

The College of Media at Illinois presents

17th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival 2015

April 15-19, 2015



The Virginia Theatre
203 W. Park, Champaign

Special Support Provided by Champaign County Alliance for the Promotion of Acceptance, Inclusion, & Respect;
Steak 'n Shake; and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



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

Harold Ramis

1944 - 2014



"Honestly, Harold was a Renaissance man who enjoyed so many things, just like Roger. He was not only sweet but deeply intelligent and insightful and inquisitive. He had his feet on the ground the whole time, enjoying every minute of it."

- Erica Mann Ramis

Festival Schedule 2015

Film Screenings

Wednesday, April 15

7:00 p.m. *Goodbye to Language*

9:30 p.m. *Harold Ramis Tribute*

Thursday, April 16

1:00 p.m. *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch
Reflecting on Existence*

4:00 p.m. *Moving Midway*

8:30 p.m. *The End of the Tour*

Friday, April 17

1:00 p.m. *Girlhood*

4:00 p.m. *The Son of the Sheik*

8:30 p.m. *A Bronx Tale*

Saturday, April 18

11:00 a.m. *Wild Tales*

2:00 p.m. *Ida*

5:00 p.m. *The Motel Life*

9:00 p.m. *99 Homes*

Sunday, April 19

11:00 a.m. *Seymour: An Introduction*

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

For more information contact:
Mary Susan Britt
marsue@illinois.edu
217-244-0552
College of Media

Academic Panel Discussions

Illini Union

1401 W. Green Street, Urbana, IL

Free and open to the public

Thursday, April 16, 2015

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

*Challenging Stigma
Through the Arts*

Moderated by
Eric Pierson

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

*Ebert Center @ Illinois:
Storytelling Meets
Engineering*

Moderated by
Dean Jan Slater

Friday, April 17, 2015

Pine Lounge, 1st Floor

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

*Filmmaking in the
Digital Age*

Moderated by
Nate Kohn

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Critics Forum

Moderated by
Godfrey Cheshire

Live On-air Interview

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

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

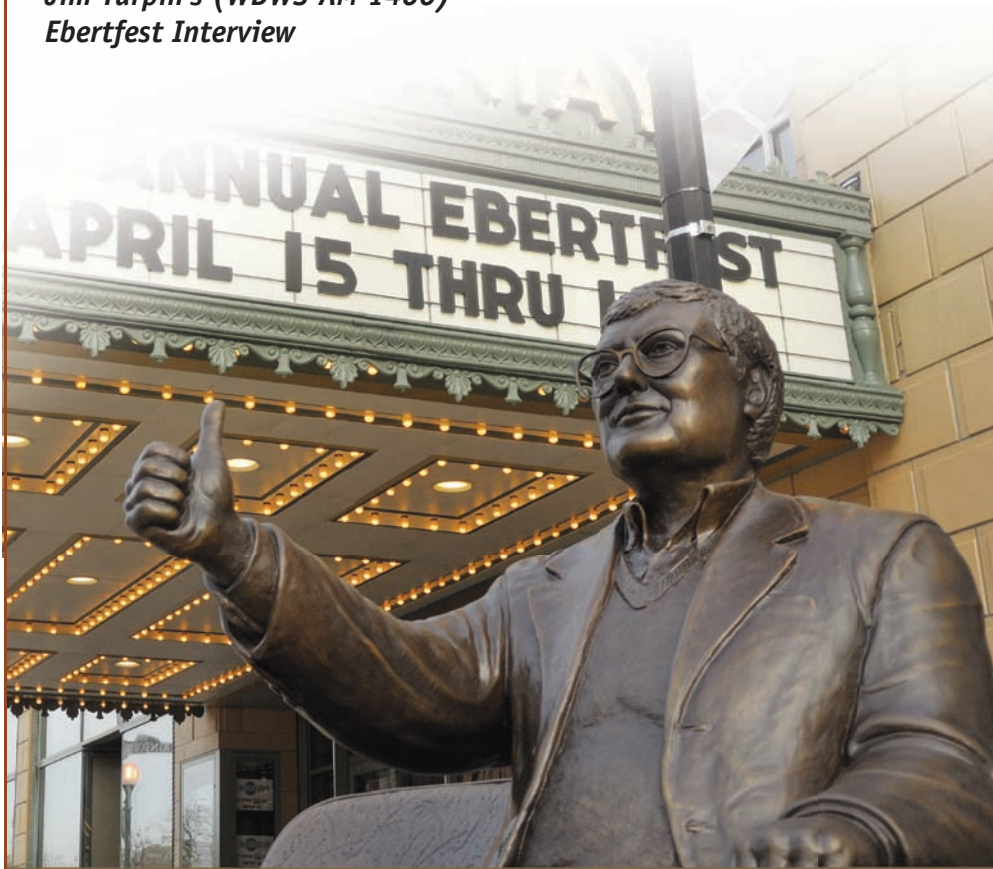


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The Daily Illini is
proud to produce
this Festival Program
each year.

We are honored to
call Roger Ebert one
of our own.

Roger Ebert, The Daily Illini editor-in-chief, 1963-64.



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Welcome to Ebertfest!

It is difficult for me to believe that it has been a year since our last Ebertfest. Memories of our 2014 festival are still so vivid in my mind. It feels like just yesterday Bill Nack was reciting Roger's favorite passage from "The Great Gatsby" onstage following the magical opening night screening of Steve James' "Life Itself." You could feel the silence in the room as audiences shared in the experiences of my dear husband's final days, while bursting out into uproarious laughter at his ageless wit and incomparable banter with his legendary sparring partner, Gene Siskel. It truly felt like a homecoming for us, screening the film for our ever-growing family at Ebertfest, and I carried those good memories with me for the rest of the year as I traveled the country promoting the film. It received a great many accolades along the way, yet none quite as poignant as the Golden Thumb.

Last year also saw the unveiling of Rick Carney's wonderful sculpture of Roger. Thank you to Donna and Scott Anderson for making this a reality. Although Roger would have been too modest to think he deserved a monument to himself, it just feels appropriate that the bronze figure of Roger now has a permanent home at Ebertfest's grand and grandly intimate venue, the Virginia Theatre, where it will give a hearty "Thumbs Up" to movie lovers for generations to come. It is especially touching for me to see Roger's likeness honored in this way, since it brings him full circle back to his alma mater, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which has done a superb job of hosting the festival, thanks to Dean Jan Slater and the College of Media.



Chaz Ebert, executive producer and host of Ebertfest

The rich smorgasbord of audience members—a mixture of filmmakers, journalists, students, Road Scholars and film buffs both local and from around the globe—that annually make their pilgrimage to the Virginia displays an enthusiasm, kindness and adventurous spirit unlike any I have witnessed at any other festival. Their participation in the post-film Q&As always leads to great conversations that are well worth sticking around to see. Who can forget how Patton Oswalt brought down the house last year with his uproarious quips and candid reflections on Jason Reitman's "Young

Adult?" Or how the audience rose to its feet for an emotional standing ovation celebrating the astonishing achievement of Haifaa Al-Mansour? Her debut feature, "Wadjda," was the first film ever to be shot in its entirety in Saudi Arabia, not to mention the first film helmed by a female Saudi director. The picture stands as unassailable proof that artistry can survive and flourish anywhere—even in a country lacking an industry to support it.

Ebertfest is proud to shine a light on movies that deserve to be rediscovered. That is why Roger included the word

Ebertfest is proud to shine a light on movies that deserve to be rediscovered. That is why Roger included the word "Overlooked" in the original title of the festival.

"Overlooked" in the original title of the festival. I am thrilled to welcome two Oscar nominees, actor/filmmaker Chazz Palminteri and producer Jon Kilik, to the festival for a screening of their 1993 film, "A Bronx Tale." Palminteri based the film's script on his semi-autobiographical play. Palminteri co-stars in the film along with Robert De Niro, who made his directorial debut with this picture. In his 4-star review, Roger wrote that the film "is filled with life and colorful characters and great lines of dialogue, and De Niro [...] finds the right notes as he moves from laughter to anger to tears." Another fine character study screening at the festival is 2013's "The Motel Life," pairing Stephen Dorff and Emile Hirsch as brothers on the run, also co-starring Dakota Fanning. We are pleased to have the director, Alan Polsky as a guest along with acclaimed actor Stephen Dorff. The co-director of the film, Gabe Polsky, is Alan's brother and directed the acclaimed documentary, "Red Army."

Several of the films screening this year, however, have yet to be seen by the vast majority of people in the U.S. As an attendee at Ebertfest, you will be among the lucky few to view them before everyone else. On the heels of gaining a well-deserved reputation as one of the hottest tickets on the festival circuit, James Ponsoldt's "The End of the Tour" will screen at Ebertfest. James will join us making this his second visit to Ebertfest following his celebrated appearance two years ago with actress Shailene Woodley for a screening of his riveting teen romance, "The Spectacular Now."

continued on page 6

Welcome to Ebertfest

continued from page 5

"The End of the Tour" features a richly anticipated performance by Jason Segel as David Foster Wallace, whose father, James, was a professor at the University of Illinois. David Foster Wallace briefly attended Urbana High School, Roger's alma mater. Jason Segel will be with us. The film co-stars Jesse Eisenberg, Anna Chlumsky and Joan Cusack. Another returning guest this year is Ramin Bahrani, who dedicated his latest film about the heartbreak of repossessed houses in Florida, "99 Homes," to Roger. Michael Shannon, Andrew Garfield and Laura Dern headline the impressive cast of this timely drama, a film I wish Roger could have reviewed.

Two of this year's acclaimed foreign imports tackle female identity in exhilarating fashion. Céline Sciamma's "Girlhood" stars Karidja Touré in a revelatory debut performance as a teen struggling to break out of her bleak surroundings while coming of age in an oppressive environment in France. This film is being made possible by our generous returning sponsor The Champaign County Alliance for the Promotion of Acceptance, Inclusion and Respect. Pawel Pawlikowski's "Ida," which won this year's Best Foreign Film Oscar, charts the inner transformation of a young nun (another stunning newcomer, Agata Trzebuchowska) on the eve of taking her vows, as she learns the startling identity and disturbing fate of her parents. The film's gloriously textured, Oscar-nominated cinematography by Lukasz Zal and Ryszard Lenczewski demands to be seen on the biggest screen possible, and makes it a perfect choice for Ebertfest with our world class projection consultant, James Bond.

And speaking of beautiful projection, James Bond will screen "Goodbye to Language," the latest work of French New Wave trailblazer Jean-Luc Godard

Viewers seeking cinematic experiences of a wholly unique and unpredictable stripe are guaranteed to be first in line for "A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence."

in a special 3D imagery unlike any witnessed in the history of the medium. Some may find this film ponderous, (just what a film festival is for), but Godard's film was named the best film of 2014 by the National Society of Film Critics and was awarded the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival. We are so fortunate to be able to present it in 3D in this gorgeous movie palace. Héloïse Godet, star of "Goodbye To Language" will be with us.

Viewers seeking cinematic experiences of a wholly unique and unpredictable stripe are guaranteed to be first in line for "A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence," the final film in revered Swedish filmmaker Roy Andersson's trilogy "on being a human being." The first film, "Songs From the Second Floor," was a highly controversial film at an early Ebertfest, and when we showed Andersson's second film in the trilogy, I think an atmospheric dust storm from an Icelandic volcano eruption prevented producer Johan Carlsson from coming. Fortunately Johan will be able to join us this year.

Damián Sziffrón's Oscar-nominated "Wild Tales," takes the form of vignettes tracing seemingly ordinary events as they gradually erupt into chaos. Michael Barker, Co-President of Sony Pictures Classic, is bringing us this wildly entertaining film fresh from its appearance at the Academy Awards. We are happy to welcome him back. He has been a good friend of the festival for many years. Also joining us will be actress Julieta Zylberberg and casting director Javier Braier.

No festival is complete without documentaries, and this year we have two must-see selections. "Moving Midway" is a personal portrait of Southern plantation life written and directed by RogerEbert.com critic Godfrey Cheshire. Cheshire's film is topical in so many ways: about race relations, about the anniversary of "Birth Of A Nation," about the meaning of the words "home," and "plantation" and how those words can mean different things to a white descendant and a black descendant of the same relative who once lived in the Midway Plantation. We are pleased to welcome Godfrey Cheshire.

We are also presenting Ethan Hawke's meditative documentary about the charming classical pianist Seymour Bernstein in "Seymour: An Introduction." Mr. Bernstein will join us and teach a masterclass in piano to two students chosen from the School of Music at the University of Illinois. He will be joined on stage by Rumi Scholar Andrew Harvey, who encouraged the making of this movie.

We extend open arms to the Alloy Orchestra (Terry Donahue, Ken Winokur and Roger Miller), back for their 14th performance at Ebertfest, where they will provide the live score accompaniment for Rudolph Valentino's 1926 swan song, "The Son of the Sheik," screening here in a newly restored print. This is said to be Rudolf Valentino's finest role before his death at age 31. This film is being presented by our generous returning sponsor, Steak 'n Shake.

And last but not least, we

will remember the late director Harold Ramis with a tribute. The first such tribute ever presented at Ebertfest. We will have a montage of his films followed by a celebration of his career. The amazing thing you will see is how the brilliant Ramis hid deeply profound philosophies about life, religion and Buddhism in his vastly entertaining comedies. We will be joined by Ramis' widow and producing partner, Erica Ramis. Filmmaker Trevor Albert, who produced or worked on productions of several of Ramis' films including "Groundhog Day" and "Caddyshack," and frequent producer and assistant to Harold Ramis, Laurel Ward, will also join us.

In addition to the films, we will present stimulating academic panels about challenging stigma through the arts, storytelling meets engineering at the Ebert Center, a filmmaker's panel, the future of film criticism and other topics.

As always, this program goes to press before a few things are finalized, so expect some surprise guests and please understand that there may be some changes that we have no control over.

You will also be welcomed into a community of movie lovers populated by numerous special guests that include illustrious film critics Leonard Maltin, Richard Roeper, Chicago Tribune film critic Michael Phillips, RogerEbert.com editor-in-chief Matt Zoller-Seitz and managing editor Brian Tallerico, RogerEbert.com critics Glenn Kenny, Susan Wloszczyna, Simon Abrams, Sheila O'Malley and Peter Sobczynski, Matt Fagerholm, and The Urban Daily's critic Rebecca Theodore-Vachon and Movie Mom from the Beliefnet.com Nell Minow; video essayist Kevin B. Lee; Far Flung Correspondent Omer Mozaffar, University of San Diego professor Dr. Eric Pierson and our official blogger, film critic from Movie Mezzanine and Forbes, Sam Fragoso.

Other special guests and panelists in addition to Michael Barker Co-President of Sony Pictures Classics include, Fandor founder Dan Aronson, Darrien Gipson of SAGindie and Emmy-winning documentary producer Zak Piper (whose work includes "Life Itself"), and Professor Todd Rendleman of Seattle Pacific University, an UI alum who wrote the book about Roger, "Rule of Thumb."

I am grateful to Roger's alma mater, the College of Media, of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for making it possible to gather once again and welcome the 1500 guests to the Virginia Theater. So I say a special thanks to University of Illinois President Bob Easter and his wife Cheryl, to Chancellor Phyllis Wise, and to Dean Jan Slater for their generous support. Roger and I announced the start of the Roger Ebert Center to be located within the College of Media and I will be calling on you to help us make the Center a reality to maintain Roger's legacy of passing forward the values of empathy and compassion through cinema and to encourage and support emerging writers and filmmakers at Ebertfest and other events throughout the year.

From Day One Professor Nate Kohn from the University of Georgia's Grady College has been the festival director. Nate is an Urbana native and Illinois alum. So Ebertfest is close to his heart. He made a commitment to Roger to carry on, and he has been

resolute in that commitment. Mary Susan Britt makes everything run and despite the challenges we present her with, she has remained level-headed, organized and diplomatic. She heads a dedicated staff, including many Volunteers whose smiling faces have become familiar over the years. It is with much sadness that I announce that Mary Susan will be leaving Ebertfest after 14 years to move to Louisiana with her husband Tad and their daughter Grace. My heart breaks over this news. Please join me in celebrating Mary Susan every chance we get at this, her last Ebertfest.

Steven Bentz and his cheerful staff at the Virginia Theater put out the welcome mat. The Champaign Park District and the Champaign Police Department are always helpful. Betsy Hendrick throws her now-legendary Saturday night party. Where would we be without our fabled projectionist James Bond who maintains the highest of standards whether projecting 70 mm, 35 mm, 3D or digital prints. We are so grateful for their continued help.

We thank our friend Bertha Mitchell, who serves her famous

downstate barbeque from the tent in front of the theater. She came back year after year all while trying to support her gifted hockey playing son Marcus in Canada and the US. Mrs. Mitchell and other vendors make it convenient for our festival-goers to grab a bite to eat in between movies. We will also have food trucks this year at Ebertfest – a first – including one from Hendrick House that will serve several gourmet selections and another from Steak 'n Shake, for those of you who love their famous steak burgers as much as Roger did.

Thanks also goes to the Illini Union which plays host for most of our guests in the heart of the campus.

Our sponsors are crucial. They help make the festival possible. Without their financial support we could not undertake the festival year after year. Some sponsors have been with us all 17 years; some are with us for the first time this year. We say a special thanks to some of our leading sponsors: The Champaign County Alliance for the Promotion of Acceptance, Inclusion and Respect; Steak 'n Shake; the University of Illinois

at Urbana-Champaign; The Ebert Foundation; and Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

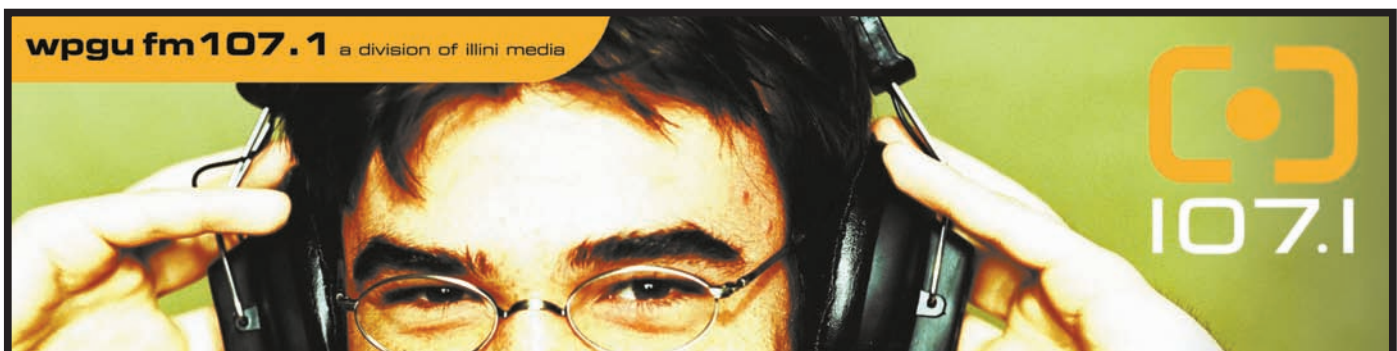
Volunteers serve in many ways, including serving as drivers and guides for festival guests. We thank them for their loyalty and continuing support.

Thank you to Leone Advertising who is our invaluable Webmaster at ebertfest.com; Carlton Bruett who is responsible for the posters and the look of the festival; and The Daily Illini which produces this splendid program.

And once again I want to call attention to our Ebertfest iPad App from Shatterglass Studios. The app contains every festival interview, photograph, review, panel discussion, link and artifact that we could find from the first sixteen Ebertfests. It is 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 Boyce and Brett Hayes, the Shatterglass guys, around the festival.

And finally, I want to thank the festival goers who keep coming back year after year. Thank you for uncovering cinema gems with Roger and me over the years. And thank you also to those who are joining us for the first time. Thank you for honoring his memory and for keeping his legacy alive. In the tradition of Roger I encourage you to please greet your fellow festival-goers. As Roger used to paraphrase a well-known movie title, they're no longer strangers when they meet.

*I want to thank the festival goers
who keep coming back year after year.
Thank you for uncovering cinema gems
with Roger and me over the years.*



ALLIANCE
FOR THE PROMOTION OF
**acceptance
& inclusion
& respect**

Upcoming Anti-Stigma Events:

17th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival

**Anti-Stigma Panel Discussion, Illini Union
Art Show/Sale near Virginia Theatre, April 18
Select Pieces on Display at Springer Cultural Center
Sponsored Shows at Cafe Kopi and Cafe Zojo**

CU Autism Network's Annual Autism Walk, April 19

**Premiere of "Who Stole My Hoo-to Foo-to Boo-to Bah?"
Art Theater, April 21**

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, May 3-8

"Where Hope Grows" in Theatres, May 15

The Artists' Collective, Indi Go Gallery, May 21

9th Annual disAbility Resource Expo, October 17

8th Annual Healthy Aging Conference, October 27

**National Depression Screening Day
Parkland, November 4**

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The Pavilion Behavioral Health System

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The Alliance for the Promotion of

Acceptance, Inclusion, & Respect

is a community collaboration which works to address and challenge the negative impact of stigma.

*We use the arts to stimulate dialogue about stigma and how it affects people who have
disabilities, their loved ones, and their communities. We also partner with artists
and entrepreneurs to broaden the audience for their works.*

www.facebook.com/allianceforAIR

Ebertfest makes time for appreciation

Welcome to Ebertfest! Every year it is exciting to see how this singular film festival transforms our university and our local community into the center of the film world. These hectic days of darkened theaters and conversations with actors, writers and directors don't just give us a look at great movies, they remind us how powerful and transformational art can be in any form. And clearly, we have Roger Ebert to thank for teaching us that movies are, indeed, art to be celebrated.

But even as he used his words and vision to elevate film criticism and reviews to a literary form, he also never let us forget that it was okay to simply enjoy

And clearly, we have Roger Ebert to thank for teaching us that movies are, indeed, art to be celebrated.

a great movie. I am particularly fond of this observation of his: "I am, beneath everything else, a fan."

I admire those of you who understand the special vocabulary of film and have the knowledge and expertise to look at these moving pictures in ways that I cannot. And I thank those of you who take the time and effort to share these special

perspectives and your knowledge in ways that help all of us see these films in a new way.

But, I am also grateful to know that when the lights go down this year and the opening credits roll and I simply get lost in the stories that follow, that the founder of this great festival would be the first to understand.

Here's to being a fan of great films!



Phyllis M. Wise
Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

JAN SLATER DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF MEDIA

Community support drives Festival

The College of Media is delighted to be your host for the 17th annual Ebertfest.

We produce this festival each year to honor Roger's love of storytelling. Roger believed that the close study of films was important. He believed that films affect how people think and behave, and that close analysis can illuminate this for viewers. By encouraging people to choose movies that can expand their understanding of human nature, Roger achieved what he considered his highest calling: to encourage good films and discourage bad films.

The partnerships that have grown around Ebertfest make the festival possible. Without

We produce this festival each year to honor Roger's love of storytelling.

the combined resources of the College of Media, the University of Illinois, the Champaign Park District, our loyal sponsors, our dedicated volunteers and you, the movie fan, we wouldn't be here today. Thank you for partnering with us to bring these films and their creators to town.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Mary Susan Britt and Dr. Nate Kohn who organize and direct this festival. It requires super

human effort and unsurpassed coordination. They work tirelessly and graciously to make this event better each year.

