

The College of Media at Illinois presents

18th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival 2016

April 13-17, 2016



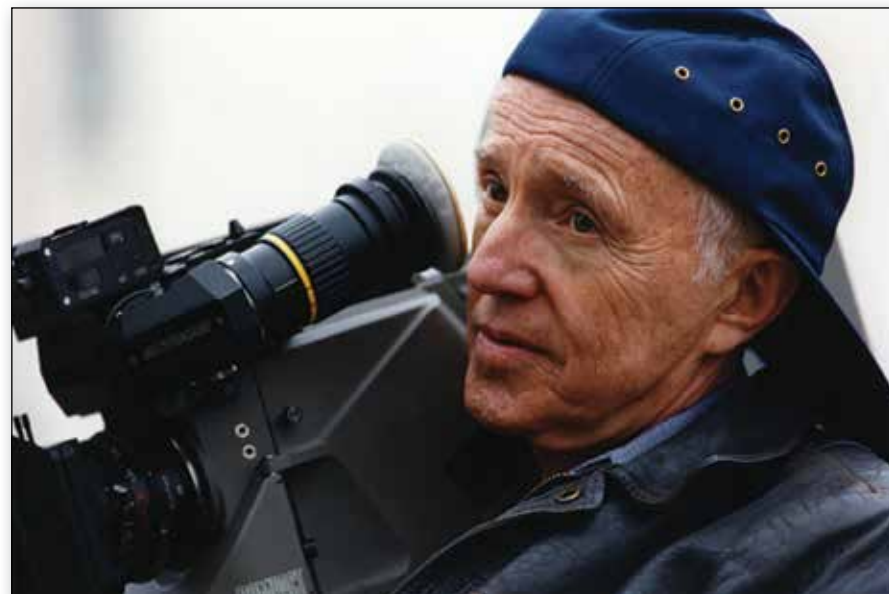
**The Virginia Theatre
203 W. Park, Champaign**

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 the memory of

Haskell Wexler

1922-2015



"Haskell was a man . . . who fought always for what was right and was thus indispensable.

His loss feels harder when you realize how many real-world issues he tackled through his art and generosity."

- Guillermo del Toro

Festival Schedule 2016

Film Screenings

Tuesday, April 12

7 p.m. ***Everybody Wants Some!!***
at Foellinger Auditorium
University of Illinois campus
Free and open to the public

Wednesday, April 13

7 p.m. ***Crimson Peak***

Thursday, April 14

1 p.m. ***Grandma***

4 p.m. ***Northfork***

8:30 p.m. ***The Third Man***

Friday, April 15

1 p.m. ***Disturbing the Peace***

4 p.m. ***L'inhumaine***

9 p.m. ***Eve's Bayou***

Saturday, April 16

11 a.m. ***Force of Destiny***

2 p.m. ***Radical Grace***

4:30 p.m. ***Love & Mercy***

9 p.m. ***Blow Out***

Sunday, April 17

Noon ***Body and Soul***

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 (\$150). Individual tickets (\$15) and student & senior citizen tickets (\$13) on sale at the Virginia Theatre box office, 217-356-9063.

For more information contact:
Casey Ludwig
ludwig2@illinois.edu | 217-300-1375
College of Media

Academic Panel Discussions

Illini Union | Pine Lounge, First Floor

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

Thursday, April 14, 2016

9 a.m.-10 a.m.
Challenging Stigma Through Love, Mercy and the Arts
Moderated by
Eric Pierson

10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.
Creating Empathy on the Big Screen
Moderated by
Nate Kohn

Friday, April 15, 2016

9 a.m.-10 a.m.
#oscarssowhite: Diversity in Hollywood
Moderated by
Chaz Ebert

10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.
Women in Film
Moderated by
Chaz Ebert

Live On-Air Interview

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

9 a.m.-10 a.m.
Jim Turpin (WDWS-AM 1400)
Ebertfest Interview



Welcome to Ebertfest!

