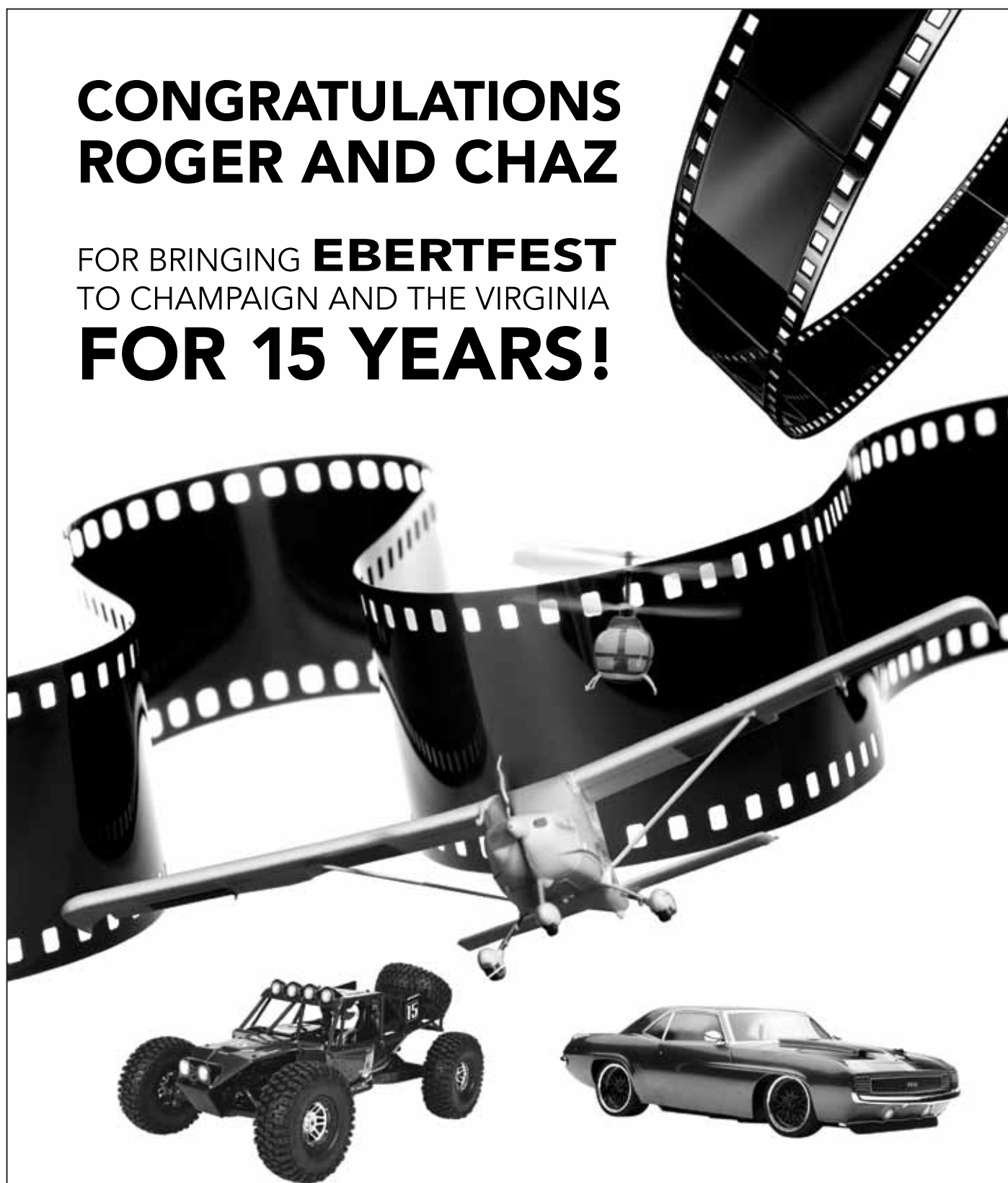
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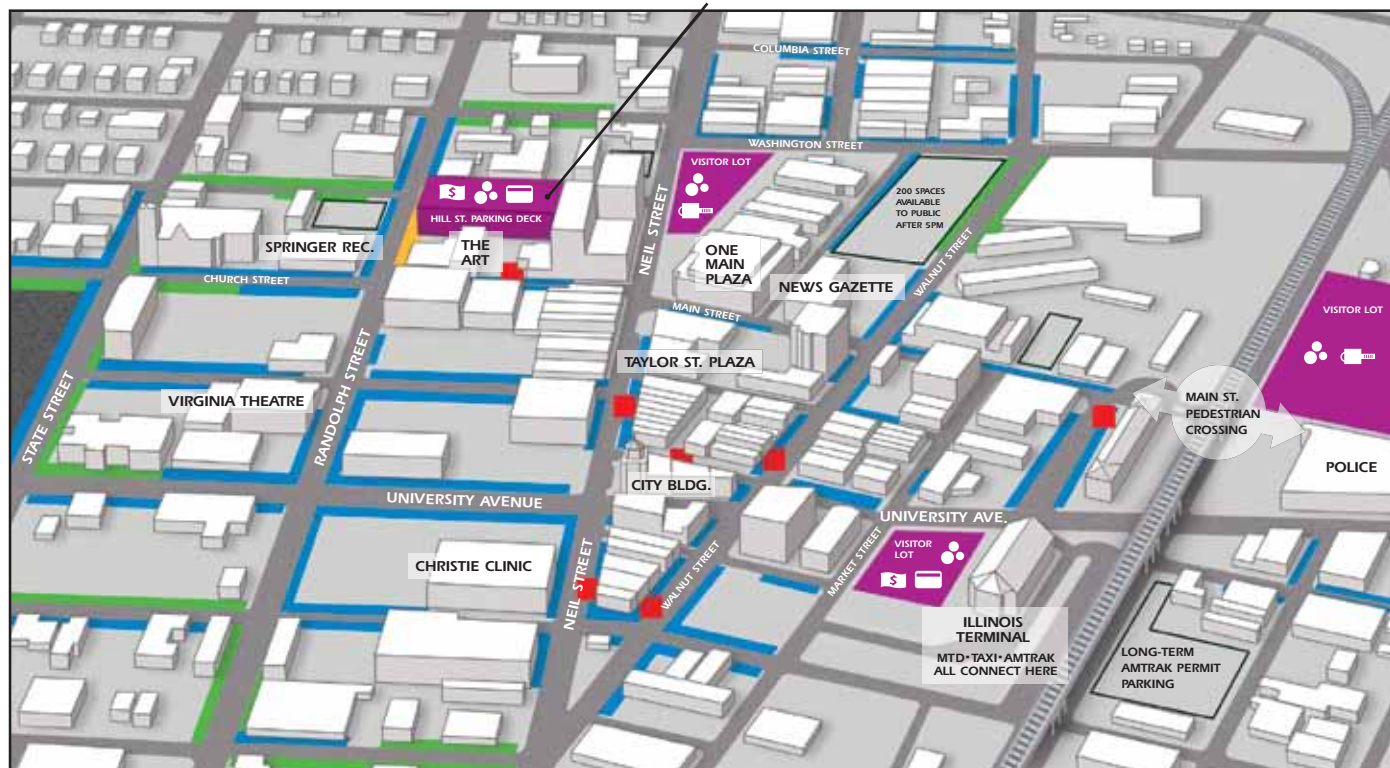
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Cinematographer honored at 15th Ebertfest