The College of Media at the University of Illinois welcomes you to the best show in town. We appreciate your support and revel in your enthusiasm for what the next few days bring to Champaign-Urbana.

Welcome to Ebertfest. Enjoy the show!



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

Betsy Hendrick encourages you to

Help Keep Roger's Dream Alive

Please donate to the Roger Ebert Center
at the University of Illinois

"The University of Illinois is deep in my heart as a great institution. It informed me and enriched me and guided me in my lifelong love of film. I hope when the Center is fully realized, it will inspire new generations."

– Roger Ebert (BS '64 Journalism)

To make a donation and
help with Roger's dream
please contact

Vicki S. Megginson, Ph.D.
vickimeg@illinois.edu



The
Roger Ebert
Center
will:

- Bring together journalism and the art of storytelling
- Champion humanist films and filmmakers whose work deserves to be encouraged and seen
- Challenge students and the industry to produce stories that matter

- Engage students and faculty to carry forward Roger and Chaz' vision of how film analysis can inform the world around us
- Serve Roger's mission of linking film, film analysis, its production, technologies and industry with vital social topics and issues

Festival remains true to Ebert's vision

Welcome to the 17th 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 mark an important milestone at this year's festival. Mary Susan Britt, our festival associate director for the past 14 years, will be leaving us this summer for the warmer pastures of Louisiana. So this is her last Ebertfest. After joining us in the early part of the last decade, Mary Susan quickly became an essential part of the Ebertfest team. Everything that Chaz Ebert and I don't do, Mary Susan does. And that means a lot. She deals with the Virginia Theatre, green room caterers, volunteers, film distributors, filmmaker travel and accommodation, filmmaker hosts, Hollywood publicists and agents, grant applications and dozens of other things that I don't even know about. She also recruits festival sponsors and donors, and in the process has made many friends for the festival and for herself. We will miss her hard work, straight talk, sense of humor, and most of all, her Southern charm. We wish her well in her new endeavors. Two other people will be hired to take her place, but we all know that Mary Susan, loved by all of us who know and admire her, is completely irreplaceable. My definition of a good producer is someone who can make things happen; Mary Susan makes things happen. So when you see her around the Union or the Virginia, please wish her well and encourage her to change her mind.

Chaz Ebert and I get a lot of questions about how we select the festival films now that Roger is no longer with us. Of course there are lists of films that Roger, with a little help from us, put

together over the years. And we do draw from those lists. But more importantly, we are always conscious of Roger's vision for the festival and the kinds of films he wanted to showcase and champion – film that address the human condition, that allow us to explore places and people strange to us, films that engender empathy for others. So this year, we are showing three films that Roger reviewed and loved; three new films by festival alumni, two of which premiered recently at the Sundance Film Festival and one that took home a prize at the Venice Film Festival; three critically acclaimed foreign language films, two from France and one from Argentina; a silent film accompanied by the Alloy Orchestra; and a music documentary that touched our hearts. All these films accomplish what Roger looked for in a great festival film. We hope you will agree.

One of those films, "Goodbye to Language" by Jean-Luc Godard, which took home a prize at the Cannes Film Festival, will screen in 3D. You will wear glasses. Now we all know Roger's

opinion of 3D. In 2011, he wrote a journal entry entitled WHY 3D DOESN'T WORK AND NEVER WILL. CASE CLOSED. Later that year, he softened his position in his review of Martin Scorsese's "Hugo," saying that Scorsese used 3D "properly." And he approved of how 3D was used in "Avatar" and "Cave of Forgotten Dreams." Godard has succeeded in moving the bar even further, using 3D in ways never before imagined, as "an important artistic tool" in and of itself, to quote David Bordwell. We think Roger would approve. We also think he would be in total awe, seeing this 3D film projected properly on the Virginia's large screen by our resident projection expert James Bond. And we thank James, who loves this film so much that he is personally sponsoring this screening.

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

One of our most dedicated sponsors, the Champaign County Alliance for the Promotion of Acceptance, Inclusion, & Respect, in addition to sponsoring our showing of "Girlhood" is holding a panel discussion on Thursday morning at the Illini Union. Please plan to attend this free event. We thank the 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.

And of course, Roger's favorite restaurant, Steak 'n Shake, is back with us once again, this time sponsoring our silent film. Their famous slogan, which Roger never tired of reciting in his booming voice, "In sight it must be right," might also apply to the films that screen at Roger's festival.

We would also like to thank Kino Lorber, Strand Releasing, Music Box Films, Second City, Box 5, Magnolia Pictures, Sony Pictures Classics, Broad Green Pictures, First Run Features, Polsky Films, A24, and IFC Films for graciously providing us with their very best 35mm and digital prints. A particular appreciation goes to Jane Rosenthal at Tribeca, Martin Scorsese, and The George Eastman House who helped us secure an archival print of "A Bronx Tale."

Finally, I want to recognize Associate Festival Director Mary Susan Britt (once again), Dean Jan Slater, President and Mrs. Bob Easter and Chancellor Phyllis Wise without whose hard work and enthusiastic support this festival would not be possible. We especially want to thank the University of Illinois for its loyal support.

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

All these films accomplish what Roger looked for in a great festival film.



Nate Kohn, festival director

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Talking with Chaz Ebert

By Abrar Al-Heeti, *The Daily Illini*

When Roger Ebert considered potential films to show at Ebertfest, there was one person in particular who he loved to discuss movies with: his wife, his supporter and his closest friend Chaz.

We spoke with Chaz via email and asked her a few questions about her connection to the Champaign-Urbana community, how the film festival has carried on without the man who started it all and what she believes her husband's legacy is.

The Daily Illini: What connection do you feel with Champaign-Urbana? When did that connection start?

Chaz Ebert: Urbana was my husband's hometown, and so of course I feel a connection to the twin-towns of Urbana-Champaign. In the beginning, it was more a curiosity in wanting to know more about Roger's background and the influences that shaped him as a person growing up there. But over the years as we visited his relatives there and attended his high school and college reunions, and maintained contact with the University, my relationship to the towns grew.



Chaz Ebert

But the connection really deepened when we started Ebertfest (originally called Roger Ebert's Overlooked Film Festival) there 17 years ago. And now with a sculpture of Roger in front of the Virginia Theatre, it just feels like a home away from home when I go there. That is why I am so happy we will be establishing The Ebert Center in the College of Media at the University. Roger says that his values were instilled in him by his parents and the nuns in his grade school, and that the University gave him a window to the rest of the world. He was always so grateful for his start.

DI: Whose decision was it to continue the festival, and how do you feel about it?

CE: There was never any real talk about not having the film festival. It just didn't occur to us that it shouldn't take place. Roger and I had worked with Nate Kohn and Mary Susan Britt and Dean Jan Slater, and so many others on the festival for so long, that we all just assumed it would continue. In fact, Roger was actually making plans to attend the festival in 2013 before he passed away on April 4. But when I think back on it, he was also making plans if he could not make the trip. And it was only after we looked at the totality of the program that year that we realized he knew he wouldn't be there. The program contained several films about loss and love and legacy and continuing on in the face of loss. I was stunned when I realized this.

DI: Can you describe the support from fans and sponsors of the festival?



Photo courtesy Thompson McClellan

Chaz Ebert touches the hand of the statue of Roger Ebert that was unveiled at Ebertfest last year.

CE: The festival differs from other festivals because it exists purely for the pleasure of experiencing good films in the communal atmosphere of other film lovers in a gorgeous renovated movie palace. We don't conduct business or have competitive prizes or audition people for their next roles. We try to maintain a warm and welcoming environment for our filmmakers and audiences, and it has become one of the friendliest festivals around. I am proud to say that most of the sponsors and attendees have been coming almost from the beginning, and I am truly grateful for that.

DI: How has the festival changed (both while Mr. Ebert was alive and after his passing)? How do you keep his spirit and presence alive?

CE: While we plan to keep up with the times, I like the fact that you can still feel Roger's spirit here. We were so close and we respected each other's opinions. But Roger also

respected what Nate and I had to say about the films and the guests, and he trusted us to keep things going. My routine with Roger when we were going home would be to talk about films we wanted at the festival, and so I have a list of films that I will be excited to present in future years. One of those films is Jodorowsky's "Santa Sangre." But I am hoping we can do it when Jodorowsky is able to come with the film. I am so sad that Roger didn't get to welcome Terrence Malick to the festival, but I am hoping we will be able to do that one day. Anyone who has attended this festival knows what a testament it is to the values Roger espoused. He said that movies are a giant machine that generate empathy. He and I were big on things like kindness and compassion. It is those things as much as his movie reviews that I consider his legacy. And while I am no Roger Ebert, I will try to do my best to continue in that tradition.



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Extending the Highest Praise: Thumbs Up

For 14 years Mary Susan Britt has been the organizational force behind Ebertfest. Every detail – from flights and hotels, to volunteers and sponsors, to menus and passes – has felt her influence. Mary Susan has been instrumental in shaping the look and feel of the festival. And while this year will be her final performance, the event will forever carry her mark.

Thank you for the dedication - the sleepless nights, the quiet strength, the sharp wit. We will miss your calm and Southern charm. Rest assured, you will always be a part of Ebertfest in our hearts.

Best wishes from your adoring fans.



College of media

*E*bertfest

Mary Susan Britt: The ‘force’ behind Ebertfest

By Reema Abi-Akar, *The Daily Illini*

Fourteen years ago, Mary Susan Britt responded to an ad in the paper to work for the University of Illinois’ College of Media. Her family had just moved to Champaign-Urbana from Vicksburg, Mississippi, and she thought she’d try her luck with a new job in a new town.

She couldn’t have predicted that this job, director for advancement in the College of Media and associate festival director for Ebertfest, would mold her career, connect her with people in diverse walks of life and create great memories.

“She very quickly became indispensable to the organization and the running of the festival,” said Nate Kohn, director of Ebertfest.

With the festival in its 17th year, however, it will be her last in this position. She and her family will be moving to Louisiana this summer and reconnecting with the South.

“The warm weather is something that we’ll welcome,” Britt joked. “As far as what I’ll be doing, I’m not sure, but I’m sure it’ll be something wonderful.”

This will be a new experience for Britt, because she has been the powerhouse of Ebertfest for so long, planning and carefully organizing every detail year-round in preparation for the festival.

“She just handles it all,” said Jan Slater, dean of the College

of Media. “I can’t imagine another one person doing all that Mary Susan does.”

Britt’s annual Ebertfest schedule begins in the summer, where she calls the festival sponsors, puts together the sponsorship package and works on the beginning phases of the following Ebertfest. Next come newspaper ads, media connections and pass sales in November before the home stretch in January.

Despite her persistently busy schedule, Slater said she keeps an upbeat attitude and a contagiously positive air.

“She’s a force... nothing fazes her,” Slater said. “No matter whether she might have one thing or a hundred things on her mind, when she’s talking to you about her daughter or her job or Roger Ebert, she’s completely focused on you ... I think one of her greatest strengths is she listens to people.”

In addition to her day-to-day and month-to-month tasks, she also keeps track of individuals who attend Ebertfest, especially those who return every year.

“She has an incredible memory,” Slater said. “She not only knows (the festival visitor’s) name, she knows who they are, where they’re from, what they do for Ebertfest, how long they’ve been involved in Ebertfest... she knows the whole story.”

“Having had the opportunity to work with Roger Ebert has been the experience of a lifetime.”

– Mary Susan Britt, associate festival director



Photo courtesy Thompson McClellan
Mary Susan Britt, far right, stands with Chaz Ebert and Nate Kohn at the opening night of last year’s festival. This will be Britt’s last year with Ebertfest.

This enables her to establish close, personal relationships with volunteers, sponsors, students and festival staff, Kohn said.

“She comes from the South and has a bit of a southern accent,” Kohn continued, “Which seems to work wonders in Illinois when it comes to talking about the festival.”

This southern charm extends into her conversations about the festival, her job, her family or her coworkers.

“I think it’s hard not to have a personal relationship with Mary Susan,” said Slater, who has known Britt since 2007. “She makes everybody feel very special because she always gives them the time.”

In Britt’s case, time is something she has very little of. She breaks up her time between planning Ebertfest and working with the College of Media, where she works more with students and alumni.

“The relationships I’ve made and the friends I’ve made are

unbelievable,” Britt said. “We’ve lived here for so long; we have a lot of connections, and I’m sure we’ll be back from time to time.”

She is especially passionate about keeping Roger Ebert’s legacy alive each April.

“There are so many things I enjoy about the festival; it’s going to be impossible for me to say everything,” said Britt. “Having had the opportunity to work with Roger Ebert has been the experience of a lifetime. But just how wonderful this community is, and how the community really does get behind the festival ... they believe in what we’re doing and what Roger started in 1999.”

Every year is deemed “the best festival ever” by the time it is complete, she laughed, because each is so unique.

Ultimately, while Britt is excited for the next phase in her life and her family’s life, she will be missed through the personal networks she has created here.

EBERTFEST

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Festival Info

Things to know about Ebertfest

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.
- 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 16, 2015
- Friday, April 17, 2015
- Saturday, April 18, 2015

DIRECTIONS

How to get to the Illini Union from The Virginia Theatre

- Turn RIGHT (south) onto N. Neil Street
- Turn LEFT onto E. Springfield Ave.
- Turn RIGHT onto S. Wright Street
- Turn LEFT onto W. Green Street
- The Illini Union will be on the RIGHT.

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.
- The Virginia Theatre offers complimentary assisted listening devices, available upon request. Devices come with an ear bud, ear speaker or neck loop and can be used to enhance the enjoyment of movies, spoken word events and live performances. Visit the Virginia Theatre Box Office before showtime to pick up an assisted listening device. A driver's license, credit card or other valid form of ID is required.
- **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 1,000. 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.

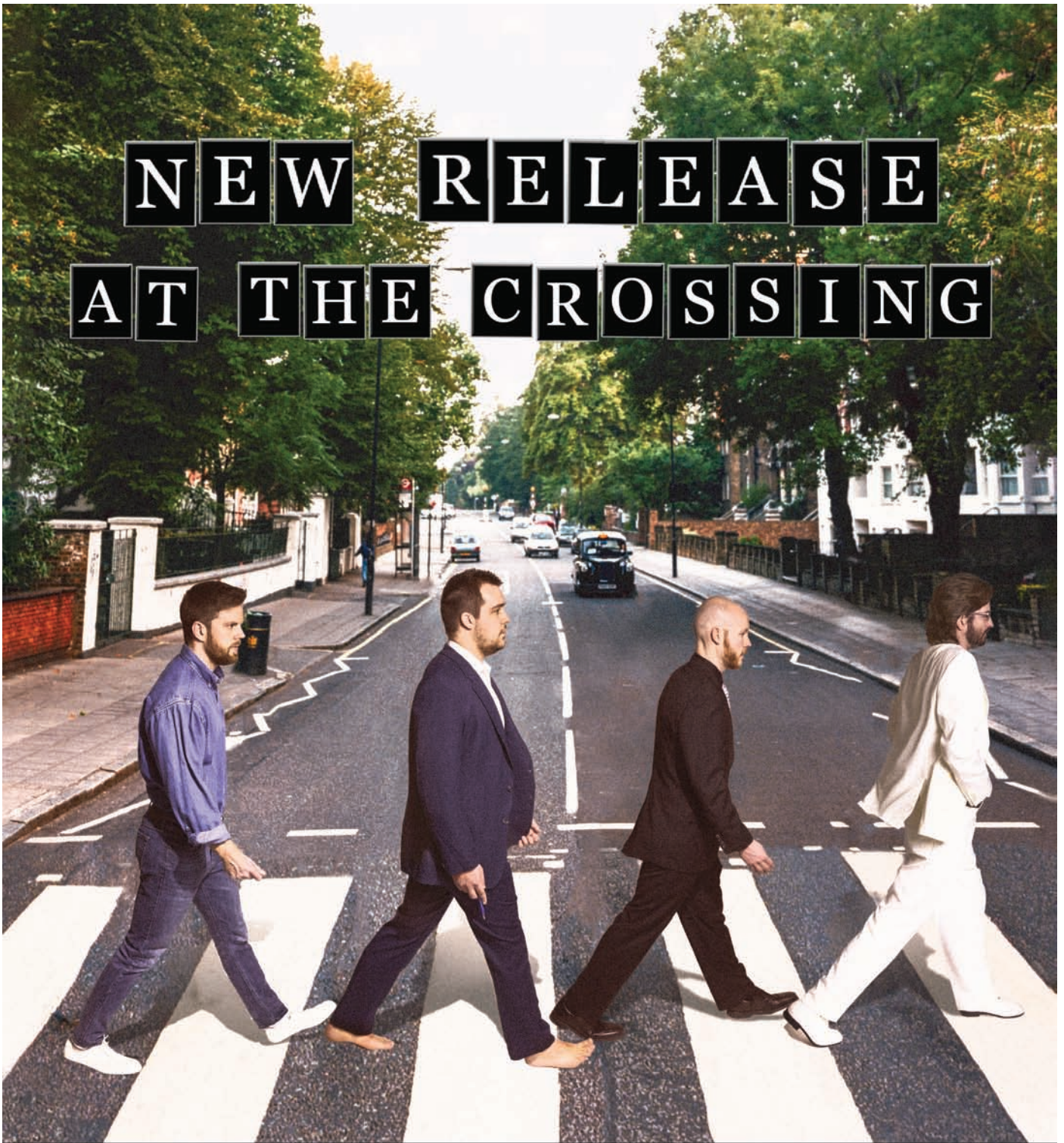
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For a more complete list, check out the **Champaign-Urbana Dining Guide:**
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Father, daughter volunteer time at Ebertfest

By Susan Szuch, *The Daily Illini*

For Jessica Elliott, a sophomore in FAA, April not only brings the end of the school year, but also a family tradition: volunteering at Ebertfest.

Since childhood, her father, Ray, has been showing film festival guests around the community.

"My dad's been doing it since I can remember, and it was just this big event every spring," Jessica said. "I didn't realize what a big deal they were, that was always really cool, and I remember Roger (Ebert) as well."

Ray, who retired from teaching English and journalism at Urbana High School to teach journalism at the University of Illinois, has been volunteering for Ebertfest for over a decade. Prior to that, he covered the festival for the College of Media's Alumni publication.

"When I left the College of Media, I knew Mary Susan (Britt) pretty well, and I just helped her with hosting," Ray said. "It's a trip, man. It's a lot of fun, you see a lot of good movies and meet a lot of nice people, and it's just a really nice thing for the community and the University of Illinois."

Some of the people Ray has had the opportunity to host include Steve James, who produced the documentary "Life Itself" on Roger Ebert, as well as Haskell Wexler, a cinematographer, and Kaylie Jones, the daughter of American author James Jones. Since the festival draws guests from all over and brings so much to Champaign-Urbana, Ray said he always makes sure he has time to contribute to it.

"There's been so many people that Roger's name has been able to pull in here, and that's

"There's so many people that Roger's name has been able to pull in here, and that's something that I set aside a week, five days, every year to be a part of."

something that I set aside a week, five days, every year to be a part of," Ray said.

While his daughter agrees, she also feels that the people from Champaign-Urbana are part of what make the festival successful.

"I guess Ebertfest is kind of a showcase of all the talent that we have here because it's so cool that we can bring people in and mesh ideas from all over the world with people in Champaign-Urbana," Jessica said. "There's so many people that we bring in, but there's also so many people

locally that are involved. I think Ebertfest is a really cool way of saying, 'Champaign-Urbana is in the game, we have contributions to make.'"

Though he's been hosting guests since he began volunteering, one of the things Ray enjoys most about the festival is that the community gets to have a similar experience that he does in interacting with the guests.

"What I like about it is that I've been to other festivals and other events where people are sort of separated," Ray said. "This one, the actors, actresses, directors (and) producers walk out of the theatre between movies and intermingle with the community and talk with them. It's just a nice thing that Roger set up and it really adds to his legacy of what he's done for the film industry."

For Jessica, growing up volunteering at Ebertfest played a large part in preparing her to change her major from journalism to theatre.

"To be able to talk to people who have that mindset and who approach film from the director's standpoint, I think that definitely influenced my decision to change," she said. "Because I saw the potential that it had, that you could create something from nothing and that you could tell a story to people and it can mean so many different people."



Ray Elliott poses with his daughter, Jessica. The Elliots have been volunteering at Ebertfest for over a decade.

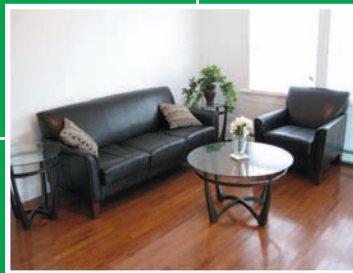
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Guests

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.

Goodbye to Language

Wednesday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.

HELOISE GODET (actor) trained at the International Theater School Jacques Lecoq in Paris. Her first lead role came about with Jean-Luc Godard's *Goodbye to Language*, winner ex-aequo of the Jury prize at Cannes 2014.

In 2010 she starred in the Talents Cannes entry *N'oubliez pas Roger* by Etienne Labroue, and since then has appeared in numerous short films. At the same time Heloise has continued to act both on television and on stage.

Harold Ramis Tribute

Wednesday, April 15, 9:30 p.m.

HAROLD RAMIS was a screenwriter, director and actor whose films include some of the most popular and influential comedies of our time--*Animal House*, *Caddyshack*, *Stripes*, *National Lampoon's Vacation*, *Ghostbusters*, *Back to School*, *Groundhog Day*, *Multiplicity*, *Analyze This*, *Bedazzled*, *Analyze That*, *The Ice Harvest* and *Year One*. Having received his BA from Washington University in St. Louis, Mr. Ramis was awarded honorary Doctorates in Arts from both Columbia College Chicago and Washington University, and was a former member of the Washington University Board of Trustees. Among his numerous professional honors and awards, Mr. Ramis was the recipient of the American Comedy Award, the British Comedy Award, and the BAFTA (British Academy) award for screenwriting (*Groundhog Day*) and The Just for Laughs Lifetime Achievement Award. Four of his films were listed among the American Film Institutes' "100 Funniest Movies" and *Groundhog Day* was named as one of the "101 Greatest Screenplays" by the Writers Guild of America. Mr. Ramis also directed several episodes of television's acclaimed series *The Office*.

ERICA RAMIS

TREVOR ALBERT started his journey as a communications and film major at UC San Diego and worked his way through college as a journalist for the *San Diego Reader*. Upon graduation, he moved up the California coast to pursue a film career in LA. After working as a film researcher at Universal Pictures and Warner Brothers, he accepted a full-time

position with producers Jon Peters and Barbra Streisand. In his first year, he was sent to Florida to work with Harold Ramis on *Caddyshack*, Harold's directorial debut. Trevor and Harold instantly developed a great rapport based on their mutual love of laughter and movies.