With Chris Rock's Oscar monologue about diversity still fresh in our minds, the 18th annual Ebertfest is geared toward championing diversity in all its forms. Both Roger and I believed that one of cinema's chief purposes is to enable audiences to view the world through the eyes of another, enabling us to empathize with the perspectives of different people both domestically and from around the globe. We will be celebrating female directors and actors, technicians, older filmmakers, filmmakers documenting peace in the Middle East, and African-American directors, as well as directors from Mexico and the Netherlands by way of Australia. Our panels will tackle topics of inclusiveness and how that adds to a civility that we aren't finding in some of our presidential debates this year. And for the very first time we will introduce the inaugural Ebert Humanitarian Award.

I hope you are as delighted as I am to be welcomed by the handsome sculpture of Roger outside of the Virginia Theatre. When it was sculpted by the artist Rick Harney at the request of Donna and Scott Anderson, I had no way of knowing it would become one of the most popular installations in Champaign-Urbana. Each week we see photos posted on social media of people who joyously sit next to Roger and give the Thumbs-Up! I am especially gladdened by the photos of children who seem to take extra delight in sitting next to him.

Once again, we are striving to shine a light on films that deserve to be rediscovered, including underrated gems from last year. We're thrilled to welcome Mexican director Guillermo del Toro, the visionary auteur best known



Chaz Ebert, co-founder, producer and host of Ebertfest

for his 2006 masterwork, "Pan's Labyrinth," a film Roger so loved that he inducted it into his Great Movies series a mere year after its release. I wish Roger had been able to see del Toro's latest visual marvel, "Crimson Peak," the gothic horror fantasy that will open Ebertfest 2016.

We will have a special premiere of "Disturbing The Peace," a film about Israelis and Palestinians who buck the powers that be in order to strive for peace. Once enemy combatants, they go through a miraculous transformation to form a coalition called the Combatants for Peace. The film's directors, Steve Apkon and Andrew Young will be here. Joining them will be the Story Consultant Marcina Hale and some of the Combatants for Peace (Chen Alon and Sulaiman Khatib) who will be visiting from Israel. This film, illustrating a powerful aspect of empathy, will receive the first Ebert Humanitarian Award.

We will also be screening several of Roger's favorite films, all of which he awarded four stars. Legendary script supervisor

Angela Allen will accompany a screening of Carol Reed's 1949 masterpiece, "The Third Man," a film Roger ranked alongside the greatest films of all time. "It told a story of existential loss and betrayal," wrote Roger. "It was weary and knowing, and its glorious style was an act of defiance against the corrupt world it pictured." This screening is made possible by a grant from The Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

Another famous Allen attending our festival — unrelated to Angela — is actress Nancy Allen, who was so unforgettable as the scheming bully in Brian De Palma's "Carrie." She'll be joining us to discuss another De Palma classic, 1981's "Blow Out," which Roger hailed as the director's "best and most original work."

A film that will be especially glorious to experience on the big screen is 2003's "Northfork," a film Roger compared to Terrence Malick's "Days of Heaven" and Wim Wenders' "Wings of Desire." "The movie is visionary and elegiac, more a fable than a story,