By Jeff Kirshman, Daily Illini staff writer

In Roger Ebert's 1997 review of the film "Days of Heaven," we learn that director Terrence Malick's complex love story between laborers in Texas had comparable drama away from the camera.

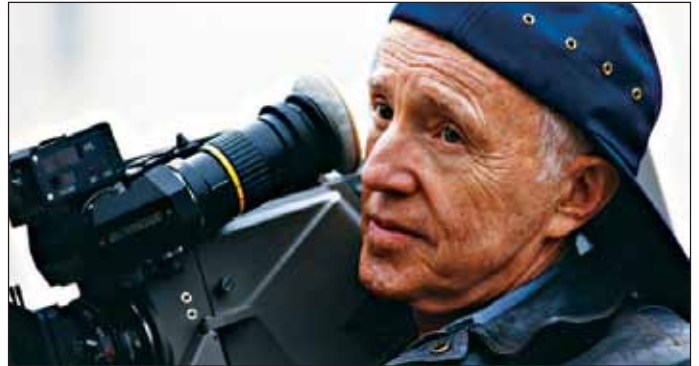
Nestor Almendros is credited for the film's cinematography that eventually earned him an Oscar® in 1978. Colleague Haskell Wexler, meanwhile, receives lesser credit at the end of the film despite stepping in when Almendros was losing his eyesight: "Additional photography by Haskell Wexler."

"That credit has always rankled (Wexler), and he once sent me a letter in which he described sitting in a theater with a stopwatch to prove that more than half of the footage was shot by him," Ebert writes in his review. "The reason he didn't get top billing is a story of personal and studio politics, but the fact remains that between them, these two great

cinematographers created a film whose look remains unmistakably in the memory."

Perhaps that possible slight is why, 35 years later after the film was released, Ebert has invited Wexler to be his guest at this year's Ebertfest, which will feature a 7 p.m. showing of "Days of Heaven" on April 17.

Wexler, 91, is one of the most revered cinematographers in the history of the medium. He is a two-time Academy Award®-winning cinematographer and was also named one of the top-10 most influential cinematographers of all-time, according to a survey of International Cinematographers Guild members. Wexler won his Oscars® for the films "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and "Bound for Glory," and he has received five total Oscar® nominations for his cinematography. Wexler was additionally selected for a Lifetime Achievement Award



Film industry veteran Haskell Wexler, winner of two Academy Awards®, is this year's Festival honoree. He was the director of photography of "Days of Heaven."

by the American Society of Cinematographers for his career that has spanned six decades.

"'Days of Heaven' is above all one of the most beautiful films ever made," Ebert continues in his review of the film. "Malick's purpose is not to tell a story of melodrama, but one of loss. His tone is elegiac. He evokes the

loneliness and beauty of the limitless Texas prairie."

"Days of Heaven" is slated to be the first film shown at Ebertfest, which runs from April 17-21 at the Virginia Theater. The film's run time is 95 minutes — and at least half of the cinematography may or may not be attributed to Wexler.

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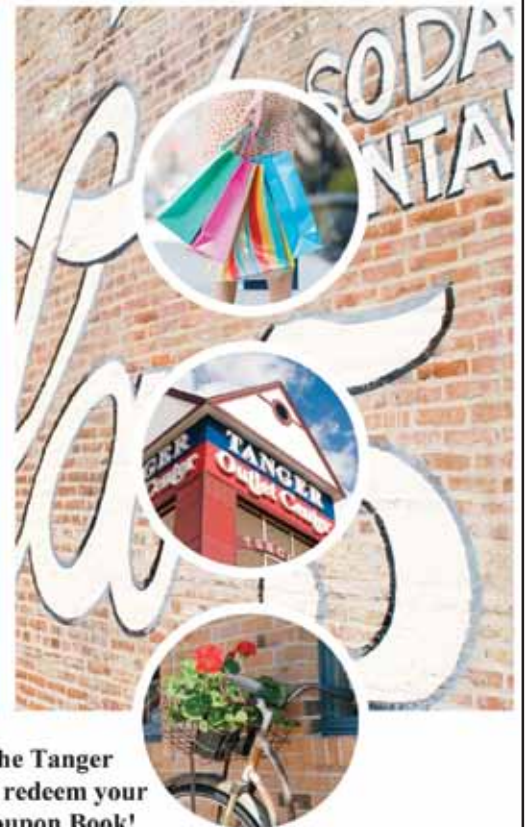
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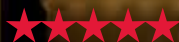
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