When Albert agreed to be the gopher puppet in several scenes on the golf course, a professional relationship was cemented that would last for over 20 years. Together they made a series of very successful comedies including *National Lampoon's Vacation* with Chevy Chase, *Club Paradise* with Robin Williams and Peter O'Toole, *Groundhog Day* with Bill Murray and Andie McDowell, *Multiplicity* with Michael Keaton and Andie McDowell, *Stuart Saves his Family* with Al Franken and *Bedazzled*, starring Brendan Fraser and Elizabeth Hurley.

After many years in Hollywood, Ramis and his family decided to move back to his hometown of Chicago, and Albert stayed in LA and started a new film company. Having worked for many years exclusively in the world of comedy, Albert decided to venture into the world of graphic novels, producing *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* starring Sean Connery. Following that he produced *The First Twenty Million is The Hardest* based on the novel by Pro Bronson, starring Rosario Dawson, and then the classic children's film *Because of Winn-Dixie* based on the Newbery award winning book by Kate DiCamillo, starring Cicely Tyson, Jeff Daniels, Eve Marie Saint, Dave Matthews and Anna Sophia Robb and then the independent film *Waiting For Forever*, starring Richard Jenkins, Blythe Danner and Rachel Bilson.

Gratified to make films that are entertaining, sometimes intelligent and occasionally inspiring, Albert is a distinguished member of the Academy of Motion

Picture Arts and Sciences.

His most recent and perhaps proudest production is the Academy Award® nominated documentary, *Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me*, which follows the iconic musician Campbell on his unprecedented tour across America, after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Richard Roeper called it "one of the most remarkable documentaries in recent years." It is currently screening in cities around the US and Canada and will have its TV premier on CNN in June.

LAUREL WARD is an accomplished film producer and creative talent who has compiled an impressive list of credits in her nearly 20 years of filmmaking. For more than 15 years, Ward worked side by side with the legendary writer/director Harold Ramis, serving as Vice President of Development for Ramis' Ocean Pictures and collaborating with him on 5 feature films and several TV pilots. She served as Associate Producer on both *The Ice Harvest* and *Analyze That* starring Robert DeNiro and Billy Crystal. Ward also played a key role in the making of Ocean Pictures' *Analyze This* and *Bedazzled*. Most recently, Ward was the co-producer on *Year One* starring Jack Black and Michael Cera.

Ward began her film career in 1994 at Hughes Entertainment working with writer/director John Hughes. She worked as a production associate on such feature films as *Miracle on 34th Street*, *Reach the Rock*, *Flubber* and *Home Alone 3*.

Ward, who studied political philosophy at Michigan State University, is an active member of the IFP/Chicago Board of Directors. She is currently working on several creative projects for both cinema and TV.

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A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence

Thursday, April 16, 1:00 p.m.

JOHAN CARLSSON (producer) was born in Umeå, Sweden in 1967 and went to Skurups School of Film and TV 1989-1990.

He has worked at Roy Andersson Filmproduktion since 1990, as production manager, assistant director and currently as a line producer. His credits include *World of Glory* (1991), *Songs from the Second Floor* (2000), *You, the Living* (2007) and *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence* (2014). He has also directed short films, commercials and a documentary, *Tomorrow is Another Day* (2011).

Moving Midway

Thursday, April 16, 4:00 p.m.

GODFREY CHESHIRE (writer/director/ producer) is an award-winning film critic, journalist, screenwriter and filmmaker based in New York City. His writings on film have appeared in publications including *The New York Times*, *Variety*, *Newsweek*, *The Village Voice*, *Interview*, *Film Comment*, *Sight & Sound* and *Cineaste*. He currently writes for RogerEbert.com.

His first film as writer-director, a documentary titled *Moving Midway*, was named one of the 2008 10 best films by the *LA Weekly* and *New York Magazine*. He is a member of the National Society of Film Critics and a former chairman of the New York Film Critics Circle.

End of the Tour

Thursday, April 16, 8:30 p.m.

JAMES PONSOLDT (director) is a filmmaker originally from Athens, Georgia. His films, which include *Off the Black*, *Smashed* and *The Spectacular Now*, have won prizes at Sundance, been nominated for Independent Spirit Awards, and honored by the National Board of Review. Ponsoldt co-wrote the graphic novel, *Refresh, Refresh*

(selected by Alison Bechdel for "The Best American Comics 2011") and directed the upcoming feature, *The End of the Tour* (which premiered at Sundance 2015 to amazing reviews and will be released on July 31, 2015 by A24).

JASON SEGEL (actor) stars in James Ponsoldt's dramatic biopic *The End of the Tour*, as writer David Foster Wallace, opposite Jesse Eisenberg. The film recounts magazine reporter David Lipsky's (Eisenberg's) travels and conversations with Wallace during a promotional book tour.

Segel was recently seen in Jake Kasdan's *Sex Tape* for Sony Pictures. Segel starred with Cameron Diaz in Kasdan's *Bad Teacher*, which made over \$200 million worldwide.

Segel landed his first major leading role as Peter in Nicholas Stoller's *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, which he also wrote. The film was released in 2008 by Universal Pictures and made over \$100 million worldwide. Segel wrote a *Dracula* musical performed by puppets, which was a personal idea and passion he incorporated into the film, emboldening him to pitch his concept for a Muppets movie. He and Stoller signed with Disney to write *The Muppets*, which made over \$150 million worldwide. Additionally, the film won an Academy Award® in 2012 for Best Original Song for "Man or Muppet," written by Bret McKenzie and performed by Segel.

Segel and Stoller collaborated in 2010 to write and co-produce the film *Get Him to the Greek*, a spin-off of *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. The film grossed over \$90 million worldwide and won the Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie: Comedy.

In 2012, he starred in Judd Apatow's *This Is 40*, which expands on the story of *Knocked Up* and was nominated for a 2013 Critics' Choice Award for Best Comedy Movie.

Segel's other film credits include: *The Five-Year Engagement*, *I Love You, Man*, *Jeff Who Lives at Home*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Despicable Me*, *Slackers*, *The New Jersey Turnpikes*, *S.L.C. Punk*, *Can't Hardly Wait* and *Dead Man on Campus*, among others.

On TV, Segel starred as Marshall on the CBS hit comedy series *How I Met Your Mother* which, in its 9-season run was nominated for an Emmy® for Outstanding Comedy Series, a People's Choice Award for Favorite TV Comedy and a Teen Choice Award for Choice TV Show: Comedy. He also starred in Apatow's Emmy® nominated TV series *Freaks and Geeks* for NBC as well as Apatow's *Undeclared* for Fox.

In addition to his work in TV and film, Segel made his debut as a children's book author with *Nightmares!*, published by Random House and co-written by Kirsten Miller. The first installment of his middle-grade trilogy was released in 2014 and debuted at #2 on the *NYTimes* Bestseller List. The second book, *Nightmares: The Sleepwalker Tonic*, will be published in September 2015.

Girlhood

Friday, April 17, 1:00 p.m.

The Son of the Sheik

Friday, April 17, 4:00 p.m.

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

An unusual combination of found percussion and state-of-the-art electronics gives the Orchestra the ability to create any sound imaginable. Utilizing their famous "rack of junk" and electronic synthesizers, the group generates beautiful music in a spectacular variety of styles. They can conjure up a simple German bar band of the 1920s or a French

symphony. The group can make the audience think it is being attacked by tigers, contacted by radio signals from Mars or swept up in the Russian Revolution.

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

A Bronx Tale


Friday, April 17, 8:30 p.m.

CHAZZ PALMINTERI (writer/actor) Bronx-born and raised, continues the long line of prominent Italian actors in the film industry, started in the 1970s by such icons as director Martin Scorsese and actors Robert DeNiro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci. Palminteri has brought grit, muscle and an evocative realism to the sidewalks of his New York neighborhood, violent as they are and were.

Born in 1952, Palminteri grew up in a tough area of the Bronx and it gave young Calogero (Palminteri's given first name) the life lessons that would later prove very useful to his career. He started out pursuing his craft in studying at the Actor's Studio with Lee Strasberg. He appeared off-Broadway in the early 1980s while paying his dues as a singer in his own band.

Well known for *A Bronx Tale*, Palminteri originally wrote the script for the stage and performed it as a one-man show in LA. It became the hottest property in Hollywood since *Rocky*. Palminteri was offered over a million to walk away from the project, but with only \$200 left in the bank, he refused. He wanted to play Sonny and write the screenplay. One night DeNiro walked in to see the show and, as they say, 'the rest is history.' He then moved the production to New York, where it played for four sold-out months and earned him New York Outer Critics Circle nominations for both acting and writing. While in New York, he completed the screenplay of *A Bronx Tale* and soon found himself starring opposite DeNiro, who chose the

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script for his directorial debut.

Palminteri has appeared in more than 50 movies including *The Usual Suspects*, Academy-Award® nominated *Bullets Over Broadway*, *Analyze This*, *Hurlyburly*, *Mulholland Falls*, *Faithful* (also as co-writer), *Poolhall Junkies*, *The Perez Family*, *Jade*, *Diabolique*, *Down to Earth* and *A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints*. Recent films include *Final Recourse*, *Mighty Fine* (starring Andie MacDowell), *Yonkers Joe*, *Jolene* and *The Dukes*.

His TV credits include directing for the HBO series *Oz*, Showtime's *Women vs. Men* and the feature film *Noel*, starring Susan Sarandon, Penelope Cruz, Robin Williams and Paul Walker. He appeared on the New York stage in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* with Al Pacino, John Goodman, Steve Buscemi and Billy Crudup. Palminteri is a member of the Actors Studio in NYC. He received the 1996 Leadership in Entertainment Award from the Coalition of Italo-American Association, and was honored by President Clinton with a Special Achievement Award for the Performing Arts from the National Italian American Foundation in Washington DC.

Palminteri resides in Westchester County with his lovely wife, Gianna, and their two children, Dante and Gabriella.

JON KILIK (producer) is one of New York's premier film producers, collaborating with a wide range of auteur directors to create a body of work with an emphasis on human values and social issues.

In 1988, Kilik began his collaboration with Spike Lee and has gone on to produce 14 of Lee's films, including *He Got Game*, *Clockers*, *Malcolm X*, and the groundbreaking *Do The Right Thing*, which was recently selected by The Smithsonian Institute for The National Film Archives.

Kilik also produced Robert De Niro's highly acclaimed directorial debut, *A Bronx Tale*, based on the play by Chazz Palminteri.

In 1995, Kilik produced Tim Robbins' Academy Award® winner, *Dead Man Walking*, starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn. The same year he produced Julian Schnabel's directorial debut, *Basquiat*. Next, he teamed with Gary Ross and Steven Soderbergh

to produce Ross' directorial debut, *Pleasantville*.

In 2000, Kilik produced Julian Schnabel's *Before Night Falls*, starring Javier Bardem, and winner of the Grand Jury Prize and Best Actor awards at the Venice Film Festival. Also in 2000, Kilik produced Ed Harris' directorial debut, *Pollock*. Ed Harris and Javier Bardem were each nominated for the Best Actor Oscar® at the 2001 Academy Awards®.

Next, Kilik traveled to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation where he produced *Skins*, directed by Chris Eyre, and featuring Graham Greene as a Native American who returns home from service in Viet Nam. In 2004, Kilik produced Oliver Stone's *Alexander*. He returned to New York in 2005 to produce Jim Jarmusch's very personal *Broken Flowers*, winner of the Cannes Film Festival Grand Jury Prize.

Kilik then partnered with Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu to produce *Babel*, which was shot in Morocco, Mexico and Japan, involving 4 uniquely interwoven stories in Arabic, Spanish, English and Japanese. *Babel* won the Best Director prize at Cannes 2006, a Golden Globe® for Best Feature Film Drama, and was nominated for 7 Academy Awards®, including Best Picture. In 2007 Kilik produced Julian Schnabel's *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, winning his second Golden Globe® and 4 Academy Awards® nominations. Next Kilik produced Iñárritu's *Biutiful*, starring Bardem, which was nominated for 2 Academy Awards®. Kilik spent 8 years developing *Foxcatcher* with Bennett Miller. The film was released in 2014 and received 5 Academy Award® nominations.

Kilik is currently in production on Gary Ross' *The Free State of Jones* starring Matthew McConaughey, as well as *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*, the eagerly anticipated fourth film in the beloved franchise. Kilik has been with the series from the beginning, having produced *The Hunger Games*, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1*.

Kilik was born in Newark, New Jersey and grew up in Millburn. He graduated from the University

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of Vermont and moved to New York in 1979 to pursue a career in filmmaking. He returned to his Vermont alma mater to receive an honorary doctorate and deliver the commencement address to the class of 2003.

Wild Tales

Saturday, April 18, 11:00 a.m.

JULIETA ZYLBERBERG (actor) is an Argentine actress. She started her career in TV's ground-breaking comedy *Magazine for Fai*, and by 1994 had appeared in some of Argentina's biggest prime-time TV shows. She has also regularly appeared on stage, most notably performing as Ivy in Tracy Letts' *August: Osage County*, in which she worked with Norma Aleandro and Mercedes Morán.

Zylberberg's first movie role, awarded by the prestigious director Lucrecia Martel, was in *La Niña Santa (The Holy Girl)*. She subsequently participated in projects such as *The Invisible Eye* (Diego Lerman), *A Boyfriend For My Wife* (Juan Taratuto), *Los Marziano* (Ana Katz), *El 5 de Talleres* (Adrián Biniez) and *Wild Tales* by Damián Szifron.

In 2015 she will star in Daniel Burman's *El Rey Del Once* by and Ana Katz' *Mi Amiga Del Parque*, as well as the TV series *Los 7 Locos*, based on the novel by Roberto Arlt.

JAVIER BRAIER (casting director) is an Image and Sound Design graduate from the University of Buenos Aires. In his early career he worked as an AD, primarily in TV commercials. Starting in 2005, he joined the casting world with *On Probation*, Damián Szifron's second film. Since then, he has become one of the leading casting directors in Argentina, working with such talented people as Armando Bo (*The Last Elvis*), Héctor Babenco (*O Pasado*), Adrián Caetano (*Crónica De Una Fuga*), Martín Rejtman (*Two Shot Guns*), Pablo Giorgelli (*Las Acacias*) and Damián Szifron (*Wild Tales*). His reputation earned him the privilege of collaborating with international projects such as *Biutiful* (Alejandro G. Iñárritu), *Rudo y Cursi* (Carlos Cuarón) and *Focus*

(John Requa and Glenn Ficarra).

Currently he is on the staff at K&S Films, where he works on the development and releasing of projects. Among these, the company is now working on Pablo Traperó's new feature *The Clan*, where he's also the Casting Director.

Ida

Saturday, April 18, 2:00 p.m.

The Motel Life

Saturday, April 18, 5:00 p.m.

ALAN POLSKY (director) and his brother Gabe have secured the rights to an array of profound and edgy literary material, creating quality films characterized by both intelligence and commercial appeal, since launching Polsky Films.

Their directorial debut, *The Motel Life*, based on Willy Vlautin's novel, starring Dakota Fanning, Kris Kristofferson, Emile Hirsch and Stephen Dorff, is one such example.

Other Polsky Films projects include *His Way*, an Emmy®-nominated documentary about the prolific film and music producer Jerry Weintraub, premiered by HBO in 2011. They also produced *Little Birds*, directed by Elgin James and starring Juno Temple, Kay Panabaker, Kate Bosworth and Leslie Mann, which debuted in competition at Sundance in 2011. Polsky Films previously produced Werner Herzog's *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans*, named in over 40 top-10 lists for the best films of 2009.

The Polskys have also acquired the rights to critically acclaimed novels *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes, to be produced at Sony as a starring vehicle for Will Smith; *Butcher's Crossing* by John Williams, to be produced at Focus Features with Sam Mended attached to direct; *Eat the Document* by Dana Spiotta, with Bennett Miller attached to direct; and *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov. Additionally, they have secured the rights to the Albert Einstein Estate, and are partnered with Sean Penn to

produce a biopic on surfing legend Dorian "Doc" Paskowitz and his family, in which Penn will star.

Growing up outside Chicago, the brothers' collaborative and competitive nature was fostered over their devotion to hockey. Alan worked in investment banking and private equity before getting his MBA from The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. Gabe attended Yale University and shortly after graduating, moved to LA to work for Mayhem Pictures, Endeavor Talent Agency's literary department, and the Yari Film Group.

STEPHEN DORFF (actor) appeared as disillusioned Hollywood actor and single father Johnny Marco in Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere*, which won a Golden Lion at the 2010 Venice Film Festival. In 2009, Dorff teamed with *Somewhere* producer G. Mac Brown on Michael Mann's gangster drama *Public Enemies*, starring opposite Johnny Depp and Christian Bale. The Atlanta native has been acting in movies for over two decades. In 1990, Dorff was chosen from 2,000 actors who auditioned for the lead role in John G. Avildsen's *The Power Of One*, starring opposite Morgan Freeman, John Gielgud and Fay Masterson.

In addition to Gabe and Alan Polsky's *The Motel Life*, Dorff has appeared as "fifth Beate" Stuart Sutcliffe in Iain Softley's *Backbeat*, and as cross-dressing underground movie star Candy Darling in Mary Harron's *I Shot Andy Warhol*. Other highlights in Dorff's career include appearances in Bob Rafelson's *Blood And Wine*, opposite Jack Nicholson and Michael Caine; Stephen Norrington's *Blade* (for which he won the MTV Movie Award for Best Villain), John Waters' *Cecil B. DeMented*, Lee Daniels' *Shadowboxer*, Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*, Mike Figgis' *Cold Creek Manor*, Eran Riklis' *Zaytoun* and Stone's *Deal*, and he recently wrapped Nick Love's *American Hero*. Dorff was most recently cast in the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* prequel *Leatherface* and the fantasy family film *Albion: Rise Of The Danann*.

99 Homes

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

RAMIN BAHRANI (director, co-writer) films have screened at the Venice, Cannes, Sundance, Berlin and Toronto Film Festivals.

Bahrani has won numerous awards, including the FIPRESCI critic's prize for best film in Venice (*Goodbye Solo*, 2009) and a Guggenheim Fellowship, among many others. He has been the subject of retrospectives in venues such as the MoMA in NYC. In 2010 legendary film critic Roger Ebert proclaimed Bahrani as "the director of the decade."

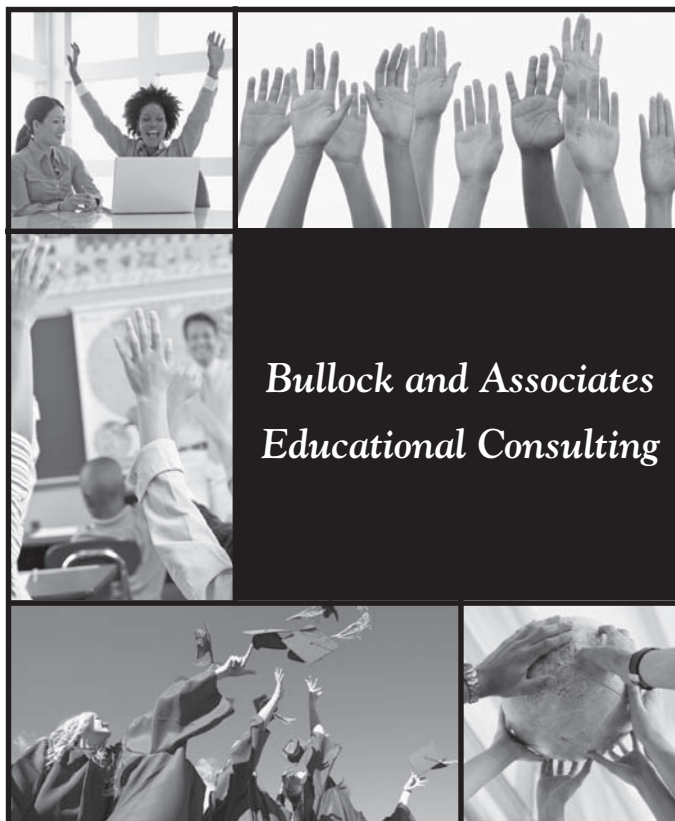
Additional credits include *Man Push Cart* (2005), *Chop Shop* (2006), *Goodbye Solo* (2009), *Plastic Bag* (short, 2009), *At Any Price* (2012) and *Lift You Up* (short, 2014).

NOAH LOMAX (actor), at only 13 years old, has appeared on some of TV's hottest projects and has already had lead roles in 3 major feature films. His feature film debut was *Playing For Keeps*, where he starred opposite Gerard Butler and Jessica Biel for director Gabriele Muccino. He was next seen in the film adaptation of Nicholas Sparks' *Safe Haven* opposite Josh Duhamel, directed by Lasse Hallstrom. Lomax stars as Andrew Garfield's son in Ramin Bahrani's indie drama *99 Homes*, also starring Michael Shannon and Laura Dern. *99 Homes* premiered at the 2014 Venice Film Festival, screened at TIFF, Telluride and Sundance to much critical acclaim, and is positioned to release spring 2015.

Lomax's TV work includes a recurring role on AMC's hit series *The Walking Dead*, and guest appearances in *Bones* (Fox), *The Middle* (ABC), *Mad Love* (CBS), and *Drop Dead Diva* and *Army Wives* (Lifetime).

Lomax was born in New Orleans, and lived there until Hurricane Katrina, which forced his family to evacuate. They eventually relocated permanently to Atlanta in 2006. Lomax booked his first gig when he was seven years old, a guest star role on *Army Wives*, and he was hooked. His mom notes, "Noah's first job was a 2-day shoot, and he was so

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devastated when it was over. He said, 'I don't want this to end, can we do it again?' So, his dad and I decided to let him keep acting, as long as he loves it! Never in a million years would we have thought Noah would want to be an actor."

When not working on film and TV projects, Lomax loves to be outdoors. He plays 7th grade football and is a wide receiver for his team. A hockey lover, he is a huge Chicago Blackhawks fan, as well as a New Orleans Saints fan. He has a dog named Romeo.

On the charity front, he actively supports Soccer for Hope, a non-profit organization that raises awareness and funds for pediatric cancer research through soccer related activities. Lomax currently splits his time between Atlanta and LA, and lives with his mom, dad, and older sister Maddie.

Seymour: An Introduction

Sunday, April 19, 11:00 a.m.

SEYMOUR BERNSTEIN (subject, pianist, composer, writer, and lecturer) [Bio adapted from the *NY Times* article "Seymour Bernstein Triumphs at the Piano" by Donal Henahan]

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Seymour Bernstein was already teaching piano at the age of 15, his then teacher, Clara Husserl, having arranged for him to supervise the practicing of some of her gifted younger pupils. He soon had a class of pupils of his own, some of whom are still studying with him. By age 17, he'd achieved local fame as a performer, winning the Griffith Artist Award. Inducted into the Army during the Korean War, he gave concerts on the front lines and for top military leaders. During this experience, he came to understand that he possessed a missionary zeal, a desire to bring music's message to a wider audience.

Bernstein realized this goal through a concert career that took him to Asia, Europe, and throughout the Americas, and with his books *With Your Own Two Hands* and *20 Lessons in Keyboard Choreography*, which have been published in German,

Japanese, Korean, Russian and Chinese. Two new books, *Monsters and Angels: Surviving a Career in Music* and *Chopin: Interpreting His Notational Symbols* have recently been published by Manduca Music Publishing.