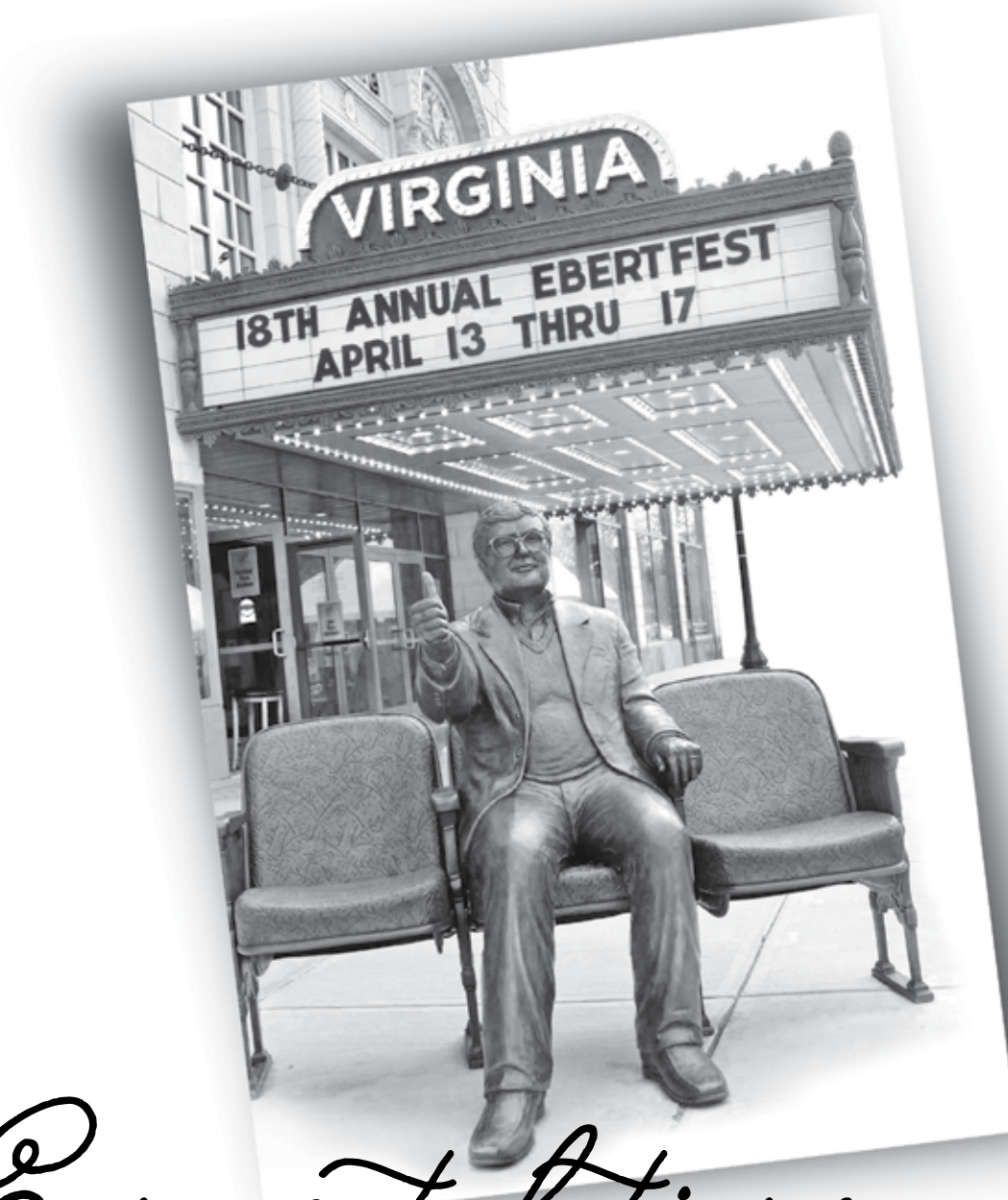
and frame by frame, it looks like a portfolio of spaces so wide, so open, that men must wonder if they have a role beneath such indifferent skies," wrote Roger. The film's director, Michael Polish will join us.

Beach Boys fans will be especially pleased with our next selection, "Love & Mercy," a widely acclaimed biopic on the challenged life of the band's iconic leader, Brian Wilson, played at different ages by John Cusack and Paul Dano. This film is being sponsored by the Champaign County Alliance for the Promotion of Acceptance, Inclusion and Respect.

I am pleased to welcome three extraordinary female directors as first-time guests at Ebertfest. Kasi Lemmons will be on hand to discuss her 1997 debut, "Eve's Bayou," which Roger declared as "one of the very best films of the year" and "a film of astonishing maturity and confidence." "She sets her story in Southern Gothic country, in the bayous and old Louisiana traditions that Tennessee Williams might have been familiar with, but in tone and style she earns comparison with the family dramas of Ingmar Bergman," wrote Roger.

Joining her are two women, one of whom helmed her first feature last year, and the film is a remarkable achievement. Windy City documentarians Rebecca Parrish and Nicole Bernard-Reis will be here with "Radical Grace," their crowd-pleasing profile of the Nuns on the Bus, who became engaged in social activism despite protests from the Vatican. They won the Chicago Award at last year's Chicago International Film Festival. Parrish and Bernard-Reis will be joined on stage by Father Mike Pfleger, the activist priest

continued on page 6



Congratulations

on the 18th Annual Roger Ebert Film Festival
— President Tim Killeen and Dr. Roberta Johnson Killeen

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN • CHICAGO • SPRINGFIELD

Welcome to Ebertfest

continued from page 4

from the South Side of Chicago who stands up for justice even when he has to speak truth to power. He was portrayed by John Cusack in Spike Lee’s recent film, “Chi-Raq.”

The iconic Lily Tomlin will headline “Grandma,” a film about a 70-year-old worldly grandmother who is on a mission to help her granddaughter with an unwanted pregnancy. The film’s director, Paul Weitz (“About A Boy,” “American Pie”), and its producer, Andrew Miano, will join us.

This year’s installment of Ebertfest marks the first time in our history that two silent films are included in our scheduled programming. The wonderful Alloy Orchestra (Terry Donahue, Ken Winokur and Roger Miller) will deliver its 16th performance at our festival, providing a live accompaniment to Marcel L’Herbier’s staggering 1924 landmark, “L’inhumaine” (“The Inhuman Woman”). French film historian Richard Neupert will be on hand to discuss the film with the Alloy Orchestra. This screening is sponsored by Steak ‘n Shake.

Renee Baker and The Chicago Modern Orchestra Project will be making their Ebertfest debut when they perform their new jazz score for 1925’s “Body and Soul,” directed by the trailblazing black filmmaker Oscar Micheaux. “Body and Soul” marked the film debut of legendary actor Paul Robeson, who plays a double role of the villain and the preacher. In another first, the entire 13-piece orchestra of the Chicago Modern Orchestra Project will perform in the orchestra pit of the Virginia Theatre. That will take some doing as the pit was built to hold about ten musicians.

And last but not least, we will welcome back director Paul Cox with his new romantic film, “Force of Destiny,” which tackles some of the issues he confronted with his liver transplant. I’m especially excited that Cox will be

*Thank you for honoring Roger’s memory
and for keeping his legacy alive.*

here to present “Force of Destiny,” because it will serve as the film’s American premiere. Joining him will be the object of his love, Rosie Raka.

In addition to the films, we will present stimulating academic panels with Gil Robertson, the head of the African American Film Critics Association, and Shawn Edwards, its cofounder. You will also be welcomed into a community of movie review writers populated by numerous special guests that include film critics Leonard Maltin, Michael Phillips, Nell Minow, Matt Zoller-Seitz, Sheila O’Malley, Brian Tallerico, Susan Wloszczyna, Matt Fagerholm, Nick Allen, Mark Dujsik, Angelica Jade Bastién, and Chuck Koplinski.

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

I am grateful to Roger’s alma mater, the College of Media at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for making it possible to gather once again and welcome the 1500 guests to the Virginia Theatre. I say a special thanks to University of Illinois President Timothy L. Killeen and to Dean Jan Slater of the College of Media for their generous support.

I announced the start of the Roger Ebert Center to be located within the College of Media. It will maintain Roger’s legacy of passing forward the values of empathy and compassion through cinema and to encourage and support emerging writers, technologists and filmmakers at Ebertfest and other events throughout the year. We are about halfway to our financial

goal of \$5 million to qualify as a Center, and I will call on you to help make it a reality.

Professor Nate Kohn from the University of Georgia’s Grady College has been the festival director since day one and we are fortunate to have him continue in that role. Nate is an Urbana native and Illinois alum, so Ebertfest is close to his heart. Please welcome Casey Ludwig, who is taking Mary Susan Britt’s place as the assistant director. This will be Casey’s first Ebertfest, so please stop to say hello. She has been working hard to make it as flawless as possible.

Steven Bentz and his cheerful staff at the Virginia Theatre put out the welcome mat. The Champaign Park District and the Champaign Police Department are always helpful. 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, 3-D or digital prints. We are so grateful for their continued help.

We thank our friend Bertha Mitchell, who serves her famous downstate barbecue from the tent in front of the theater. She comes back year after year, all while trying to support her gifted hockey playing son Marcus in Canada and the U.S. Mrs. Mitchell and other vendors make it convenient for our festival-goers to grab a bite to eat in between movies. Thanks also goes to the Illini Union, which plays host for most of our guests in the heart of the campus.