Bernstein studied with such notable musicians as Alexander Brailowsky, Sir Clifford Curzon, Jan Gorbaty, Nadia Boulanger and Georges Enesco. He debuted in 1969 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, playing the world premiere of Concerto No. 2 by Villa-Lobos. He's won First Prize and Prix Jacques Durand at Fontainebleau, the National Federation of Music Clubs Award for Furthering American Music Abroad, a Beebe Foundation grant, 2 Martha Baird Rockefeller grants and 4 State Department grants. Wherever his concert tours took him, he made a point of offering master classes and lecture recitals. When grant money allowed, he filled his suitcases with scores to distribute to teachers and students.

One of the most sought-after clinicians in this country and abroad, Bernstein is also a prolific composer, with many works on the bestseller list. His compositions range from teaching material for students of all levels to the most sophisticated concert pieces. He continues to perform as a guest artist with chamber ensembles and serves regularly on the juries of a number of international competitions. In addition to his piano faculty appointment at NYU Steinhardt, Bernstein maintains a private studio in New York City. On December 18, 2004, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music degree from Shenandoah University.

Audience and press responses to Ethan Hawke's documentary on Bernstein have eclipsed all expectations. Sundance Selects purchased the rights to the film and released it to theaters throughout the US and South America.

ANDREW HARVEY is Founder and Director of the Institute of Sacred Activism, an international organization. He has taught at Oxford and Cornell Universities as well as various colleges and spiritual centers throughout the world.

2015 Panelists & Special Guests

SIMON ABRAMS is a New York-based film critic and regular contributor to the *Village Voice*, *Esquire*, *Vulture*, and other outlets. Recently, Simon introduced a screening of Walerian Borowczyk's *Blanche* (1971) at Lincoln Center. He's currently working on a non-fiction book on a history of gore and the exploitation of violence on film.

DAN ARONSON has been at the forefront of technology since the 1980s, when he began building supercomputers at Thinking Machines Corporation. Dan co-founded Fandor, a subscription-based streaming site for independent and foreign cinema, to take advantage of the distribution opportunities of the internet as a platform to better connect great films with people who want to see them. 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, as Co-President and Co-Founder of Sony Pictures Classics (with Tom Bernard), which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2012, 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 158 Academy Award® nominations including several for Best Picture: *Whiplash*, *Amour*; *Midnight in Paris*, Woody Allen's most successful film of all time; *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 36 wins (most recently Julianne Moore for Best Actress for *Still Alice*, and J.K. Simmons for Best Supporting Actor for *Whiplash*), including five for Best Documentary Feature, most recently for *Searching For Sugarman*, *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*, *A Separation* and *Amour*. Other notable award wins include 41 Independent Spirit Awards and 22 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 (*Only Lovers Left Alive*, *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*); animated features (*The Triplets Of Bellville*, *Persepolis*, *Waltz With Bashir*); feature documentaries (*Dogtown And The Z Boys*, *Crumb*, *Winged Migration*, *It Might Get Loud*, *The Gatekeepers*, *Tim's Vermeer*, *The Armstrong Lie*) 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 by Indian master Satyajit Ray.

continued on next page

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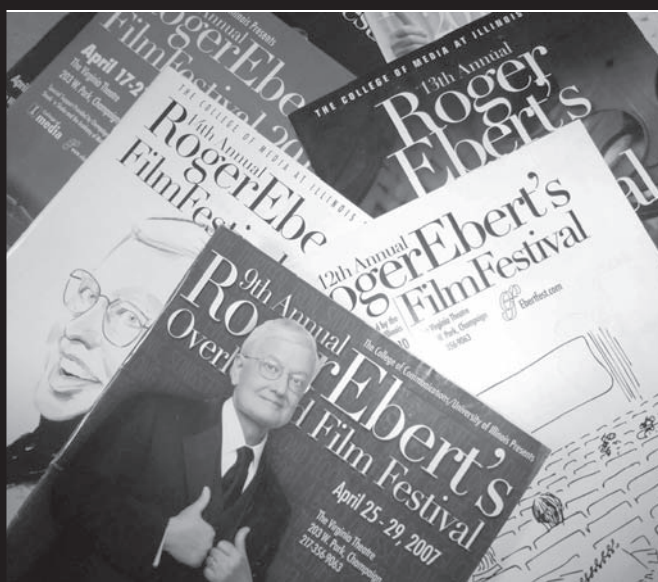


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Sony Pictures Classics most recently released *Still Alice* (Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland), *Mr. Turner* (Mike Leigh), *Leviathan* (Andrey Zvyagintsev), *Foxcatcher* (Bennett Miller), *Whiplash* (Damien Chazelle), *Red Army* (Gabe Polsky) and *Wild Tales* (Damián Sziffrón).

Upcoming releases include *The Salt Of The Earth* (Wim Wenders and Julianio Ribeiro Salgado), *Infinitely Polar Bear* (Maya Forbes), *Lambert & Stamp* (James D. Cooper), *Saint Laurent* (Bertrand Bonello), *Jimmy's Hall* (Ken Loach), *Grandma* (Paul Weitz) and *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (Marielle Heller).

JASON BRETT is a creative entrepreneur whose career spans theater, film, TV and technology. He founded Chicago's famed Apollo Theater, home to Chicago's longest running hit musical, *Million Dollar Quartet*, and has produced dozens of theatrical productions featuring John Malkovich, Joan Allen, Jim Belushi, William H. Macy, Laurie Metcalfe, Gary Sinise, Jeff Perry, Megan Mullally and William Peterson. He has created and written dozens of TV series and produced the classic film comedy, *About Last Night*.

As an entertainment executive, Jason launched the scripted series division of Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Television, and headed up the film and TV division of America's legendary comedy theater, The Second City. Moving into technology, Jason founded MashPlant, a multi-media sharing platform that builds community around learning, now used in hundreds of classrooms worldwide.

Jason holds a BFA in Theater from the University of Illinois, is an avid pilot and a lifelong musician. He is married to physician and author, Dr. Lauren Streicher.

MATT FAGERHOLM has been covering the film beat in Chicago for the last nine years, writing film reviews and conducting interviews for a variety of outlets including *Time Out Chicago*, *The A.V. Club* and *HollywoodChicago.com*. He is an employee of The Ebert Company and publisher of the independent film blog, *Indie-Outlook.com*.

SCOTT FOUNDAS is the Chief Film Critic for *Variety*. Prior to joining *Variety*, he was Chief Film Critic for the *LA Weekly* and *The Village Voice*, in addition to which his writing on film has appeared in the *DGA Quarterly*, *Film Comment*, *Slate* and *The New York Times*. In 2010, he was named Critic of the Year at the LA Press Club's National Entertainment Journalism Awards. In 2013, a Spanish-language collection of his writing entitled *Time Stopped* was published by the Mar Del Plata Film Festival in Argentina. As a programmer, Foundas spent 6 years as a member of the New York Film Festival selection committee and three years as Associate Program Director for the Film Society of Lincoln Center. In addition, he has been a programming consultant to the Cannes and Telluride film festivals and the film department of the Walker Art Center.

SAM FRAGOSO, a native of Chicago, currently lives and works in San Francisco as a journalist and student at SF State University. He's the founder of *Movie Mezzanine*, a regular contributor at Forbes, and a member of the SFFCC. His work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Playboy*, *The Daily Beast*, *Vulture*, *The Dissolve*, *Interview Magazine*, *VICE* and, of course, RogerEbert.com.

GLENN KENNY is the editor of *A Galaxy Not So Far Away: Writers and Artists On 25 Years of 'Star Wars'* (Holt, 2002) and the author of *Robert De Niro: Anatomy of An Actor* (Phaidon/Cahiers du Cinema, 2014). His writings on the arts have appeared in a wide variety of publications, which include the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Rolling Stone*, the *Village Voice*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Humanities*, and others. From the mid-1990s to the magazine's 2007 folding, he was a senior editor and the chief film critic for *Premiere*. There he commissioned and edited pieces by David Foster Wallace, Tony Kushner, Martin Amis, William Prochnau, and other well-regarded writers. He also wrote early features on such soon-to-be-prominent motion picture figures as Paul Thomas Anderson and Billy Bob Thornton. He currently contributes film reviews

and essays to RogerEbert.com and to *Vanity Fair Online*, *Decider*, the *Criterion Collection* website, and other outlets. He has made numerous television and radio appearances and appears as an actor in Steven Soderbergh's 2009 film *The Girlfriend Experience*, and Preston Miller's 2010 *God's Land*. He was born in Fort Lee, New Jersey and has been a resident of Brooklyn since 1990; he lives in that borough with his wife.

LEONARD MALTIN is one of the world's most respected film critics and historians. He is best known for his widely-used reference work *Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide* and its companion volume *Leonard Maltin's Classic Movie Guide*, as well as his 30-year run on TV's *Entertainment Tonight*. He teaches at the USC School of Cinematic Arts and appears regularly on the Reelz Channel.

His books include *The 151 Best Movies You've Never Seen*, *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons*, *The Great Movie Comedians*, *The Disney Films*, *The Art of the Cinematographer*, *Movie Comedy Teams*, *The Great American Broadcast*, and *Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia*.

He served two terms as President of the LA Film Critics Association, is a voting member of the National Film Registry, and was appointed by the Librarian of Congress to sit on the Board of Directors of the National Film Preservation Foundation.

He hosted and co-produced the popular *Walt Disney Treasures* DVD series and has appeared on innumerable television programs and documentaries. He has received numerous awards from the American Society of Cinematographers, the Telluride Film Festival, Anthology Film Archives, and San Diego's Comic-Con International. Perhaps the pinnacle of his career was his appearance in a now-classic episode of *South Park*. (Or was it Carmela consulting his *Movie Guide* on an episode of *The Sopranos*?)

He holds court at leonardmaltin.com. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook; you can also listen to him on his weekly podcast: *Maltin on Movies with Baron Vaughn*.

NELL MINOW began reviewing movies for her high school and college newspapers and has been writing reviews online as the Movie Mom since 1995. Her website Movie Mom includes reviews of theatrical and DVD/Blu-Ray releases as well as features, interviews, and contests, and she appears each week on radio stations across the country and Huffington Post to talk about new releases. Her writing about movies and popular culture has appeared in many outlets, including RogerEbert.com, *USA Today*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Kansas City Star*, and the Motion Picture Association's thecredits.org. Her books include *The Movie Mom's Guide to Family Movies*, *101 Must-See Movie Moments*, and the *50 Must-See Movies* series.

OMER MOZAFFAR is the Muslim Chaplain at Loyola University. A scholar of religion, he received an "Excellence in Teaching Award in the Humanities, Arts, and Sciences" in 2011 from the University of Chicago's Graham School. He also teaches at DePaul and other Chicago area institutions, academic and confessional. In 2009, Roger named him as one of his Far Flung Correspondents. Omer misses Roger tremendously.

SHEILA O'MALLEY received a BFA in Theatre from the University of Rhode Island and a Master's in Acting from the Actors Studio MFA Program. She is a regular film critic for Rogerebert.com, and has also contributed reviews and essays to *The Dissolve*, *Fandor*, *Bright Wall/Dark Room*, *Capital New York*, *Movie Mezzanine*, *The Sewanee Review* and *Press Play*. Her video essay on the work of Gena Rowlands was included in the Criterion Collection's release of John Cassavetes' *Love Streams*. Her script *July and Half of August* was recently shot as a short film, starring Annika Marks and Robert Baker. O'Malley writes about actors, movies, books, and Elvis Presley at her personal site, *The Sheila Variations*.

continued on next page

Thanks Chaz!

— Marsha



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MICHAEL PHILLIPS is the *Chicago Tribune* film critic. He cohosted 100 or so episodes of the long-running nationally syndicated *At the Movies*, first opposite Richard Roeper, then A.O. Scott. He reviewed *Taxi Driver* for his high school paper, *The Shield*. He went on to write about movies for the Twin Cities weekly *City Pages*. He served as theater critic of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, the *Dallas Times-Herald* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. He came to the *Tribune* as its drama critic in 2002 before being named film critic in 2006. He has hosted programming for Turner Classic Movies. He lives in Logan Square with his wife, *Tribune* columnist Heidi Stevens, and their three children. He's also happy and honored to be back at Ebertfest.

ERIC PIERSON is an associate professor and former chair of the Communication Studies Department at the University of San Diego. His work on black images and audiences has appeared in the *Encyclopedia of African American Business History*, *Screening Noir*, the *Encyclopedia of the Great Black Migration*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* and *Watching While Black: Centering the Television of Black Audiences*. His most recent work, "The Clinton 12" and "Prom Night in Mississippi: Conversations in Integration," appears in the collection of essays, *Documenting the Black Experience*. Eric can also be seen in the documentary *Infiltrating Hollywood: The Rise and Fall of the Spook Who Sat By The Door*.

Eric holds two degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a BFA in Fine Arts and a PhD from the Institute for Communications Research.

ZAK PIPER is an Emmy®-winning producer who previously served as Director of Production at Kartemquin Films for more than a decade.

Zak produced the critically acclaimed documentary *Life Itself*, which premiered at Sundance 2014 and was an official selection of Cannes 2015. *Life Itself* was named Best Documentary of the year by over 12 critics associations, The Critic's Choice

Awards and The National Board of Review. Zak also received an the Producer's Guild award for Outstanding Producer of a Documentary.

Previously, Zak co-produced *The Interrupters*, which premiered at Sundance and was released in the US, Canada and the UK, culminating in TV broadcasts on PBS *Frontline*, BBC *Storyville*, Canal+, and the CBC. The film received a 2012 Spirit Award for Best Documentary and was awarded Best Documentary by the Chicago Film Critics Association. *The New Yorker*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *LA Times* all hailed *The Interrupters* as one of the year's best films.

He is currently directing his first feature documentary, set for completion in 2017.

TODD RENDLEMAN is Professor of Communication Studies at Seattle Pacific University, where he teaches film art, history and criticism. He is the author of *Rule of Thumb: Ebert at the Movies* (Bloomsbury, 2012) and he lives in Seattle.

RICHARD ROEPER is a columnist and film critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. His reviews are syndicated to more than 100 newspapers in the United States. He has hosted radio shows on WLUP-FM, WLS-FM and WLS-AM. He is the author of 8 books, with two more scheduled for publication in the next year.

Richard has been an on-air contributor to CBS-2, Fox and WLS-TV in Chicago. He is currently a regular on *Windy City Live* on ABC-7. He also reviews films for the Reelz Channel.

For nine years, Richard was the co-host of *Ebert & Roeper*. He has appeared as a guest on *Oprah*, *Nightline*, *The Tonight Show*, *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *Top Chef*, *The Conan O'Brien Show*, *Entourage* and many other national programs.

All of Richard's reviews can be found at richardroeper.com and on the Richard Roeper app.

REBECCA THEODORE-VACHON is a contributor to RogerEbert.com. Her work has also been published at TheUrbanDaily.com, Forbes.com, and NYTimes.com. She also runs her own blog FilmFataleNYC.

blogspot.com and co-hosts "Cinema in Noir" podcast on Sundays on BlogTalkRadio.

PETER SOBCZYNSKI saw his very first film, *Dumbo*, when he was 3 and has not stopped talking about them since then. Currently, he is a proud contributor to RogerEbert.com and also reviews films for eFilmcritic.com and for Magills Cinema Annual. He is also a programming advisor for the Chicago Critics Film Festival, an annual festival of upcoming film put together entirely by Chicago-based film critics. He is excited to be attending Ebertfest again this year and, while he cannot promise that he will participate in any karaoke competitions with his colleagues, he says that, if he does, Taylor Swift will be his jam. He currently resides in the suburbs of Chicago, is eagerly awaiting *Fury Road* and would like to have a few words with Tim Burton about this *Dumbo* remake he is supposedly doing.

BRIAN TALLERICO has covered TV, film, video games, Blu-ray/DVD, interviews and entertainment news for over a decade online, on radio and in print. Tallerico is the managing editor of RogerEbert.com. In addition, he is the editor of Magill's Cinema Annual, a regular guest on Chicago radio, writes the PlayStation Guide for About.com and freelances for Videohound. He also serves as vice president of the Chicago Film Critics Association and co-produces the Chicago Critics Film Festival. None of it is possible and none of it is worthwhile without the support of his wife Lauren and 3 boys: Lucas, Miles, and Noah.

SUSAN WLOSZCZYNA, now a regular contributor and critic for RogerEbert.com, previously spent much of her nearly 30 years at *USA Today* as a senior entertainment reporter doing her dream job. She visited the New Zealand film set of *The Lord of the Rings* and was a zombie extra in George Romero's *Land of the Dead*. She interviewed countless show biz figures including icons (Vincent Price, Shirley Temple, Peter O'Toole, Mr. Rogers), A-list stars (George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks, Will

Smith, Sandra Bullock, Denzel Washington) and big-name filmmakers (Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Martin Scorsese, Jane Campion, Nancy Meyers, Spike Lee, Wes Anderson and Alexander Payne).

Her positions at *USA Today* also included being a film reviewer for twelve years as well as the *Life* section copy desk chief. She has served on juries at film festivals in Nantucket and Sarasota, and is a founding member of The Alliance of Women Film Journalists and belongs to The Washington Area Film Critics Association and the Broadcast Film Critics Association.

Since leaving the Nation's Newspaper in 2013, Wloszczyna has devoted herself to exploring new opportunities in the world of online journalism. In addition to her RogerEbert.com duties, she is an Oscar columnist and writer for the *Women and Hollywood* blog and also regularly contributes to the *Thompson on Hollywood* blog, both part of the *Indiewire.com* website.

MATT ZOLLER SEITZ is the Editor-in-Chief of RogerEbert.com. He is also the TV critic for *New York Magazine* & *Vulture.com* and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in criticism.

A Brooklyn-based writer and filmmaker, Seitz 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 and *The L Magazine*, 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*. Seitz is the founder and original editor of *The House Next Door*, now a part of *Slant Magazine*, and the publisher of *Press Play*, a blog of film and TV criticism and video essays. He is the director of the 2005 romantic comedy *Home* and the forthcoming sci-fi epic *Rabbit of the Sith*. He is currently writing a memoir titled *All the Things that Remind Me of Her*.

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Ramis' work far more than just 'Ghostbusters'

By Johnathan Hettinger, The Daily Illini



Harold Ramis rose to fame through movies like "Ghostbusters" and "Groundhog Day," but Ramis' contributions to film are far more than these early works.

Harold Ramis is quickly recognized as the quirky Dr. Egon Spengler in "Ghostbusters." He is also spotted as the neurologist in "Groundhog Day." But his appearances in these works are not the reason the Chicago native is being honored with the first-ever film tribute at Ebertfest.

In addition to his on-screen duties, Ramis also helped write the screenplay for both of these films, and he directed "Groundhog Day." Ramis also directed "Caddyshack" and "National Lampoon's Vacation." Ramis also helped pen the screenplays for "Caddyshack," "Meatballs" and "Animal House."

Ramis' contribution to comedy films is beyond compare, and it is fitting that he is remembered for these films, along with comedy greats Chevy Chase, Bill Murray and John Belushi.

Ramis got his start in comedy writing and reviewing jokes for Playboy magazine before joining the Second City comedy troupe in Chicago.

Most recently, Ramis directed four episodes of "The Office" and the movie "Year One," which starred Jack Black and Michael Cera.



Ramis helped write the screenplay for "Animal House."



Before his death in 2014, Ramis directed 12 movies.



Like many of the people he worked with, Ramis got his start at Second City.



"Year One" was Ramis' final movie.



Ramis directed "Groundhog Day."



Ramis directed comedy great Chevy Chase in "Caddyshack" and "National Lampoon's Vacation."

WEDNESDAY 7PM

3D FILM SCREENING SPONSORED BY: JAMES BOND

Goodbye to Language

Unique production true to Godard's original style

By Matt Zoller Sietz

Yes, but what is Godard trying to say?

This is the question, the question, the question critics ask, and have asked, since Jean Luc-Godard made his first feature, "Breathless," back in 1959. And with his latest, "Goodbye to Language," they're asking it again.

What is it? Where to begin? Much of the film is built around a young couple at a lake house who do a lot of arguing and also spend a lot of time naked. (Much of this feels like a self-parody of European art cinema tendencies: How can I get people to sit still for an extended discussion of politics and language? By having attractive people take their clothes off, of course.) But these characters one just anchor points for, essentially,

a feature length montage, much of it quickly edited, with few shots held longer than three or four seconds. The style might be irritating in a traditional narrative film. But it seems of a piece in a movie that is partly about (Godard's films are always "about" more than one thing—and often only partly about any of them) the impossibility of focusing, concentrating, and comprehending history, and politics, and the written and spoken word, then making all of it make some kind of sense, if only to yourself. If Terrence Malick tried to make a Godard film in the spirit of Godard, it might look something like this, though with less prolonged discussion of Hitler, the Holocaust, colonialism, imperialism and other favorite

The film continually circles back to its rhetorical center — the idea that existence is about trying to reconcile the "real" world with the subject experience of the world.

Godard subjects, but with Godard's cryptic voice-over aphorisms ("This morning is a dream. Each person must think that the other is the dreamer").

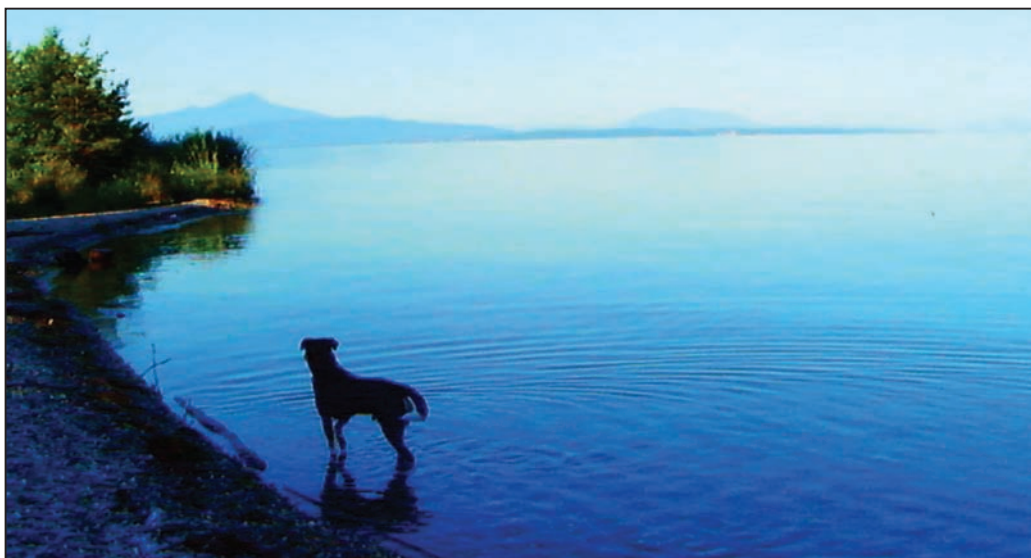
Did I mention it's in 3-D? It's in 3-D. And Godard's use of 3-D is the most original since Werner Herzog's "The Cave of Forgotten Dreams." Herzog's brilliance was counterintuitive (at least from a commercial standpoint). He put a technical process that's often deployed

in service of spectacle and violence and instead used it in the most mundane (and therefore revelatory) manner: to give an added sense of presence, of "you are there-ness," to very long takes, of a camera gliding through plant life (a snake's-eye view) or an unseen viewer (us) scrutinizing an ancient mural, or listening to an expert tell us about that mural while shifting nervously from foot to foot.