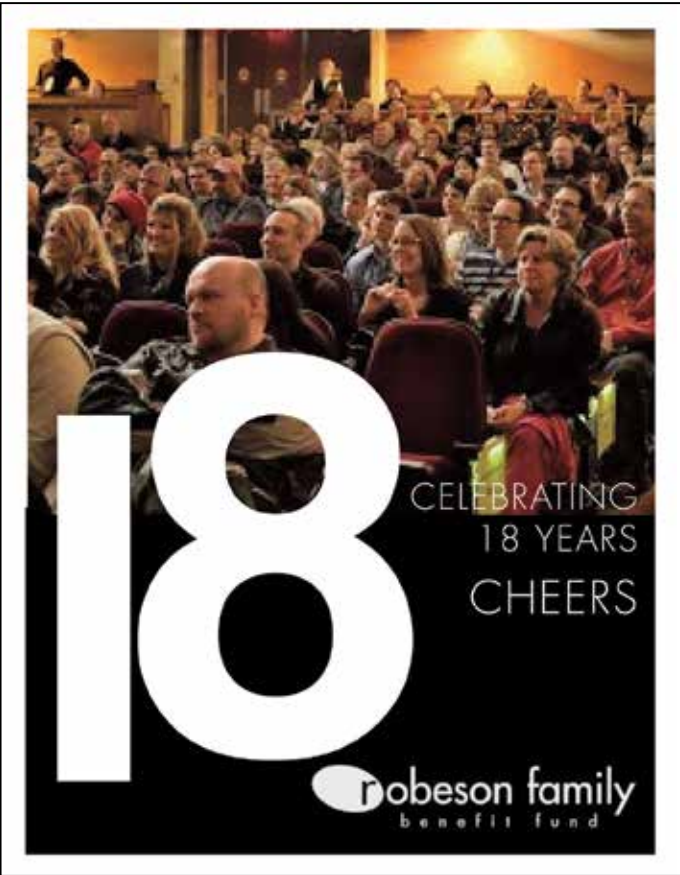
Our sponsors are crucial. They help make the festival possible. Without their financial support we could not undertake the

festival year after year. Some sponsors have been with us all 18 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 Hollywood Foreign Press Association; SAG-Indie; The News-Gazette; and the Ebert Foundation.

Volunteers serve in many ways, including serving as drivers and guides for festival guests. They also help to plan the festival logistics and serve as ticket takers and ushers at the Virginia. 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 fifteen Ebertfests. It is available on iTunes. 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 Hays, 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 us, and thank you also to those who are joining us for the first time. Thank you for honoring Roger’s 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.





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BARBARA WILSON UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS INTERIM CHANCELLOR

Join the debate: Buy a ticket, find your seat

Welcome to Ebertfest! I know standing in line is usually not considered an enjoyable pastime. But I think waiting in line to get into the Virginia Theatre for the next movie or panel here at the festival might just be the exception. There is a real excitement that comes from the anticipation and from being surrounded by several hundred others who are right there with you in the moment.

As Roger Ebert taught us all, movies aren't just a different way to tell powerful stories and entertain us. Movies — done right — have the power to bring

Movies — done right — have the power to bring people together, geographically and emotionally.

people together, geographically and emotionally. Yet even though a film may bring us closer as we watch it together, every single one of us experiences that same film very differently. Part of the magic of film is what happens after the credits run: the lights come up and we start talking with one another about what we think

we just saw or heard.

Roger also helped us understand that these conversations are open to everyone. Whether you're a Pulitzer Prize-winning critic or a ten-year-old child, the only requirement to join the debate is to buy a ticket and find your seat. Enjoy the festival!



Barbara Wilson
Interim Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

JAN SLATER DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF MEDIA

Let the lights dim and the reels spin, enjoy

The College of Media is proud to welcome you to the 18th annual Ebertfest!

Each year, we look forward to this week with great anticipation. As the films and special guests are announced, that anticipation grows. When the week arrives, we cannot wait to see old friends and make a few new ones. And when the lights dim and the reels spin, we are transported to another place and time through the magic of storytelling.

We owe it all to Roger with his vision of a festival that celebrates the best in film and his understanding of how those films affect us all. What an inspirational legacy.

It takes a full year and a great deal of support to produce this festival. The College of Media, the University of Illinois and the Champaign Park District,

We owe it all to Roger with his vision of a festival that celebrates the best in film and his understanding of how those films affect us all.

in combination with the many sponsors, volunteers and attendees, make this a one-of-a-kind event. Thank you all for making it possible. Your dedication is humbling.

Thank you to Chaz Ebert for continuing to entrust the College with Ebertfest. Roger meant a great deal to us, to the University and to the community. This festival is one way for us to honor his work.

Thank you to Casey Ludwig and Dr. Nate Kohn, who organize and direct this festival. The logistics and coordination required for an

event of this size are staggering. It all seems to happen effortlessly, but we know better. This is Casey's first festival. She has done a marvelous job and we look forward to hearing her ideas for making it even better in the future.

The College of Media is in the education business. And while our efforts are usually focused on college students, we hope this event will teach us all something about film and its power to affect the human condition.

The College of Media at the University of Illinois welcomes



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

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!



CHAZ,

Thank you for everything you do to keep Roger's spirit, and Ebertfest, alive for all of us. I miss Roger so much but am so grateful for you.

Thank you. Betsy

NATE KOHN FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Thank you all who contributed to Ebertfest

Welcome to the 18th 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.

In selecting the films for this year, Chaz Ebert and I decided to take another look at films that Roger loved. We found four films from his vast reservoir that in some way benefit from a second look on our part, given the social, cultural and political issues that dominate contemporary discourse. Films are living things and take on new meanings each time we view them. So when you watch these four films — "Northfork," "Eve's Bayou," "The Third Man" and "Blow Out" — note how they take on new life and in their humanity inform our present-day lived experiences. Each in its own way comments on how we view the world and perhaps gives us fresh insights on how to confront the troubles of our day.

This year we are showing two silent films, both with live orchestra accompaniment. The Alloy Orchestra is presenting their new score for the French film "L'inhumaine," and the Chicago Modern Orchestra Project brings us "Body and Soul," a film that marks Paul Robeson's debut as an actor.

To complement these two classic films, we have selected Paul Cox's latest film "Force of Destiny," Bill Pohlad's "Love & Mercy," Guillermo del Toro's "Crimson Peak," Kasi Lemmons' "Eve's Bayou," Paul Weitz's "Grandma," Stephen Apkon and Andrew Young's "Disturbing the Peace" and Rebecca Parrish's documentary "Radical Grace." Most of these directors will be with us as our very special guests.

These films combine to fulfill Roger's vision for the festival and are the kinds of films he wanted to showcase and champion — films that address the human condition, that allow us to explore places and

people strange to us, films that engender empathy for others. All these films accomplish what Roger looked for in a great festival film. We hope you will agree.

Other filmmaker guests at this year's festival include star Nancy Allen from "Blow Out" and script supervisor Angela Allen from "The Third Man." Plus there will probably be a couple of surprise guests.

This festival is Roger Ebert's gift to his hometown, and for that we thank him and his wife, Chaz.

James Bond will be back with us in the projection booth and we are pleased to add Gil Robertson and Shawn Edwards to our array of film critics and commentators. Both will participate in a morning panel on diversity in the entertainment industry at the Illini Union.

One of our most dedicated sponsors, the Champaign County Alliance for the Promotion of Acceptance, Inclusion and Respect, in addition to sponsoring

our showing of "Love & Mercy," is organizing a morning panel discussion 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

to blossom each year in the Central Illinois spring.

We would also like to thank Paramount Classics, NBC Universal Pictures, Swank Motion Pictures, Park Circus, Inc., Rialto Pictures, Flicker Alley, ChubbCo Film Co., Illumination Films, Kindling Group and Interchange Productions, Dirigent Media and Sony Pictures Classics for graciously providing us with their very best 35mm and digital prints.

Finally, please welcome our new Assistant Director Casey Ludwig when you see her. She has hit the ground running and we're very pleased to have her on board. Our thanks go out to her and to Dean Jan Slater, President Timothy Killeen and Dr. Roberta Johnson Killeen, and Interim Chancellor Barbara Wilson, without whose hard work and enthusiastic support this festival would not be possible. We especially want to thank the University of Illinois for their loyal support.

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



Nate Kohn, festival director

Cinematographer receives second dedication

By Mariah Schaefer, The Daily Illini

When Chaz Ebert introduced Haskell Wexler as a special guest at the 2013 Ebertfest and said he was going to receive a Golden Thumb, Wexler smiled and bounced onto the stage at the Virginia Theatre.