Godard deploys the technology in a cheeky way (of course he does; he's Godard!). Here, 3-D becomes one more element in Godard's career-long fascination with exploring cinema's formal properties, its grammar and technique and technology—the better to show how films can tell or elide a story, reveal or obfuscate the truth, or just kill screen time by distracting us with pretty pictures or jokes. There are a lot of pretty pictures in this movie, and a lot of jokes, and they're not all corrosive or politically minded. Sometimes Godard seems to just be doing them because he wants to



Héloïse Godet stars as Josette in "Goodbye to Language." Godet is one of this year's Ebertfest guests.



"Goodbye to Language" uses technology in many unique ways throughout the film.

do them—because he wants to try something new, or different. Other times the film combines pretty pictures and jokes to create an oxymoron: a gorgeous sight gag.

The film often superimposes

two titles or subtitles over each other, collage-style, or allows people or objects in the frame to partly obscure written words; at a New York screening of "Goodbye to Language" a few weeks back, the first time the

film played around with text in this way, you could see a few critics sort of leaning to one side, as if attempting to see around whatever was on top

continued on page 42

FILMCREDITS

GOODBYE TO LANGUAGE

(2014) Not Rated

Written and directed by
Jean-Luc Godard

CAST:

Héloïse Godet as Josette
Kamel Abdeli as Gédéon
Richard Chevallier as Marcus
Zoé Bruneau as Ivitch
Christian Gregori as Davidson
Jessica Erickson as Mary Shelley

Running time: 70 minutes

Print courtesy:
Kino Lorber

SPECIAL TRIBUTE WEDNESDAY 9:30PM

Harold Ramis Tribute



This year's Festival is dedicated to Harold Ramis, 1944-2014

Join us for a special tribute to Harold Ramis, featuring a collection of short clips from his movies along with other footage.

The screening will be followed by a conversation with his wife Erica Ramis, producer Trevor Albert, producer Laurel Ward and Chaz Ebert.



Erica Ramis (top), Trevor Albert (center), and Laurel Ward (bottom).

Goodbye to Language

continued from page 41

of the thing that they wanted to see. The movie also uses 3-D to create something like 2 1/2 D, by which I mean, you're aware of separate planes within the same image, seemingly separated by indeterminate space, yet each plane is two-dimensional, which means the net effect is like looking through a series of scrims, each emblazoned with a silkscreened image. (Godard has contributed episodes to two 3-D anthology films, "The Three Disasters" and "The Bridges of Sarajevo." Clearly this format is not just a lark to him.)

Shooting in digital video again, the 83-year old director plays with color saturation, exposure, light and shadow. In shots taken through the windshield of a car zipping down a highway at night,

the blacks have been crushed so that you can't see any background detail; red taillights in the background become splashes of red. In a shot of roses in a green field, the red of the flowers has been cranked up so that the color smears and seems to be trying to escape the petals, like spirits escaping a body. An intriguingly Malick-ian point-of-view shot looking up at trees festooned with fall leaves favors two colors: orange for the leaves and violet for the sky. And of course, there are lots and lots and lots of shots of dogs. Godard loves dogs.

Meanwhile the film's multiple narrators go full-steam ahead, peppering the soundtrack with thoughts and fragments of thoughts, some of them overlapping. Some music

cues are cut off abruptly, as if somebody had pressed the "Stop" button on a recording. We hear that cinema is the enemy and savior of memory, that the state is at war with its people. The camera lingers over a shot of a sink superimposed over a shot of bisected oranges and lemons superimposed over a red substance (blood) slowly spreading through water.

The film continually circles back to its rhetorical center—the idea that existence is about trying to reconcile the "real" world with the subjective experience of the world, and the names and notions we use to catalog and define the world—but the digressions are what make it sing, or scat-sing.

"I will barely say a word," says a voice on the soundtrack—maybe Godard?—

adding, "I am looking for poverty in language." Given that the film is itself so richly expressive in every sort of language (written, spoken, visual) this seems like yet another wonderful joke, one that somehow doubles as a lament. "Goodbye to Language" will be catnip to anyone who continues to appreciate Godard and find him fascinating, and toxic to anyone who read this review and thought, "No thanks."

It's a rapturous experience, mostly, though tempered by a certain Godardian crankiness. Watching it is, I would imagine, as close as we'll get to being able to be Godard, sitting there thinking, or dreaming. It's a documentary of a restless mind.

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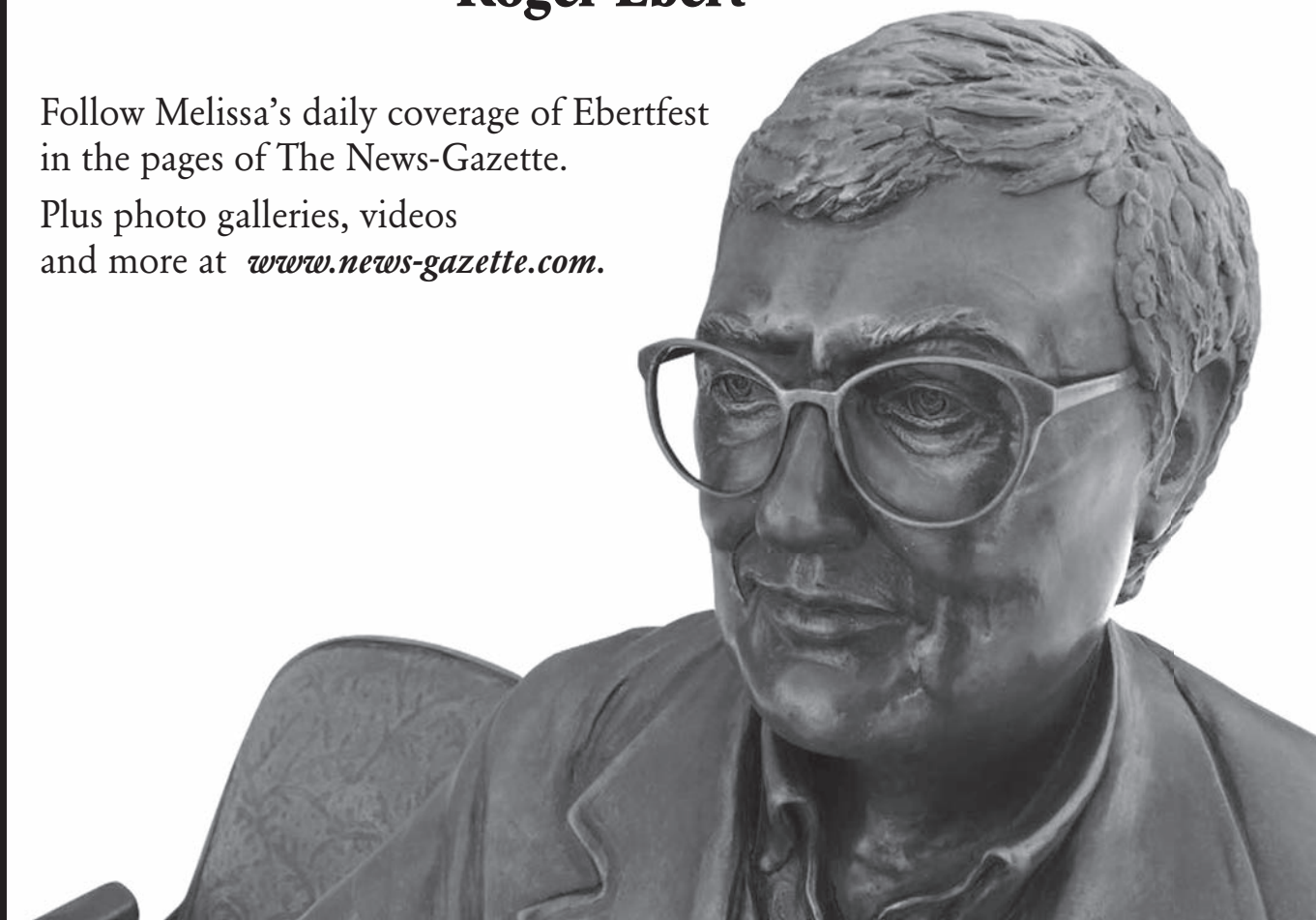
Melissa Merli

**“I’d hire her
on **any**
paper I
edited.”**

– Roger Ebert

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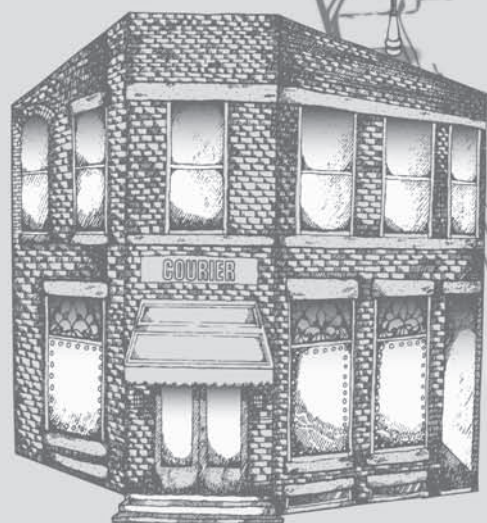
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THURSDAY 1PM

A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence

Despite end-of-life theme, film is anything but ‘dull’

By Peter Debruge

In a Venice Film Festival lineup full of cynicism, suicide and despair, who would expect the new Roy Andersson picture — “the final part of a trilogy on being a human being” — to be the most life-affirming? And yet, from its comic title to the wistful smile that accompanies its over-too-soon last shot, Andersson’s delightfully odd “A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence” finds the Swedish master of comic absurdity feeling downright generous, perched at a comfortable enough distance from this coterie of sad sacks and lonelyhearts to recognize the humor in such painful subjects as mortality, aging, unpaid debts and unrequited love.

Just last year, Ethan Hawke was quoted as referring to “Before Sunrise” and its two sequels as “the lowest-grossing trilogy in the history of motion pictures.” But even he probably hasn’t bought tickets to Andersson’s incomparable triptych — rapturously

received by critics, though audiences have proven all but allergic to the first two films, which have cleared barely \$100,000 so far in the U.S. The result of four years of rigorous planning and meticulous execution, “Pigeon” could fare slightly better than “Songs From the Second Floor” and “You, the Living” (both of which bowed at Cannes), but only just. At least arthouse programmers can now get creative, treating Andersson’s now-complete tragicomic opus, a decade and a half in the making, as the special event that it is.

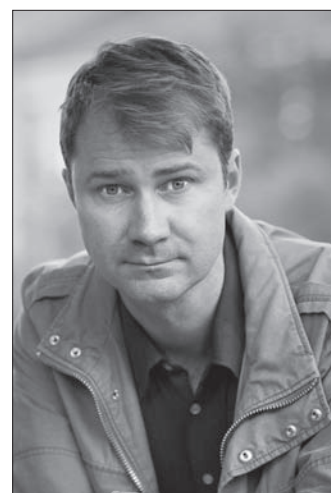
“Pigeon” is by far the most accessible of the three films, offering a continuity throughline in the form of novelty salesmen Sam (Nils Westblom) and Jonathan (Holger Andersson), a comedic duo who’d be right at home in a Samuel Beckett or Tom Stoppard play. Here, the Laurel-and-Hardy-esque pair appear in nearly one-third of the film’s 37 fixed-camera compositions,

a series of chuckle-inducing tableaux that clock in at just under three minutes apiece on average.

Each of these shots serves as a nearly self-contained comic vignette, like a cross between a “Where’s Waldo” cartoon and a Gregory Crewdson photograph, and the best way to approach them is as you might a large-canvas painting or a Jacques Tati film: Study the faces, soak up the details, allow the eye to wander and the mind to free-associate. Where other directors seek out exceptional moments, Andersson endeavors to capture the poetry of the mundane.

With the exception of one scene, in which twin girls blow bubbles from the balcony of a nondescript apartment building, and another that observes a plumpish new mom (Andersson loves his ladies with a little meat on their bones) cooing over her baby carriage, all the characters here are adults. Most of them have fewer days ahead of them than they do behind, but none seem to truly appreciate the gift of living. Andersson does, and he wants us to recognize it, too.

Right up front, the helmer presents three “meetings with death:” a husband who suffers a heart attack while struggling to uncork a wine bottle; an old



Producer Johan Carlsson is one of this year’s festival guest.

lady convinced she can take her handbag to heaven; and a cruise-ship passenger who collapses at the lunch counter, having just paid for his meal (sorry, no refunds). More playful than his fellow Swede Ingmar Bergman, who famously challenged Death to a game of chess, Andersson recognizes that there’s no cheating mortality — though sometimes we can speed it along, like the suicidal CEO glimpsed later in the film. Best just to have a sense of humor about it.

Some critics have mistaken Andersson’s movies as “depressing” (while others have incorrectly labeled him a “commercial director,”

Where other directors seek out exceptional moments, Andersson endeavors to capture the poetry of the mundane.

FILMCREDITS

A PIGEON SAT ON A BRANCH REFLECTING ON EXISTENCE

(2014) Not Rated

Written and directed by
Roy Andersson

CAST:

Holger Andersson as Jonathan
Nils Westblom as Sam
Viktor Gyllenberg as Karl XII

Running time: 100 minutes

Print courtesy:
Magnolia Pictures



The final chapter in Roy Andersson's droll trilogy on "being a human being" introduces three dozen more brilliantly absurd vignettes.

failing to understand that he accepted those commissions to finance his painstaking feature ventures). "Droll" would be a better word for the artist's attitude toward the washed-out blue and beige world he presents. His characters wear white face makeup to enhance their pallor, sleepwalking zombie-like through their lives. Even the young couple seen necking on the beach appear to be doing so in slow-motion.

In the interval since his last film, Andersson has embraced hi-def digital cameras, which benefit his aesthetic enormously. Now, the helmer can ensure that even the far-distant background of every scene appears in sharp focus. Though the colors are dreary and the characters numb, compositionally speaking, there's not a single dull frame in the entire film. Andersson thinks like a painter, following Edward Hopper's example

of enhancing loneliness by depicting it within a greater context. He shoots rooms at an angle, using perspective to direct our eyes toward the activity in adjacent rooms or on the other side of windows, instead of observing everything directly on axis, the way his similarly detail-oriented American namesake, Wes Anderson, insists on doing.

In "Pigeon," people go about their business in the dreary little boxes of their lives, but they don't behave like marionettes on strings, but almost like actors on a stage, occasionally turning to address the audience. "Today I feel kind," announces a cheese monger, while his wife gestures to the audience to let us know she thinks he's crazy.

It's unclear whether the shift to digital has allowed Andersson to manipulate his footage the way directors such as David Fincher and

Ruben Ostlund do, using their locked-down cameras to make invisible nips and tucks. Regardless of the method, the film is a master class in comic timing, employing pacing and repetition with the skill of a practiced concert pianist.

Early on, outside a dance studio where the flamenco teacher gets a little too hands-on with one of her pupils, a lady janitor says into her phone, "I'm happy to hear you're doing fine." (Mobile phones are a rare nod to modern life in a film that appears to be set in a timeless retro past — and where King Charles XII and his infantry are prone to drop in unannounced, like characters in a Monty Python sketch.) The cleaning woman's line becomes a hollow platitude echoed by many of the characters by film's end, and yet, there's something to be said for merely surviving in such an absurd world as this.

Down on their luck, Sam and Jonathan bill themselves as being in the "entertainment business," selling plastic vampire teeth and a corny laughing device engineered to amuse. These two friends look like they haven't smiled in a long, long time. Emerging as the most well-rounded character in the entire trilogy, Jonathan suffers from melancholy spells, culminating in a disturbing dream sequence, where colonial soldiers lead African slaves into a giant copper instrument that produces a beautiful sound as the people inside are being roasted alive. What a curious species are homo sapiens. Judging by the film, we wage war, torture animals and take advantage of one another, and yet, Andersson assures us, things could be worse. In the grand scheme of things, he's happy to show we're doing fine.

THURSDAY 4PM

Moving Midway

Film critic visits South, discovers a surprising ancestry

By Roger Ebert, October 15, 2008

"Moving Midway" tells three stories, each one worthy of a film of its own. (1) It records the journey home to North Carolina of the film critic Godfrey Cheshire, and his discovery of his family's secret history. (2) It documents the ordeal of moving a 160-year-old Southern plantation house to a new location miles away, not by road but over land. (3) It demolishes the myth of the Southern plantation.

Movie critics are always asked if they've ever wanted to make a movie of their own. A handful, like Peter Bogdanovich and Rod Lurie, have had success with features. Others, like Todd McCarthy, have made good documentaries. Godfrey Cheshire's first film follows the first rule of both kinds of films:

Start with a strong story that you feel a personal connection with. His story grows stronger, and the connections deeper.

Like many critics (the Alabama-born Jonathan Rosenbaum comes to mind), Cheshire was a small-town boy who moved to the big city. First it was Raleigh, and now New York. In North Carolina, his youth revolved around Midway Plantation, outside Raleigh, the family seat since 1848. In 2006, the ravages of progress overran Midway. It was boxed in by two expressways. Best Buy was across the street. Target and Home Depot were moving in. Godfrey's brother Charlie hired experts to jack up the house, put it on wheels and move it to 60 or 70 acres deep into the country.

Godfrey went south to film this undertaking. It stirred family memories, and stories about the ghosts many people thought they had seen in Midway. Then he heard from an NYU professor of African-American studies named Robert Hinton, who said he was related to the family; Hinton is the ancestral name. Robert is African American. Godfrey invited him to come to North Carolina, visit the house and watch the move.

Hinton had written about a much-publicized North Carolina family reunion that reunited the black and white members of the same plantation family. Now he received an e-mail from a Brooklyn teacher named Al Hinton, who said his 96-year-old grandfather, Abraham



In "Moving Midway," film critic Godfrey Cheshire (above) learns of his unique history.

Lincoln Hinton, had some memories to share.

His mind clear as a bell, Abraham recalled, during a visit by Godfrey and Robert, that his father, born in 1848, took him past a big white two-story house and told him it was his birthplace. That was Midway. According to oral tradition in the African-American branch of the family, they were descended from a Hinton patriarch and a cook who was a black slave. There seems no doubt, both in genealogy and physical evidence: Every Hinton, white and black, has the same distinctive nose, which can clearly be seen in the portrait of their common ancestor.

Cheshire made these discoveries while filming, and Robert Hinton became co-producer. He considers the myth of the idyllic plantation as formed in works like "Birth



A 160-year-old Southern plantation house is moved to a new location miles away in "Moving Midway."

This is a deceptive film. It starts in one direction and discovers a better one.

of a Nation" and "Gone With the Wind," and demolished by "Roots." Hinton, whose slave ancestors constructed Midway and picked cotton there, is a succinct and sometimes droll observer. He surprises Cheshire by telling him he considers Midway part of his own heritage, and again when he says it doesn't bother him at all that the original land will be buried beneath a parking lot. Robert on Civil War reenactments:

"I'm comfortable with the idea that they keep refighting it, as long as they keep losing it."

Invited by Al and Abraham to a Hinton family reunion,

Cheshire finds he has more than 100 African-American cousins, all of whom know exactly who they are descended from. "It is becoming clearer," he says, "that the South is a mixed-race society." Robert Hinton reveals to him: "I found after I came North that I was more comfortable with Southern whites than with young blacks up here." When Cheshire's lively mother, Sis, and the stately Abraham meet, they are instantly at ease, even kidding with each other. Not that Sis doesn't believe the slaves, by and large, were taken good care of.

This is a deceptive film. It

starts in one direction and discovers a better one. Cheshire is a dry, almost dispassionate narrator, and that is good; preaching about his discoveries would sound wrong. Robert Hinton, whose feelings run deep, brings the story into focus: "I always wanted to meet a white Hinton. I was hoping I would hate him. The problem is, I like you, so I can't lay a lot of stuff on you." He is philosophical, but not resigned. There is a difference.

Meanwhile, at the new Shoppes of the Midway Plantation mall, there is a restaurant named Mingo's. That was the name of Midway's first slave. The mayor, bursting with civic pride about the new development, explains how we have all moved on and outgrown the troubles of the past. The mayor is black. We are now in the 21st century.

FILMCREDITS

MOVING MIDWAY

(2008) Not Rated


Written and directed by
Godfrey Cheshire

CAST:

Godfrey Cheshire
Elizabeth Silver Cheshire (Sis)
Charles Hinton Silver, Jr.
("Charlie," "Pooh")
Dena Williams Silver
Winston Sprague Silver
("Winkle")
John Wales Silver ("Possum")
Betty Wales Silver Howlson
Abraham Lincoln Hinton

Running time: 95 minutes

Print courtesy:
First Run Features



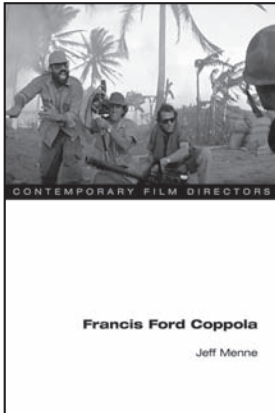
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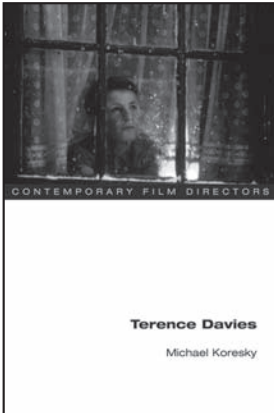
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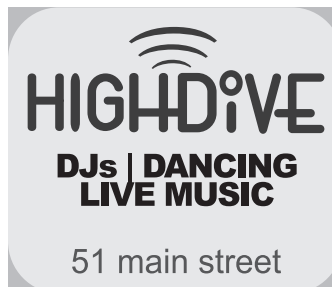
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THURSDAY 8:30PM

The End of the Tour

Impressive character dialogue elevates film's success

By Brian Tallerico

There's a scene halfway through James Ponsoldt's excellent "The End of the Tour" in which writer David Foster Wallace (Jason Segel) discusses his most common demographic—mostly men, mostly young. In 1996, which is when this scene takes place, I was that demographic. I carried around "Infinite Jest," Wallace's breakthrough book across my college campus and was either laughed at or cheered for lugging a three-pound, nearly-1,100 page book to class. Wallace struck a nerve in the mid-'90s for

thousands of literature fans looking for the "voice of their generation." Even if he never quite became that (because no one did), Wallace carved out a loyal, appreciative fan base, of which I must reveal I would have carried a card as a member if someone had printed them. In 2008, when Wallace killed himself, I was angry. It didn't dawn on me that we had read the last of his work. I didn't consider that possibility. It felt selfish to take such a gift away from his fans.

My concern as a fan was that "The End of the Tour"

It is a film about incredibly smart people made by incredibly smart people.

would attempt to "explain" why Wallace killed himself, the origin of his genius, or even the more hard-to-manage sides of his personality. Defining genius or tragedy are common routes to bad screenwriting. This is not that film. Working from a memoir by David Lipsky (played by Jesse Eisenberg in the film), Ponsoldt and writer Donald Margulies use a few crucial days of interaction between two writers to examine how genius, shyness and egocentrism can intersect, often in the same moment, without directly placing labels on any of them. The Wallace captured here is a man who only a year before derided all that is popular and "hot" only to become that himself. And as his literary star rose, he fought to hold on to the "normal life" he led. He was undeniably the smartest man in many a room he occupied, and yet, at least this version of him, refuses to embrace that, retreating into his average guy persona that really just protects him from his own insecurities and distrust.

"The End of the Tour" opens in 2008, as Lipsky hears of the death of Wallace. He pulls out the old tapes of his interviews (having to vulture batteries from his toothbrush to put in

an old recorder) and the bulk of the film takes place in 1996, when Lipsky worked for Rolling Stone and convinced his editor to expense an interview with the writer recently deemed the most important in his field. Lipsky travels to Wallace's nondescript home on a traffic-filled road, where he meets two rambunctious dogs, tries to chew tobacco for the first time, and notes that the place looks like a frat house. Is this how the voice of a generation lives? For the next five days, Wallace and Lipsky talk...and talk...and talk. "The End of the Tour" is very comparable to Richard Linklater's "Before" movies in the way that its greatest pleasures come not from narrative but discussion, and in how both films present chance encounters as life-shaping events.

From their first meeting, both Davids are nervously sizing each other up. Wallace is convinced that Lipsky is going to turn his words against him, always commenting on how the journalist can shape the narrative as he pleases. Lipsky recognizes Wallace's talent and feels the pressure to really capture something special given how rarely his publication interviews authors.



James Ponsoldt directed "The End of the Tour," a look at the late David Foster Wallace.

FILMCREDITS

THE END OF THE TOUR

(2015) Not Rated

Directed by **James Ponsoldt**

Written by
David Lipsky (book)
Donald Margulies

CAST:
Jason Segel
as David Foster Wallace
Jesse Eisenberg
as David Lipsky
Anna Chlumsky
as Sarah

Running time: 106 minutes

Print courtesy:
A24

On the other hand, Lipsky is a published author himself, with a girlfriend (Anna Chlumsky) who may have a bigger crush on DFW than Lipsky. And so there's a bit of intellectual gamesmanship going on in these conversations, trying to get closer to one another while not giving each other the upper hand.

Most of the joy of "The End of the Tour" comes in these carefully-constructed and yet seemingly casual conversations that often diverge into what may feel like tangents—I love that the gentlemen discuss the virtues of Alanis Morissette, go and excitedly see "Broken Arrow," and just enjoy each other's company—but regularly return to fascinating discussion topics. When Wallace comments that he doesn't know if he can trust women he meets on his book tour as to whether or not they're into him or his fame, Lipsky says, "Reading you is another way of knowing you." Do we really "know" the authors we adore through their

work? I don't think Wallace agrees. And I'm not sure Lipsky would by the end of the film. It's just one conversation-starting example in Margulies' stunning screenplay, a gift of highly intellectual discussion between two brilliant people at turning points in their lives.

How could someone who wants to be so ordinary write something as brilliant as "Infinite Jest"? It can be difficult for people to comprehend the everyday normalcy of people who produce works of art. And Wallace didn't exactly make himself open to the public, always concerned about the agendas of those around him and even his own reasons for wanting, or not wanting, fame. He's a man who wants to be in Rolling Stone but doesn't want to want to be in Rolling Stone.

At first, Segel's performance feels a bit mannered, but he settles into Wallace with a depth of character I did not think he had. He's always been a solid character actor,

but there's a deep blend of insecurity, melancholy, and remarkably intelligence in this performance. Eisenberg nearly matches him. Ten minutes into the film, it's hard to imagine it cast any other way. And the film is really theirs and theirs alone, despite some brief supporting turns by Joan Cusack and Mamie Gummer.

Even though I've loved his previous works, when I heard Ponsoldt was directing a film about David Foster Wallace, I was apprehensive. I wasn't sure it was the right fit of director and material. I was wrong. So many other filmmakers would have amplified Wallace's perceived misanthropy and delivered a cynical film about writing and writers. Ponsoldt loves his characters, and that likability softens the edges, without allowing the film to ever turn maudlin or sentimental. It is a film about incredibly smart people made by incredibly smart people, and that embrace of not just intellectual pursuit but what

the chase does to you is what elevates it into the best film of the first few days of Sundance 2015.



David Lipsky (left, played by Jesse Eisenberg) addresses David Foster Wallace (right, played by Jason Segel) in "The End of the Tour."

FRIDAY 1PM

Girlhood

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INCLUSION, AND RESPECT

Film shows complexity of friendship, feminine spirit

By Sheila O'Malley

Céline Sciamma's films are delicate and emotional examinations of, to quote Madonna, "what it feels like for a girl." Sciamma has directed three features thus far: "Water Lilies," "Tomboy," and now "Girlhood," and each one takes on a different sliver of the spectrum of adolescent or pre-adolescent girlhood. Girls are not a monolith, they are not all the same, they are not "the other," although you'd never know it considering some of the films out there. It takes an intuitive and devoted filmmaker like Sciamma to go beneath the surface of "girlhood," to remove the normal trappings, and to look at all of the different forces and influences in play. "Girlhood," her latest, is a powerful and entertaining

film about a gang of girls, and what friendship means, the protection it provides.

"Girlhood" follows Marieme (the extraordinary Karidja Touré) through her 16th year. She lives in a big housing project, and is the main caretaker of her younger sister. Her grades are poor and she is being pushed to transfer to a technical school and learn a trade. Her mother (Binta Diop) works so many jobs she is never around, and Marieme has to answer to her brother (Cyril Mendy), who is downright abusive. Marieme is a sweet and shy girl, her hair falling down her back in braids. One day three tough Rizzo-types, lolling on the bleachers, summon her over to their pow-wow. Their motivations aren't clear

What Sciamma is interested in is "moments." There are many moments that linger in the mind long after the film has ended.

at first. Marieme seems much younger than these glamour girls, all of whom wear long straight weaves, identical gold necklaces, and red lipstick. The cliché is that the "bad girls" will "corrupt" the good girl. But Sciamma is up to something different, thank goodness.

These three girls are Lady (the wonderful Assa Sylla), the leader of the pack, and the two humorous underlings, Fily (Mariétou Touré) and Adiatou (Lindsay Karamoh). They need a "fourth" to round out their group. They're trouble-makers, engaged in fighting with another group of girls; nothing too serious, just a lot of screaming insults across train platforms. Marieme enters the group dynamic: the four girls hustle, they shop-lift, they book hotel rooms and eat pizza. The gang of girls do not initiate Marieme into a dangerous world of drugs and sex. No, the tough girls initiate her into a world of belonging, of fun trash-talk, an environment where she can let loose, try on makeup and a different hairstyle (for her friends' benefit, not for any romantic prospect's benefit),

and experiment a little bit with identity. The new persona might not "fit" Marieme, ultimately, but she's 16 years old. She's figuring it out.

Life is tough out there, and the girls are aware of it. There are pimp-type guys starting to show interest in them, circling like sharks. There are judgmental fathers and brothers, who shame the girls for growing up, for wanting to stretch their wings a little bit, sexually. Marieme starts to date, tentatively, a boy she's known forever, named Ismaël (Idrissa Diabaté). Their scenes together offer a sweet space where both can allow themselves to be tender, in contrast to the closed-up toughness required in their larger world. They click. But it feels precarious. The girls watch their friends get knocked up and, for all intents and purposes, vanish from the world. They don't want that for themselves. They want ... something else, something more. Freedom. Liberty. To be left alone.

What Sciamma is interested in is "moments." There are



Karidja Touré plays Marieme, the main character in "Girlhood."

FILMCREDITS

GIRLHOOD

(2014) Not Rated

Written and directed by
Céline Sciamma

CAST:

Karidja Touré as Marieme
Idrissa Diabate as Ismaël
Rabah Nait Oufella as Kader

Running time: 112 minutes

Print courtesy:
Strand Releasing



Céline Sciamma's "Girlhood" delves into "what it feels like for a girl." The film follows a group of four tight-knit friends in their search for friendship and identity.

many moments that linger in the mind long after the film has ended. The epic slo-mo all-female football game of the opening. An early scene showing a raucous group of girls heading back to the projects, all talking at once, until they fall into silence, collectively, when they approach a group of boys lounging on the steps. The repeat shots of the back of Marieme's head throughout, breaking "Girlhood" up into unofficial "chapters." Marieme washing dishes, emerging into the concrete yard outside, the camera following her, her head facing out. (Sciamma started "Tomboy" with the back of a head as well, a head with shorn-short hair, looking away, creating an automatic confusion as to whether it was a boy or a girl, the whole theme of the film.) In "Girlhood," there are fight scenes and a hilarious miniature-golf excursion, as well as many painful reminders that no, they will not be left alone, the world cannot leave the girls alone.

A masterpiece scene comes halfway through, so powerful in its representation of shared joy and freedom that it sets off echoes around it that continue throughout the rest of the film. The girls have shop-lifted pretty dresses, and booked a hotel room where they can hang out for the night, maybe go out to a club later in their stolen goods. There's a sense of exhilaration in the moment, and the four get up and start dancing together to Rihanna's "Diamonds." The light is a deep blue, and the girls are jumping and laughing and loving each other's awesomeness for almost the entirety of the song. All four are in the frame at the same time. Sciamma has given us what feels like a real event, a real moment, one of those precious moments in time that the girls might look back on and think, "That. That was good."

The final section of "Girlhood" doesn't quite have the energy of the rest of it, although Karidja Touré is such a compelling presence, and

Marieme is such a watchable character, that her experiences create a tension all their own. What will become of Marieme? The group friendship is formative, powerful, for all of them, it is something they treasure and cling to, but they're also just teenage girls. They're not sure yet what is going to be the most important thing in their lives.

Comparisons will be made, inevitably, to Richard Linklater's "Boyhood," merely because of the title. They are two very different films. Sciamma's films could all go under the title "Girlhood." Her films do not diagnose. They don't worry (at least not overtly). They do not assume that "girlhood" is mostly an experience of inevitable derailment. Adolescence is a

time of growth and change, of trying on new identities, seeing which one fits the best. Girls "come of age" just like boys do, but many films take the attitude that it's more dangerous for girls to experiment. That might be partially true, because of pregnancy, but it is not entirely true. "We Are the Best!" was a terrific antidote to that prevalent teenage-girls-in-peril narrative, and so is "Girlhood." It's not that Sciamma sugar-coats the dangers that are out there. It is that she is more interested in how girls figure things out than in the many ways girls can go wrong.

Comparisons will be made to Richard Linklater's, "Boyhood," merely because of the title. They are two very different films.

The Son of the Sheik

featuring The Alloy Orchestra

Soundtrack brings life to Fitzmaurice's 1926 silent film

By George Heymont, San Francisco-based arts critic

Whenever it seems as if the world is about to crumble like a cookie (or be transformed into a pile of ash), it helps to embrace wretched excess. Like a religious deathbed conversion, wretched excess may be the antithesis of everything a person stood for in his sane, tightly disciplined life. But there comes a time when giving in is a better option than merely giving up.

As part of its five-day festival, Roger Ebert's Film Festival presents the beautifully restored print of Rudolph Valentino's last film.

Thrillingly directed by George Fitzmaurice, there is much about 1926's *The Son of the Sheik* to admire.

Valentino's lithe and athletic stunt work as an equestrian is a pleasant surprise (many people forget that he worked in San Francisco as a ballroom dancer/escort for several years).

Vilma Banky's dancing ranges from campily seductive moves to some pretty fancy footwork.

The costumes for the two romantic leads are gloriously designed and an absolute joy to behold.

*Hearing their new score for *The Son of the Sheik* could completely transform your feelings about silent film.*

But while Valentino and Banky were impressive stars during the silent era, this restored print (completed by Ken Winokur and Jane Gillooly's distribution company, Box 5), adds another star to the legacy of *The Son of the Sheik* -- a brand new score composed and performed by the Alloy Orchestra.

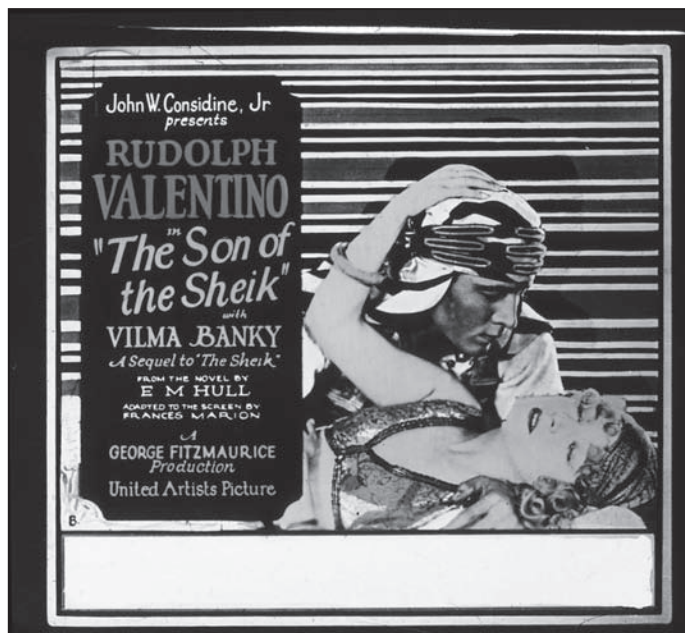
Music was -- and always will be -- a key component of silent film. A great score (or performance by talented accompanying musicians) can bring an audience to its feet with a standing ovation. Poorly-matched musical choices from what's available for free (most likely because the music has entered the public domain), can sap the life and blood of a silent film experience.

Those who have attended Ebertfest in the past are familiar with the delights that emanate from the Alloy Orchestra's instruments. Starting with their first collaboration in 1991 (a new

score for *Metropolis*), they have since composed scores for 25 silent classics ranging from *He Who Gets Slapped*, *The General*, and *The Phantom of the Opera* to *The Black Pirate*, *The Lost World*, and *Nosferatu*.

The trio, which consists of Terry Donahue on junk percussion, musical saw, and accordion; Ken Winokur on percussion and clarinet; and Roger C. Miller on keyboard, describes its work as:

"... a three-man musical ensemble, writing and performing live accompaniment to classic silent films. Working with an outrageous assemblage of peculiar objects, they thrash and grind soulful music from unlikely sources. An unusual combination of found percussion and state-of-the-art electronics gives the Orchestra the ability to create any sound imaginable. Utilizing their famous 'rack of junk' and electronic synthesizers, the group generates beautiful music in a spectacular variety of styles. They can conjure



A restored print of Rudolph Valentino's last film.

up a French symphony or a simple German bar band of the 1920s. The group can make the audience think it is being attacked by tigers, contacted by radio signals from Mars, or swept up in the Russian Revolution."

The thrilling key to their new score for *The Son of the Sheik* is a heavy percussive element, whose desert drums cover everything from the pounding hooves of Arabian steeds (although the film was shot in Yuma County, Arizona) to the passionate pumping of blood through a handsome young stud's heart.

Thankfully, the Alloy Orchestra will be touring screenings of *The Son of the Sheik* throughout the coming year. Hearing their new score for *The Son of the Sheik* could completely transform your feelings about silent film.



"The Son of the Sheik" was also a part of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival in Autumn of 2014.

FILMCREDITS

THE SON OF THE SHEIK

(1926) Not Rated

Directed by **George Fitzmaurice**
Written by **Edith Maude Hull**
Frances Marion and
Fred De Gresac

CAST:

Rudolph Valentino
as Ahmed/The Sheik
Vilma Bánky as Yasmin
George Fawcett as André

Running time: 80 minutes

Print courtesy:
Box 5

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

The Alloy Orchestra



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

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

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

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

FRIDAY 8:30PM

A Bronx Tale

Coming-of-age tale shows ups and downs of growing up

By Roger Ebert, October 1, 1993

A boy comes of age in an Italian-American neighborhood in the Bronx. His father gives him a piece of advice: "Nothing is more tragic than a wasted talent." A street-corner gangster gives him another piece of advice: "Nobody really cares." These pieces of advice seem contradictory, but the boy finds that they make a nice fit.

The movie starts when he is 9. Sitting on his front stoop, he sees Sonny, the gangster, shoot a man in what looks like a fight over a parking space. Then Sonny looks him in the eyes, hard, and the kid gets the message: "Don't squeal!"

Sonny (Chazz Palminteri) wants to do something for the kid, and offers a cushy \$150 a week paycheck to his father, Lorenzo (Robert De Niro). Lorenzo turns him down. He is a workingman, proud that he supports his family by driving a bus.

He doesn't like the Mafia and doesn't want the money.

The kid, whose name is Calogero but who is called C, idolizes Sonny. He likes the way Sonny exercises a quiet authority, and talks with his hands, and dresses well. When C is 17, he goes to work for Sonny, against his father's wishes. And in the year when

"A Bronx Tale" is a very funny movie sometimes, and very touching at other times...What's important about the film is that it's about values."

most of the film is set, he learns lessons that he will use all of his life.

"A Bronx Tale" was written for the stage by Palminteri, who plays Sonny with a calm grace in the film, but was Calogero in real life. There have been a lot of movies about neighborhood

Mafiosos (Martin Scorsese's "GoodFellas" was the best), but this movie isn't like the others. It doesn't tell some dumb story about how the bus driver and the mobster have to shoot each other, or about how C is the hostage in a tug of war. It's about two men with some



In "A Bronx Tale," both Sonny (Chazz Palminteri) and Lorenzo (Robert De Niro) act as father figures to Calogero (played by Francis Capra in this scene).

experience of life, who love this kid and want to help him out.

Lorenzo, the bus driver, gives sound advice: "You want to see a real hero? Look at a guy who gets up in the morning and goes off to work and supports his family. That's heroism." But Sonny gives sound advice, too. One of the things he tells C is that you cannot live your life on the basis of what other people think you should do, because when the chips are down, nobody really cares. You're giving them a power they don't really have. That sounds like deep thinking for a guy who hangs on the corner and runs a numbers racket, but Sonny, as played by Palminteri, is a complex, lonely character, who might have been a priest or a philosopher had not life called him to the vocation of neighborhood boss.

It is 1968. Blacks are moving into the next neighborhood.

C's friends entertain themselves by beating up on black kids who ride past on their bikes. C has other things on his mind. On his father's bus, he has seen a lovely black girl named Jane (Taral Hicks), and been struck with the thunderbolt of love. From the way she smiles back, she likes him, too. When he discovers that they go to the same school, he knows his fate is to ask her out.

But he is troubled, because in 1968 this is not the thing for



Jon Kilik served as a producer for "A Bronx Tale."

a kid from his neighborhood (or hers) to do. He questions both his father and Sonny, posing a hypothetical case, and although neither bursts into liberal-speak about the brotherhood of man, both tell him about the same thing, which is that you have to do what you think is right, or live with the consequences.

C's romance is a sweet subplot of the movie, which is filled with life and memories. There are, for example, the characters in Sonny's crowd, including a guy who is such bad luck he has to go stand in the bathroom when Sonny is rolling the dice. And another guy with a complexion so bad he looks like raisin bread. And

strange visitors from outside the neighborhood - bikers and hippies and black people - who remind us that C lives in a closed and insular community.

The climax of the film finds C inside a car he does not want to occupy, going with his friends to do something he doesn't want to do. This part is very true. Peer pressure is a terrible thing among teenage boys. It causes them to do things they desperately wish they could avoid. They're afraid to look chicken, or different. C is no exception. His whole life hinges on the outcome of that ride.

"A Bronx Tale" is a very funny movie sometimes, and very touching at other times.

FILMCREDITS

ABRONX TALE

(1993) Rated R

Directed by **Robert De Niro**
Written by **Chazz Palminteri**

CAST:

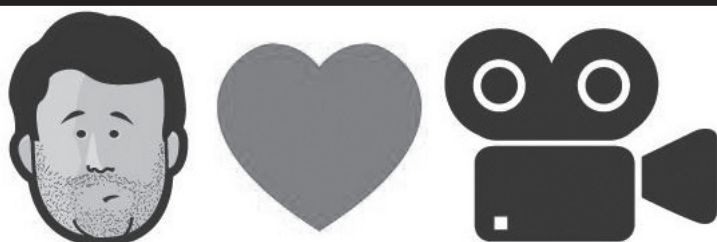
Robert De Niro as Lorenzo
Chazz Palminteri as Sonny
Lillo Brancato
as Calogero (age 17)
Francis Capra
as Calogero (age 9)
Taral Hicks as Jane
Kathrine Naarducci as Rosina
Joe Pesci as Carmine

Running time: 121 minutes

Print courtesy:
Tribeca Enterprises

It is filled with life and colorful characters and great lines of dialogue, and De Niro, in his debut as a director, finds the right notes as he moves from laughter to anger to tears. What's important about the film is that it's about values.

About how some boys grow up into men who can look at themselves in the mirror in the morning, and others just go along with the crowd, forgetting after a while that they ever had a choice.



Doug Loves Movies

SATURDAY 11AM

Wild Tales

Film comprises six humorous yet complex story lines

By Godfrey Cheshire

Multi-story feature films are not the happiest of genres, for reasons that are usually very apparent. For one, having to conclude one story and start another, over and over, interrupts the dream-like flow that most moviegoers expect of features. For another, unevenness is almost built into the form: some stories will be better than others, perhaps especially when several filmmakers are involved.

All of these inherent drawbacks help explain why Argentina's "Wild Tales" comes as such an extraordinary surprise. Perhaps the best multi-story feature this reviewer has ever seen, the Sony Classics release, a nominee for this year's Best Foreign-Language Film Oscar, deserves to become a serious

art-house hit in the U.S. thanks to its skill in deftly overcoming the form's usual deficits, for a result that feels as amazingly cohesive as it is relentlessly clever and entertaining.

No doubt the film has something of an advantage in that it comes from one filmmaker, Damián Szifron ("The Bottom of the Sea"), and thus reflects a singular vision and sensibility. Beyond that, it must be said that Szifron has remarkable skills as both a director and a storyteller. Each of the six stories here, which average about 20 minutes, is thoroughly enthralling, and all are united by a mordant black humor. Connected thematically in dealing with revenge and retribution, each segment sets up expectations that its

Each of the six stories here, which average about 20 minutes, is thoroughly enthralling, and all are united by a mordant black humor.

successor ingeniously fulfills or surpasses.

The first, pre-credits story, "Pasternak," gets things off to a high-flying start. An attractive young woman—a model, we soon learn—checks in for a flight and hears she won't get frequent flier miles because someone else has paid her ticket. On board the plane, she begins chatting with another passenger and learns they both knew a guy named Pasternak, a boyfriend she dumped years ago. Then another passenger says he was the professor who failed the same guy. Could it be--? Sure enough, the plane is full of people who've shafted Mr. P. And who's that locked in the cockpit?