“Now you have a Thumb and an Academy Award,” Chaz Ebert said as Wexler thanked her.

Wexler, a cinematographer with more than 80 credits to his name on IMDb, was the recipient of the Roger Ebert’s Film Festival dedication in 2013. This year, the festival is once again dedicated to Wexler, who passed away last year at age 93.

Because Wexler, a Chicago native, was “such a friend of the festival and such a supporter of excellence in cinema,” the festival coordinators decided to dedicate Ebertfest to him again this year, said Nate Kohn, festival director.

What stood out to Kohn at the 2013 Ebertfest was how Wexler was a perfect guest because he was very present at the festival and stayed for the entirety of Ebertfest, along with his wife, Rita Taggart.

“When he was at the festival, he always walked around with a small digital camera, and he just took pictures of everything and of everybody,” Kohn said. “He



Festival Director Nate Kohn gives cinematographer Haskell Wexler a Golden Thumb at the 2013 Festival while Chaz Ebert looks on.

had the ability to hold this small camera extremely steady as he moved and walked, and you could tell that he knew what he was doing as a cinematographer.”

Kohn said the Eberts had known Wexler for years and years, and Roger Ebert suggested dedicating the festival to Wexler in 2013 because he admired him, the body of his work and his social activism.

After Wexler’s death, Chaz Ebert said on RogerEbert.com, “Roger always wrote highly of

Haskell’s work, often noting (like in his 4-star review of ‘Bound for Glory’) about how he expected such images to last with him a lifetime.”

Wexler attended Ebertfest in 2013 for the showing of 1978’s “Days of Heaven,” for which he shot more than half of the cinematography.

Throughout his career, Wexler was nominated five times for an Academy Award and won two Best Cinematography Oscars, one for “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” in 1967 and one for “Bound for Glory” in 1977.

When accepting his Oscar for “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” Wexler ran up to the stage and said, “I hope we can use our art for peace and for love. Thanks.”

In 1968, Wexler wrote, filmed and directed the film “Medium Cool” during the

Democratic Convention in Chicago. The film was released in August 1969, and Kohn said Roger Ebert loved it. “Medium Cool” was shown at Ebertfest in 2003, a decade prior to when the festival was dedicated to Wexler.

Wexler was born on Feb. 6, 1922, in Chicago and died on Dec. 27, 2015, in Santa Monica, California. He began his cinematography career in the 1950s. Throughout his career, he shot both feature films and documentaries. Wexler also served as director, producer, writer and actor in many projects.

“Haskell Wexler just exemplified all that Roger loved about cinema,” Kohn said. “He was a passionate artist who was respected by everyone in the industry.”

mschaf2@dailyillini.com

“Roger always wrote highly of Haskell’s work, often noting about how he expected such images to last with him a lifetime.”

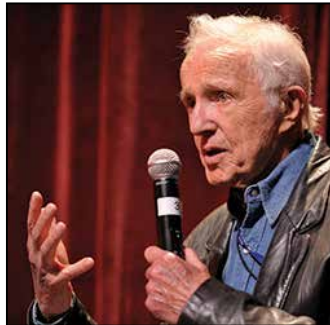
Chaz Ebert



Haskell Wexler stands with actress Tilda Swinton (center) and his wife, Rita Taggart (left).



1978’s “Days of Heaven” brought Wexler to Ebertfest in 2013 when it was shown.



Wexler speaks to the audience at the 2013 Ebertfest.



In the Pine Lounge at the Illini Union, Wexler speaks at an academic panel at Ebertfest.



“Medium Cool,” which features Wexler’s cinematography, was shown at Ebertfest in 2003. Wexler also wrote and directed the film.