In "The Rats," revenge is a dish best served with ketchup. When a grumpy man enters an empty roadside restaurant one night, the young waitress recognizes him as a corrupt official who drove her father to suicide. Sure, she'd like to see the world rid of him, but she's not inclined to do anything about it until the diner's gruff, elderly woman cook urges that it would be as simple as

loading the guy's fries and eggs with rat poison. The waitress is morally torn, but there's also a practical question: Once rat poison is past its expiration date, does it become more or less potent?

The element of class conflict grows more pronounced in "Road to Hell," which plays like a more macabre version of Spielberg's "Duel." Riding down a remote highway in his snazzy new sports car, a sleek corporate type passes a slow pickup truck and shouts insults at its grizzled, back-country driver. Naturally, the city slicker has a flat just a few miles down the road, and the first vehicle to appear in his rear-view is the scorned pickup. What ensues is apocalyptic (and droll) enough to tickle Rod Serling.

The film's last three stories are more expansive, complex and sharply edged in social satire. In "Bombita," a demolitions engineer stops to pick up his daughter's birthday cake and comes out to find his car towed — though the space wasn't marked a tow-away zone. In the coming weeks, as



"The Rats" is a tale of revenge, set in a roadside restaurant.

FILMCREDITS

WILD TALES

(2014) Rated R

Written and directed by
Damián Sziffrón

CAST:

Ricardo Darín as Simon Fisher
Leonardo Sbaraglia as Diego
Dario Grandinetti as Salgado
Julieta Zylberberg as Moza
Nancy Duplaa as Victoria
Maria Onetto as Helena
Rita Cortese as Cocinera
Erica Rivas as Romina

Running time: 122 minutes

Print courtesy:
Sony Pictures Classics



"Till Death Us Do Part," the final installment of "Wild Tales," depicts a wedding that has a promising start, but quickly takes a turn for the worst.

his marriage begins to collapse, the enraged citizen seeks justice for his parking woes, and finds himself surrounded by fellow Argentines furious at "fascist" bureaucratic stonewallers. Is it possible his skills with dynamite might turn the engineer into a combination of Frank Caprahero and Che Guevara? In this land, it seems, anything but bureaucratic responsiveness is possible.

Its premise recalling Paolo Virzi's recent *"Human Capital,"* *"The Deal"* starts out with a rich couple learning their teenage son has run down a

pregnant woman the night before. Frantic, the father and his lawyer come up with a scheme to pay his poor gardener a half mil to take the rap. But then the lawyer, who demands a half mil for his services, brings the prosecutor into it, which will cost another mil, plus payoffs for the police... No wonder poor dad tells them all to go to hell, then realizes that his only real out involves something he's in fact very skilled at: negotiation.

It might seem at this point the film couldn't top what's come before, but not to fear:

"Till Death Us Do Part" is a corker. While previous tales hinge on enmity or distress, this one starts out with celebration and love. At a fancy wedding reception, the guests are giddy, the bride and groom enveloped in bliss. Until, that is, she discovers he's cheated on her with a woman in the room. At first, she flees to the roof, weeping and suicidal. Then the prospect of vengeance hardens her, and soon he's the one who's groveling and sobbing. The reversals of emotional fortune continue until it seems we've just seen a decade of marital turmoil play

out in one convulsive evening.

Any of these tales separated from the whole could surely win prizes at short-film competitions. Together, their collective impact proves the synergistic effect of true artistic vision. With a confident, coolly elegant visual style somewhere between Demme and DePalma, Sziffrón emerges from *"Wild Tales"* an international auteur to be reckoned with.

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SATURDAY2PM

Ida

Audience joins filmmaker on journey through the past

By Godfrey Cheshire

Debuted earlier this year at Lincoln Center and now on a national tour, the 21-film series "Masterpieces of Polish Cinema" bears stunning testament to the brilliance of not only one especially fecund national cinema but an entire era of moviemaking—call it the golden age of the art film. As Martin Scorsese, who curated the series and whose Film Foundation provided its pristine digital restorations, has remarked, the period it covers (roughly the '50s through the '70s) was one of extraordinary accomplishments in many parts of the cinematic world, a high-water mark that grows ever more dazzling in retrospect.

Set in the Poland of 1962 and composed of austere black and white images, Pawel Pawlikowski's "Ida" could fit right into the "Masterpieces" series, evoking as it does films ranging from Andrzej Wajda's "Innocent Sorcerers" to Jerzy Kawalerowicz's "Mother Joan of the Angels" (both 1960). But that's not to suggest it's a throwback or an exercise in cinematic nostalgia. Riveting, original and breathtakingly accomplished on every level, "Ida" would be a masterpiece in any era, in any country.

Somewhat ironically, director and co-writer Pawlikowski can't be considered a Polish filmmaker in any strict sense.

Riveting, original and breathtakingly accomplished on every level, "Ida" would be a masterpiece in any era, in any country.

Though born in Poland, he grew up in Great Britain and has done most of his work there (his previous films include "My Summer of Love" and "Last Resort"). "Ida" represents a return home for the filmmaker, one that he has said draws on the memories, sights and sounds of his childhood.

That retrospective, and somewhat impressionistic, viewpoint mirrors the film's

own. Though set in the '60s, the era of Communist rule and modernization, the story scripted by Pawlikowski and Rebecca Lenkiewicz looks backward in time. Given that it starts out in a convent that seems like it hasn't changed since the Middle Ages, you might say that the film's perspective suggests a vast expanse of Polish history. But its main focus is closer to hand: the country's occupation by the Nazis (a historical passage that is resonantly evoked but never seen or directly referred to).

Anna (Agata Trzebokowska) is an 18-year-old orphan who was raised in that convent and is preparing to take her vows when her Mother Superior insists that first she meet her one known relative. That is an aunt, Wanda (Agneta Kulesza), a former prosecutor with a high Communist Party rank whose dissolute life of smoking, drinking and bedding men stands in stark contrast to the ascetic existence of her sheltered niece. But Anna has more to be shocked about when Wanda tells her that her real name is Ida (pronounced Eeda), that she is Jewish and that



"Ida" explores the lasting effects that the Nazi occupation during World War II had on Poland.

FILMCREDITS

IDA

(2013) Rated PG-13

Directed by **Pawel Pawlikowski**
Written by **Rebecca Lenkiewicz**
and **Pawel Pawlikowski**

CAST:

Agata Trzebuchowska as Anna
Agata Kulesza as Wanda
Joanna Kulig as Singer
Dawid Ogrodnik as Musician
Adam Szyszkowski
as Feliks Skiba
Jerzy Trela as Szymon Skiba
Artur Janusiak as Militia Man

Running time: 80 minutes

Print courtesy:
Music Box Films



Pawel Pawlikowski, Director of "Ida"

her parents were killed during World War II.

This revelation triggers a journey in which aunt and niece drive back to the village of Anna's parents in an effort to discover how they died and where they were buried. Although this quest is central to the narrative, "Ida" is anything but plot-driven. It's a film of moments, observations and moods, with a lyrical unfolding that recalls such atmospheric monochrome road movies as Wim Wenders' "Kings of the Road." And when the two voyagers pick up a hitchhiking tenor saxophonist (Dawid Ogrodnik) and end up watching his gigs, the music of John Coltrane and similar artists adds an engrossing aural dimension to the odyssey.

Few recent films can claim a visual approach as striking as that which cinematographers Lukasz Zal and Ryszard Lenczewski give "Ida." Filmed in the unusual, boxy aspect ratio of 1.37:1, and most often deployed in static long shots, the film's images sometimes suggest Vermeer lighting with the color taken away, and the compositions manage to

seem at once classical and off-handed, with the subjects often located in the screen's two bottom quadrants. As in Bresson, the effect is to draw the viewer's eye into the beauty of the image while simultaneously maintaining a contemplative distance from the drama.

Pawlikowski and Lenkiewicz's scripting proves similarly lapidarian. Besides its look, "Ida" most recalls the manner of bygone art films in the modernist spareness and thoroughgoing obliqueness of its writing. Very little is stated directly; instead, we glean things from casual remarks and subtle suggestions. Somehow, this technique of inference makes the film's eventual revelations feel both more integral and more powerful.

Because revelations do come, despite the quest's languorous rhythms, and they touch on arguably the darkest and most troubling chapter in modern Poland's history. What happened to Anna's parents? Most films that approach this horrific arena envision jackbooted armies and vast industrial execution sites.

But in Poland in the '40s, as in Cambodia in the '70s and Rwanda in the '90s, evil's authors could be one's friends and neighbors, and simple farm implements its instruments. In touching on this reality, "Ida" adds something to a subject that sometimes seems to have lost the ability to disturb us as it should in movies.

Besides this historical acuity, the film gives us a fascinating pair of matched archetypes in its main characters, which are realized in two exquisite performances. As the aspiring nun who's suddenly tossed into the ugliness of the world, newcomer Agata Trzebuchowska proves a poised icon of luminous quietude and awakened curiosity, discovering herself as she painfully uncovers her past. And as the embittered, nihilistic "Red Wanda," a woman driven both by the horrors inflicted on her and those she's inflicted on others, veteran Polish actress Agneta Kulesza creates the astonishing impression that some of history's most wrenching conflicts are being

played out in a single human soul. Like much about "Ida," these actresses' work not only pays homage to masterpieces of the past but revivifies current cinema in doing so.



Dawid Ogrodnik plays Lis, a tenor saxophonist in "Ida."

SATURDAY 5PM

The Motel Life

Film depicts the trials and tribulations of two brothers

By Sheila O'Malley

Joan Didion famously wrote, "We tell ourselves stories in order to live." And that's what brothers Frank (Emile Hirsch) and Jerry Lee (Stephen Dorff) Flannigan do for one another in "The Motel Life", directed by producers/directors/brothers, Gabe and Alan Polsky. Frank tells the stories, and Jerry Lee does accompanying drawings in a sketch book. They tape the drawings all over the cinder block walls of the various dingy motels they call home. Frank and Jerry Lee are grown men, but damaged and on the run, living in the permanent American underclass, and the stories are the lifeline they have created for one another, the context in which they

operate as brothers. Jerry Lee pleads with Frank, "Tell me a story, Frank?" Based on the debut novel by musician Willy Vlautin, "The Motel Life" could have been a schmaltzy mess in less sensitive hands. It could have made kitschy and quirky that which is essentially poignant and heartfelt. But the directors and the cast, through a miracle of tone, mood, and emotion, have made a film that feels true, that is sweet and sharp and unbearable. Every frame feels right, every choice feels thought-out, considered. All adds up to a heartbreaking whole.

The stories Frank tells are escapist cliffhangers starring the two brothers

Actors often are unable to convince us that they go way back to childhood together and have emerged from the same family. With Dorff and Hirsch, you never doubt it for a second.

battling pirates and Nazis and triumphing over unimaginable odds. When they were kids, their father abandoned them, their mother died (but not before exacting a promise that the brothers would stick together), and, after a freak accident with a moving train, Jerry Lee had to have a leg amputated. Life has been one long sorry stream of bad luck

ever since. In the stories Frank tells, Jerry Lee has two legs, of course. In the stories Frank tells both brothers are tall and handsome and strong and capable. We see these stories unfold before us in crackling pencil animations woven throughout the film, witty and riveting, a representation of Jerry Lee's illustrations come to life.



In "The Motel Life," brothers Jerry Lee (Stephen Dorff) and Frank (Emile Hirsch) hop from motel to motel, always trying to figure out their next move.



Alan Polsky directed "The Motel Life."

We meet the brothers in fragments and glimpses. We see them as kids, we see them as men. Their bond is unmistakable, and perhaps unhealthily so, but the film lives in the belljar of the brothers' reality, where they have no one else in the world but one another. Frank has friends (people he can hit up for cash, that is), but Jerry Lee's only contact with the outside world is through his brother. The motel rooms they live in are so unwelcoming you can feel how cold the tile is, how thin the stream of water in the shower, how dingy the blankets. Frank is the responsible one, and that's not saying much. He scrambles for every dollar in his pocket. He is haunted by Annie (Dakota Fanning), a girl he dumped. She was sweet and loyal, and had similar escapist tendencies (she also liked Frank's stories), but she was forced into prostitution by her horrible mother and Frank can't forgive it. He's obviously a one-woman kind of man. He cannot get over her. Jerry Lee seems challenged in a way that goes far beyond his physical handicap. Whatever might be

wrong with him is not made explicit, and Stephen Dorff's performance is a damn near masterpiece of pathos, bringing "The Motel Life" into "Of Mice and Men" territory, clearly one of the story's original influences. When Frank steals a dog (it was going to freeze to death being tied up in that front yard anyway), and tells Jerry Lee about it, Dorff's face cracks in a childlike smile that is almost unbearable to witness in its uninhibited joy, saying, "We always wanted a dog!" The "We" is eloquent.

After a hit-and-run accident on an icy night when Jerry Lee accidentally kills a young man with their car, any small hand-hold the two may have had on stability is lost. Frank helps Jerry Lee bust out of the hospital (his prosthetic leg has been lost in their travels), and they hole up in a motel, hiding from the cops, trying to figure out their next move. Well, Frank does the figuring because Jerry Lee is in a panic and emotional tailspin. The intimacy between these two actors is a miracle to behold. There is one scene where Frank helps Jerry Lee into the shower to clean him off. Dorff is stark naked, and Hirsch is clothed, and at one point they start giggling about the nudity and the close quarters ("You got a big dick, Jerry Lee," Frank comments with a mix of embarrassment and admiration), and it was a beautiful moment of levity in a story of restless heartbreak, but also a perfect encapsulation of the weird intimacy between siblings. Films often get siblings wrong. Actors often are unable to convince us that they go way back to childhood together and have emerged from the same family. With Dorff and

Hirsch, you never doubt it for one second.

Jerry Lee has an imaginary girlfriend named Marge, and he covers the walls of their motel with drawings of her, a buxom pinup with a 1940s hairstyle. Jerry Lee is in awe that his brother had actually been in love, and, more importantly, that a girl had loved him back. He, Jerry Lee, has never had that. His eyes fill with tears as he talks to Frank about it, the wreckage of his face displaying a whirlwind of loneliness. Dorff's performance is magnificent, and is entirely lacking in big histrionic gestures or cathartic breakdowns or temper tantrums. His eyes look pained and gentle as he tries to comprehend what the hell this life has handed him. And Hirsch, as Frank, is a beautiful listener, a resourceful support system, and also damaged beyond repair himself.

The supporting cast is all great, especially Kris Kristofferson as a used-car salesman and stand-in father figure for Frank. He gives advice that is actually sound (unlike most of the other folks in the film), telling Frank, "Don't make decisions thinking you're a low-life. Make decisions thinking you're a great man. Or at least a good man." The fact that Frank does not realize he is already a good man is one of the tragedies in the film.

Motels are up there with the Automat, the drive-in, jukeboxes, and cars with tailfins, as emblematic of certain aspects of American culture. These things are familiar even if their heyday predates us. "The Motel Life" does not shy away from the seedy aspects of its world, but it also understands the

FILMCREDITS

THE MOTEL LIFE

(2012) Rated R

Directed by **Alan Polsky** and **Gabe Polsky**
Written by **Willy Vlautin**,
Micah Fitzerman-Blue and
Noah Harpster

CAST:

Dakota Fanning as Annie James
Emile Hirsch as Frank
Stephen Dorff as Jerry Lee
Garrett Backstrom
as Young Jerry Lee
Kris Kristofferson as Earl Hurley
Joshua Leonard as Tommy
Noah Harpster as Al Casey
Andrew Lee as Young Frank

Running time: 95 minutes

Print courtesy:
Polsky Films

dark glamor there (especially in a show-stopper of a scene through a casino). We have all been in such places, even if it is only through the movies, or through our books. We know those red leather booths, those cigarette machines, the neon, the geometric tile floors, the crappy art on the walls. It's already in us, it's a part of us.

With super strong performances and a mood so melancholy-thick that you ache to comfort these men, "The Motel Life" is still a beautifully warm film with a very kind heart. It does not push the characters or manipulate them. It does not worry too much about its plot. The film is wise enough to just stand back and let its characters be. What a refreshing change. What a beautiful and sad film.

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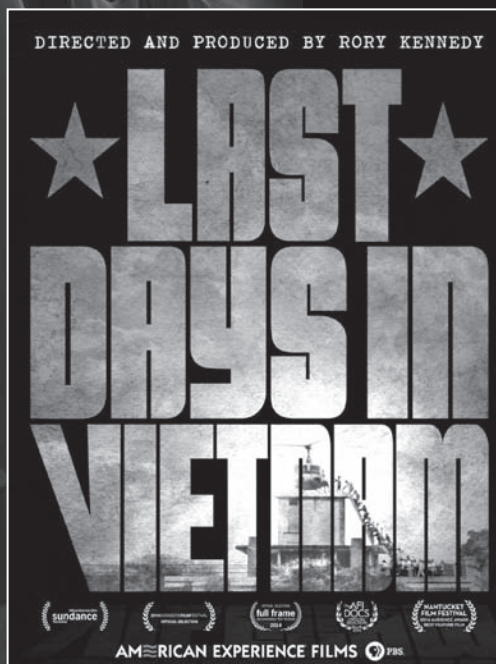
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American Experience: My Lai. 2010 film focuses on the 1968 My Lai massacre, its subsequent cover-up, and soldiers who tried to halt the atrocities. **8 PM on Tuesday, 4/21.**

The Day the 60s Died. Program chronicles the nation's upheaval after the shooting of four students at Kent State University in May 1970. **8 PM on Monday, 4/27.**

American Experience: Last Days in Vietnam. New from **American Experience**, **Last Days in Vietnam** (directed by Rory Kennedy) chronicles the chaotic final days of the Vietnam War as the North Vietnamese Army closed in on Saigon. **8 PM on Tuesday, 4/28.**

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SATURDAY 9PM

99 Homes

Bahrani uses film to explore issue of economic inequality

By Brian Tallerico

With “99 Homes,” Ramin Bahrani has taken the subject of a social issue drama and structured it like a thriller. The film hums along, perfectly paced and driven by great performances all around. It’s also something of a call to arms, an urgent instruction to pay closer to attention to one of the most defining issues of our time: economic inequality. Seeing Bahrani’s film mere hours after the premiere of Oren Moverman’s “Time Out of Mind,” a Richard Gere film about the fact that homeless people have become so marginalized that they barely exist in the social consciousness, it struck me that we could be on the cusp of a wave of films about the unfair world in which we live. As Bahrani said in his interview, through scratchy voice due to illness, “There’s something wrong in this world, and we have to reassess.” There are times in “99 Homes” when you’ll want to look away, when your gut will turn from the human pain on-screen. Don’t look away. Reassess.

There are people watching their belongings go from the home in which they raised their children to the curb where their garbage is picked up while you read this review. Bahrani uses the housing crisis as a starting point for a phenomenal piece of character-driven storytelling. Dennis Nash (Andrew Garfield, who hasn’t been this good since “The Social Network”) lives with his son and mother (the eternally great Laura Dern) in a modest Orlando home. He has missed a few payments, although he tries to argue with the judge at his hearing that it was a miscommunication with the bank and not an actual economic shortfall. It doesn’t matter. Dennis is getting evicted. And when you’re getting evicted in Orlando, you’re likely to cross paths with Richard Carver (Michael Shannon).

Carver owns a realty company that feeds on the economic crisis. As he says, he’s made more money after the crash than before it. He’s the last



“99 Homes” is a story about the human essence, and, in many ways, is structured as a thriller.

person you want to see at your door. He’ll usually be there with a couple cops, give you a few minutes to take what you need from your home, get his guys to lug the rest out to the curb and then take ownership through foreclosure. And that’s only one part of Carver’s business. He runs scams all over town: stealing air conditioners from foreclosed homes so the government will pay him to replace them (with another stolen air conditioner), using a “Cash For Keys” system to grift from the government and much more. All of Carver’s ventures have made him very rich, and that wealth has come from the economic disparity and corruption that have forever

damaged this country.

Dennis moves into a seedy motel with his mom and child, desperate to find a way to get his home back. So desperate that he ends up working for Carver. We become a part of the system that has destroyed us. Think about that. How many people have been fired by companies that they, in whatever way, contribute to the success of as consumers? Bahrani’s structure is a brilliant one, in that it’s impossible to morally judge a man who is trying to keep his mother and son safe, and yet there’s a sense of unease throughout Dennis’ journey, like watching a kid join the mob after it’s destroyed his life.

There are times in “99 Homes” when you’ll want to look away, when your gut will turn from the human pain on-screen.

Don’t look away. Reassess.

"99 Homes" plays like a thriller but it's grounded by the three-dimensional performances from Garfield and Shannon. The former finds the emotional rhythm of a man without many options left. As so many people in this world are, Dennis is forced into a situation he didn't create and can't avoid. And you can see the inner turmoil in Garfield's eyes. There's less of a moral center in Shannon's fantastic work as Carver, but that's what makes him so interesting. Shannon wisely avoids turning him into a cartoon, even finding the realism in this real estate shark. He's using a corrupt system to his advantage. When he says, "Only 1 in 100 is going to get on that Ark, son," who can blame him for trying to keep from drowning? Like all great socially conscious films,

"99 Homes" doesn't portray its issues in black and white, and Garfield and Shannon's nuanced work is what makes that gray area effective.

"99 Homes" pulses with energy from the very beginning. Bahrani is always keeping his camera moving, timed to an unsettling electronic-driven score. It is his most confidently made film. It doesn't feel like there's a beat, a shot, an angle that's out of place or unconsidered. And yet that streamlined approach to filmmaking never corrupts Bahrani's ability to capture the human condition, as he did so completely in films like "Chop Shop" and "Goodbye Solo." The evictions of "99 Homes" are gut-wrenching. I found myself, especially during the first one of Dennis and his family, remarkably uncomfortable. I



Ramin Bahrani wrote and directed "99 Homes."

wanted to turn away. I felt myself squirming in my chair. But I thought of Bahrani's words and realized that this righteously angry film should be tough to watch and emotionally difficult.

FILMCREDITS

99 HOMES

(2014) Rated R

Written and directed by
Ramin Bahrani

CAST:

Andrew Garfield

as Dennis Nash

Laura Dern

as Lynn Nash

Michael Shannon

as Rick Carver

Tim Guinee

as Frank Green

Noah Lomax

as Conner Nash

J.D. Evermore

as Mr. Tanner

Running time: 112 minutes

Print courtesy:

Broad Green Pictures

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SUNDAY 11AM

Seymour: An Introduction

Hawke tells story of legendary classical pianist

By Justin Chang

The great classical pianist Seymour Bernstein is as graceful a speaker as he is a musician, and his voice rings out with wondrous depth and clarity in "Seymour: An Introduction." Although clearly designed as a reverent tribute from one artist to another, this first documentary directed by Ethan Hawke happily sidesteps any vanity-project pitfalls, granting full expression to Bernstein's wise and witty commentary on a craft that he's spent decades honing — as well as the proper application of that craft when the demands of art are often outweighed by the pressures of commerce. Acquired by Sundance Selects on the eve of a prestigious fall festival run, this gently moving portrait should be catnip for music buffs and other artistically minded viewers, but Hawke's involvement and strong reviews could help expand its audience.

Although he's only onscreen for a few minutes, Hawke does pop up early on to explain how he met Bernstein by chance at a dinner party in Manhattan, where he found that this gentle-voiced and unfailingly perceptive older gentleman seemed to understand him and his career anxieties better than most actors did. A close friendship was born, as the pianist helped coach Hawke through his crippling bouts of stage fright, something Bernstein himself used to struggle with before and during

his onstage performances. Ultimately, he concluded that nerves were a good thing, sure evidence of someone who took their art seriously. "Nervousness is part of what we do," he says, driving the point home with a snarky anecdote about Sarah Bernhardt that builds to a hilariously insightful punchline: "You will get nervous when you learn how to act."

Still, Bernstein's ability to master his anxiety wasn't enough for him to keep subjecting himself to it, and although his performances earned rapturous reviews ("Seymour Bernstein Triumphs at the Piano," crowed a New York Times headline after his concert debut), he withdrew from the spotlight at age 50 in order to focus on his deeper calling as a teacher and composer. As the now-octogenarian musician looks back on his career in conversation with one of his former students, the pianist and Times writer Michael Kimmelman, Bernstein continually points out how important it is for talented people to take the time to develop their gifts, and how detrimental the temptations of fame and success can be to one's growth as an artist. (He holds up the late Glenn Gould, "a total neurotic mess," as a particularly unhealthy example.)

In an entertainment landscape where creative types are now encouraged to brand



Seymour Bernstein and Ethan Hawke, the director of "Seymour: An Introduction."

themselves into social-media superstars before they've even had the chance to cultivate an inner life, this is essential, if radical, advice. Still, all that high-minded talk of artistic integrity might have rung hollow were it not for Hawke's own highly adventurous track record as an actor and filmmaker, and some of it might have sounded unbearably precious coming from a documentary subject less poised, expressive and in command of his words than Bernstein.

But from the opening shot of him practicing a piece in his cozy, book-lined Upper West Side apartment to the touching self-reflection that closes the film, the man is a fount of eloquent wisdom and self-effacing humor ("You're

not allowed to play better than I do," he tells a student who has just mastered a tricky bit of phrasing). And while "Seymour: An Introduction" builds gradually to Bernstein's first public recital in 35 years (circa April 1977), we come to understand that every lesson he teaches is itself a sort of performance, striking a careful balance of gentle encouragement, critical acumen and unmistakable showmanship.

For anyone who has studied piano or any other musical instrument, Bernstein's interplay with his students may bring back fond and occasionally nerve-wracking memories. It's in these scenes, too, that the unfussy precision and elegance of the filmmaking are most apparent, from d.p.

For anyone who has studied piano or any other musical instrument, Bernstein's interplay with his students may bring back fond and occasionally nerve-wracking memories.

Ramsey Fendall's nimble coverage and Anna Gustavi's fluid editing to the all-important sound mix calibrated by Timothy Cleary and Guillermo Pena-Tapia, ensuring that the numerous snippets of Schubert, Chopin and other composers are heard to their best advantage. Hawke may be an unobtrusive presence onscreen, but his exquisite sense of formal judgment, along with his affection for his friend and mentor, permeates every frame.

While this "introduction" hardly counts as a comprehensive biography, Bernstein does occasionally talk about his early years, including his army service in the Korean War (accompanied by archival footage), during which he and others played occasional concerts for their fellow soldiers. Viewers curious to know more about his personal life since may pick up on telling details when Bernstein describes his difficult relationship with his father, who could never

fully understand or appreciate his son's gift, or when he bemoans the reality that society has taught men to "subdue the feminine," tossing off some particularly robust, aggressively masculine strains of Beethoven to prove his point.

"Let us shed our guilt concerning the use of the soft pedal," reads the tagline on the movie's poster, and "Seymour: An Introduction" is nothing if not a paean to understatement — a concept made literal when Bernstein carefully tests one Steinway after another, searching for the most controlled and delicate sound possible. In his calm defense of beauty, craftsmanship, intellectual curiosity and emotional connection as vital human needs, this is one artist who knows he doesn't have to raise his voice to speak volumes.

FILMCREDITS

SEYMOUR: AN INTRODUCTION

(2014) Rated PG

Directed by **Ethan Hawke**

CAST:

Seymour Bernstein as Himself
Jiyang Chen as Himself
Ethan Hawke as Himself
Marcus Ostermiller as Himself

Running time: 84 minutes

Print courtesy:

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Chaz, Kohn hand-pick films true to vision

By Bella Jackson, *The Daily Illini*

Festival Director Nathaniel Kohn and Chaz Ebert have worked throughout the last year to hand-pick the films shown at Ebertfest. Kohn said the process of picking the films is ongoing, and many factors are considered when choosing the films, which are announced in March.

Some of the film choices come from lists that Roger Ebert had put together before his death in 2013, he said.

"Roger, Chaz and I had an informal growing list of films we were considering for the festival. We have shown some films from that list, and will continue to do so. But the majority of the films we showed last year and will show this year are newer films and are not on those lists," Kohn wrote in an email.

Mary Susan Britt, the associate festival director, stated that it is important to the festival staff that the films remain true to Roger's vision.

"The 12 films screened during the five days represent a cross-section of important cinematic works overlooked by audiences, critics and/or distributors," she wrote in an email.

Although Roger did not leave any notes or an explanation for why he chose certain films on the existing list, Kohn said that he and Chaz worked to pick films that are true to Roger's vision for the festival.

"(The films) explore the human condition, are empathetic, allowing us to spend time in an unfamiliar world or with people who might not be like us," Kohn said.

"(The films) explore the human condition, are empathetic, allowing us to spend time in an unfamiliar world or with people who might not be like us."

Kohn said that regular festival attendees do not need to worry about the list of movies running out in the near future. There are multiple emails from Roger in which he lists many movies that he hoped would be shown at future festivals.

Outside factors, such as current events or themes in the news, can also influence the films chosen for the year's festival.

"Older films sometimes come back into currency, given where society, culture and the news

are in the present moment. For example, last year we thought that 'Do the Right Thing' and 'Born on the Fourth of July' had a particular relevance to issues that were in the public sphere last year," Kohn said.

Once the films have been chosen, festival staff ensure the choices are widely publicized. Kohn said that he has personally watched many of the films on the list, and is excited for the showings of some of his favorites this year.

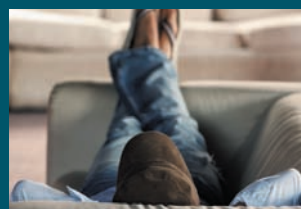
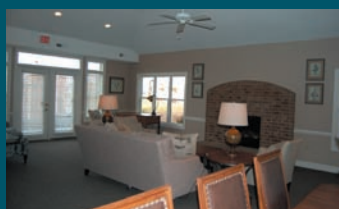




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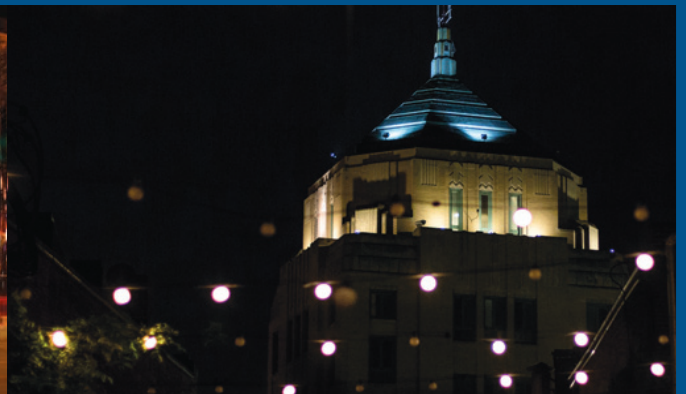
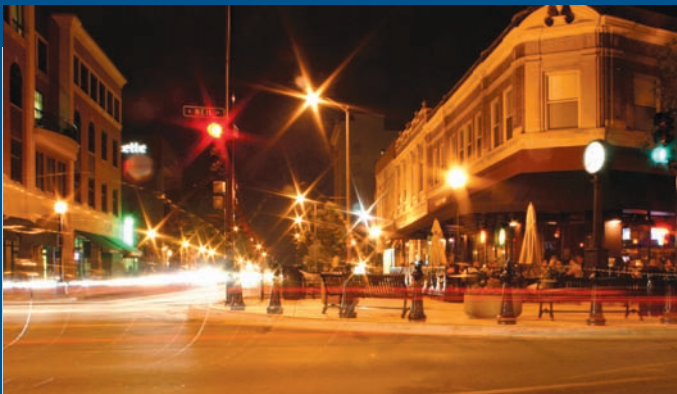
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Hourly and long term parking for Ebertfest is available in the Hill Street Parking Deck, just a few short blocks away from the Virginia at the corner of Hill St. and Randolph St.



Last year

A look back at the 2014 Festival

Photos courtesy of Thompson McClellan Photography



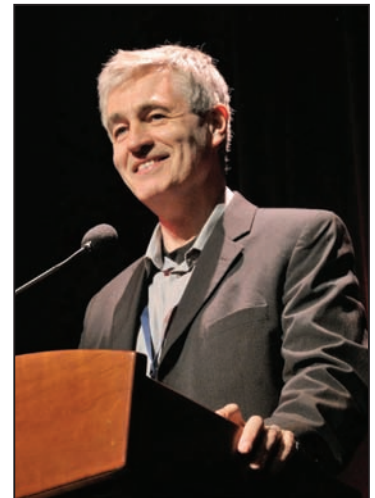
Chaz Ebert examines the new Roger Ebert sculpture after the unveiling during the 16th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival. The statue permanently sits outside of the Virginia Theatre as a tribute to Roger and Ebertfest.



Director Oliver Stone discusses his film "Born on the Fourth of July" after the screening.



Spike Lee, director of "Do the Right Thing" on-stage with Chaz Ebert after the screening of his film.



Director Steve James introducing his film "Life Itself" on opening night.



University of Illinois President Robert A. Easter addresses Ebertfest guests at the Opening Night Gala held at his home.



College of Media Dean Jan Slater and Chaz Ebert at a brunch hosted by Ebertfest sponsor Steak 'n Shake.



Chaz Ebert presents Haifaa Al-Monsour (director, "Wadjda") with the Golden Thumb Up award at the 2014 festival.



Director Ann Hui discusses her film "A Simple Life" with the audience following its screening.



Bennett Miller, director of "Capote", speaks on-stage after the screening of his film.



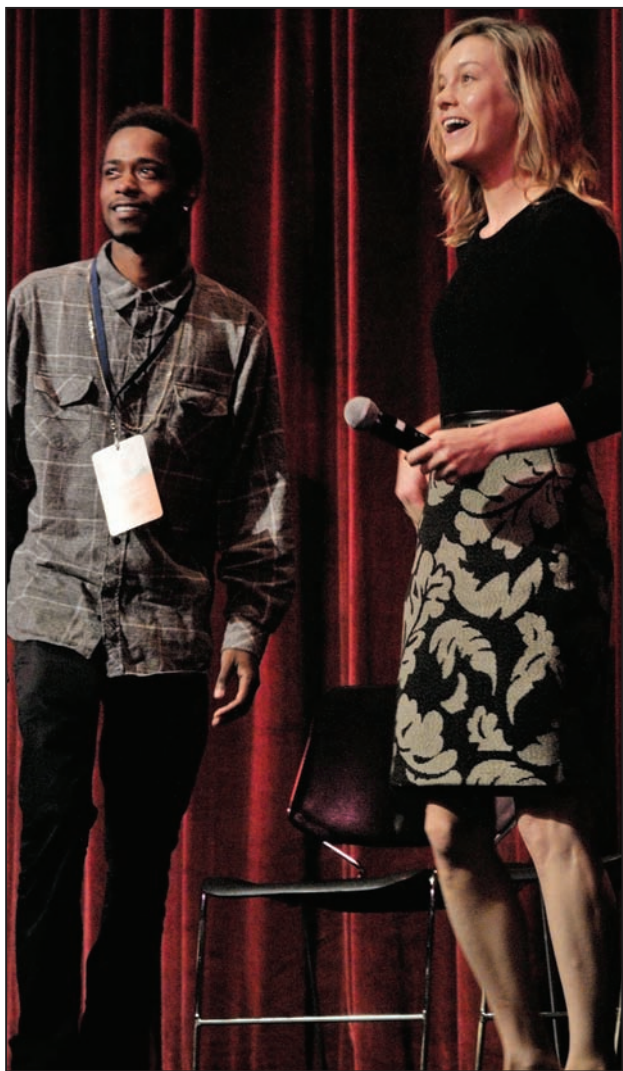
Tim Watson (editor), Henry Butler (musician), Lily Keber (director) and Nate Kohn (producer) discuss "Bayou Maharajah" in a Q-and-A session following the movie's screening at Ebertfest.



Henry Butler (musician) getting down at the 2014 Roger Ebert's Film Festival after the screening of "Bayou Maharajah."



Patton Oswalt on stage after the screening of "Young Adult."



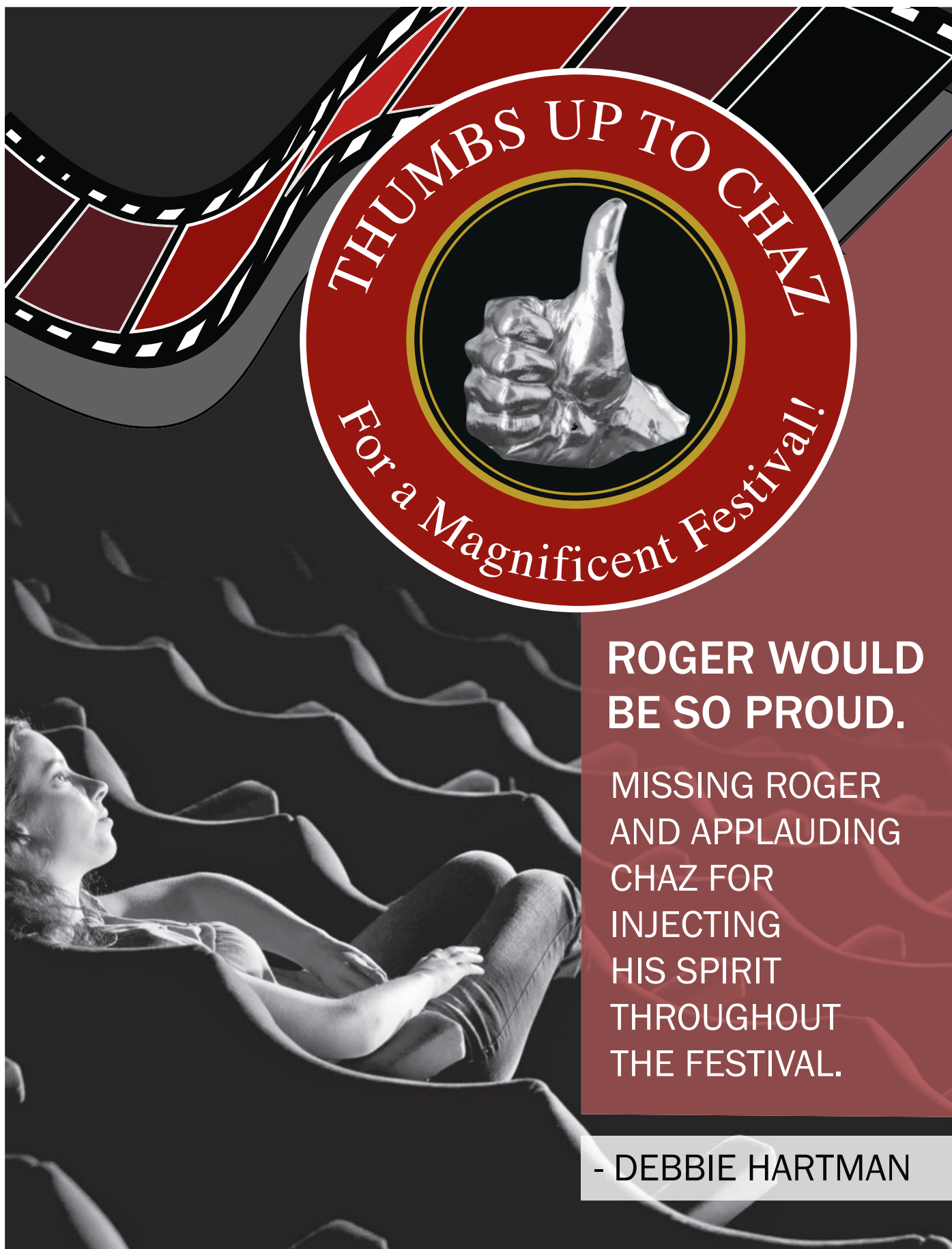
Brie Larson and Keith Stanfield receive a standing ovation after their film "Short Term 12."



Dr. Julian Rappaport moderates the panel discussion "Challenging Stigma Through the Arts" held at the Illini Union.



"Goodbye Solo" director Ramin Bahrani on stage with David Bordwell at the 2014 Festival.



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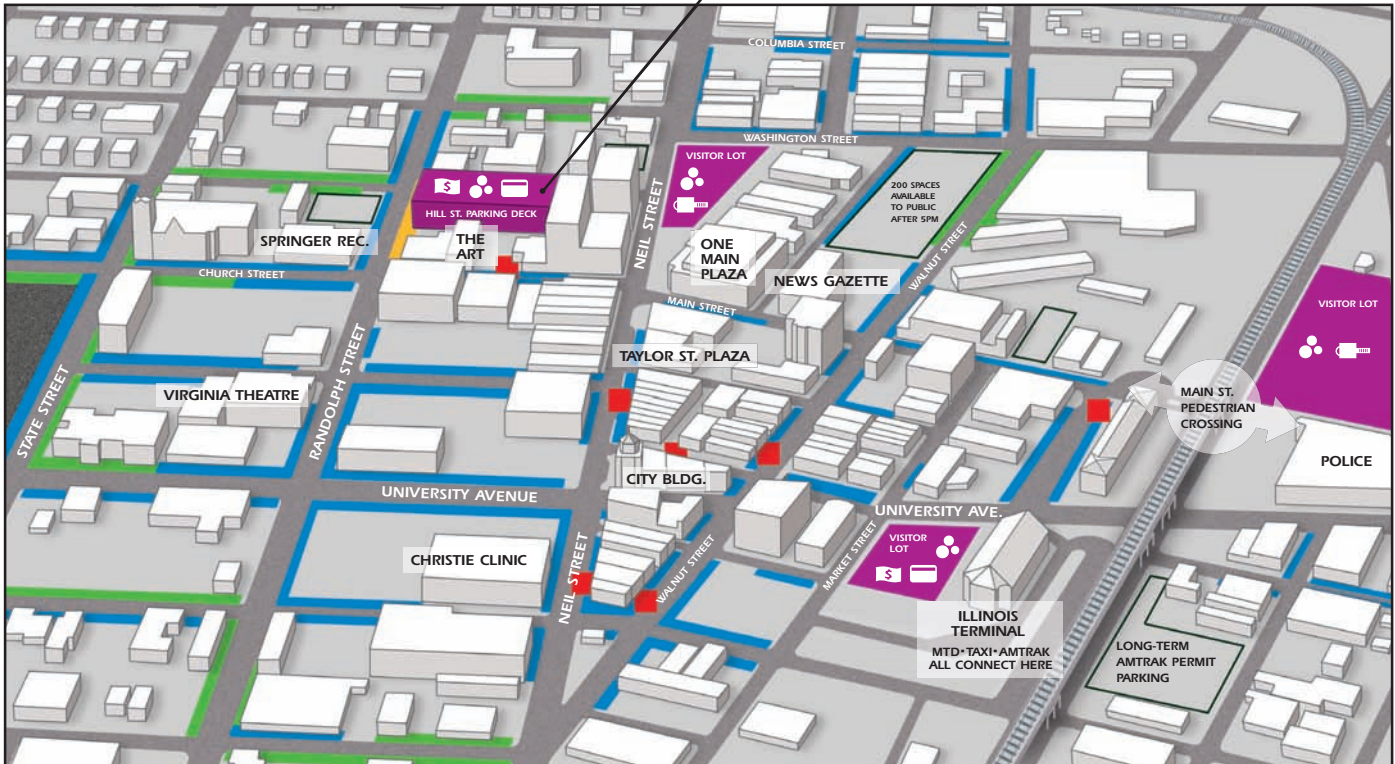
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Parking

City of Champaign public parking information

HILL STREET PARKING DECK: 600 spaces with hundreds available to the general public



www.getdownchampaign.com

Downtown Champaign

Color-coded meter labels make it easy to figure out where to park.

Look for the colored stickers that meet your downtown needs:

- Red = 30 minutes or less to grab lunch or coffee to go
- Blue = 2 hour maximum for lunch or some light shopping
- Orange = 3 or 4 hour maximum for a movie or museum visit
- Green = 10 hour maximum for a day-long meeting or outing downtown

Visitor lots are easy to find and easy to use.

Four centrally located visitor parking locations where parking is allowed in different time increments up to 10 hour maximum:

- Hill Street Parking Deck
- Neil & Washington Lot
- Market & University Lot
- North First Street Lot

Public parking lots abound.

- ☐ Permit parking lots open to public after 5pm

Lots of options.

Check for these icons in the map for various options to pay:

- Cash
- Coin
- Credit
- CashKey



Pay stations.

Pay stations are located in the Market and University Lot.

Note your stall number, proceed to pay station, keep your receipt and go to your destination. Cash, coin, credit and debit accepted.



CashKeys.

All downtown parking meters accept CashKeys.

For more information, call 217.403.7050 or visit getdownchampaign.com.



Parking at night.

Parking is monitored Monday–Friday until 9pm.

However, time limits are waived after 5pm. So go ahead... get down. And plug any meter after 5pm for as long as you like.

BEST POPCORN IN TOWN MOVIES DANCE
PLAYS EBERT FEST
CONCERTS COMEDIAN

VIRGINIA

NEW RELEASE: THEVIRGINIA.ORG

Mobile-Friendly:
Your phone becomes
your ticket in!



**Downloadable
Show Calendar**
Interactive Seating Chart



***Help us finish the
renovation!***



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

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 project included 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.

With improvements to the Virginia Theatre come increased opportunities for community groups, including youth and community theater groups, educational curriculum for children, rentals, increased options for performing arts groups and an opportunity to become the cornerstone for cultural arts in downtown Champaign. But, there is still work to be done.

The purchase of new lighting and sound equipment was not part of the latest renovation due to budget constraints, so your help is still needed. With your support, funds currently allocated for rental of this equipment will become available for other programs within the theatre and will help keep ticket prices for shows affordable.

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 donate today so we can continue our efforts to ensure that the Virginia Theatre remains a vital part of our community for generations to come.

Donate at champaignparks.com or thevirginia.org



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IN A FEW
MINUTES!

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

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WITH CHEESE!

FEATURING
PREMIUM CUTS OF REAL STEAK!

"A TRUE MASTERPIECE OF A MEAL"

Let your imagination run wild as we take a few extra moments to sear your Steakburger™ on our super hot grill & give it those famous crispy edges, then toast your bun to perfection and finish dressing your sandwich just the way you've ordered it! Yes, it takes a little longer here than it might down the street, but remember, we don't just warm up your food...

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- Roger Ebert, Sun Times

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SEP 10-12, 2015