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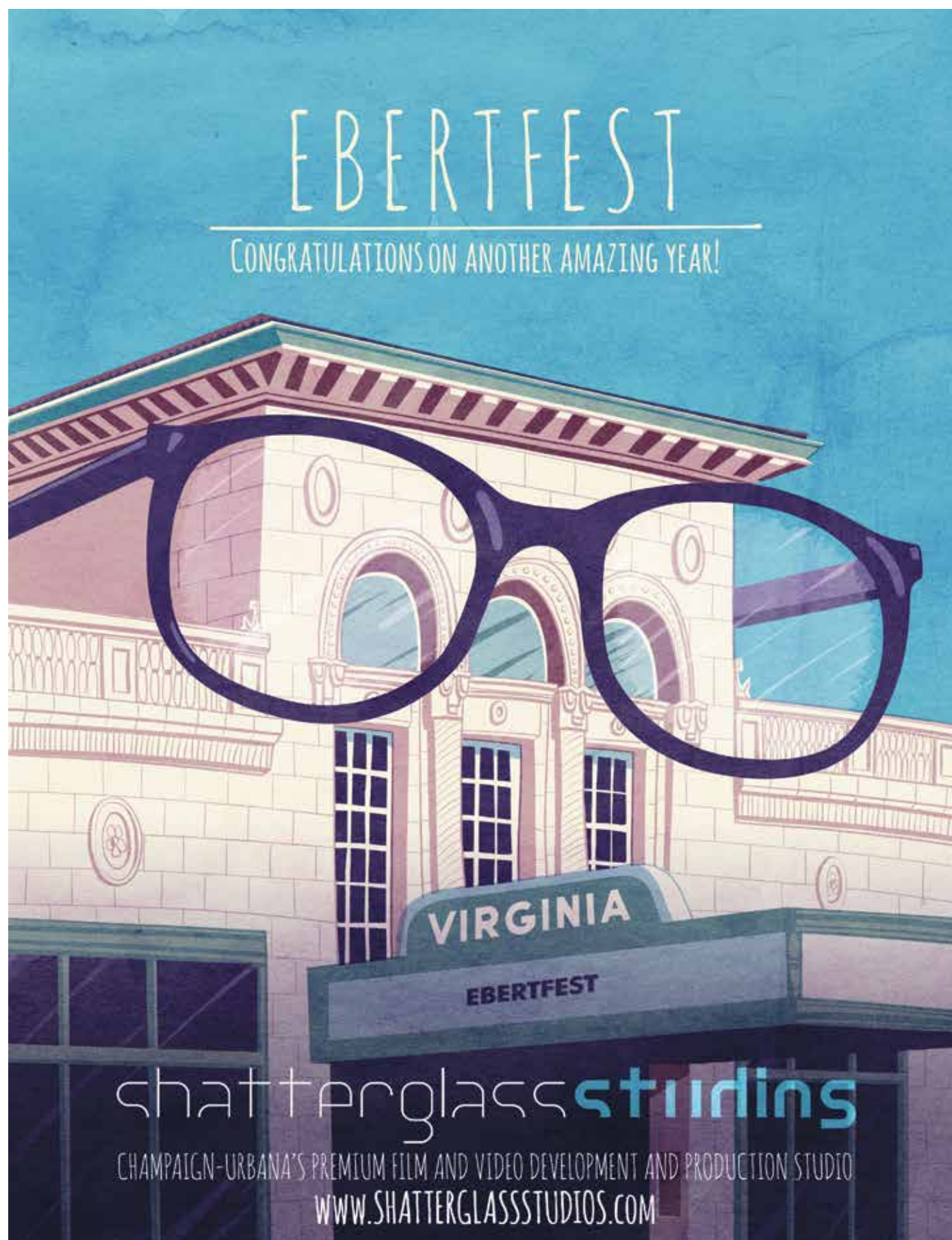
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Festival Info

Things to know about Ebertfest

TICKET INFORMATION

- A Festival pass to all 12 screenings is \$150.
- Individual tickets are \$15. Student and senior citizen tickets are \$13.
- 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 14, 2016
- Friday, April 15, 2016

DIRECTIONS

How to get to the Illini Union from the Virginia Theatre

- Turn RIGHT (south) onto N. Neil 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 W. 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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Ebert continues to assist University students through fellowships, center offering programming

By Megan Jones, The Daily Illini

Roger Ebert was much more than a critic — he was a lover of film and a champion of movies. With a newly founded Ebert fellowship program at the University of Illinois, students are trying to follow his footsteps.

Because Roger was known for being a mentor to young critics, the Ebert fellowship program takes a professional mentor and matches them with three students as Ebert Fellows in Media Criticism.

Chaz and Roger Ebert established the Roger Ebert Center in 2009 and initiated its first class of Ebert fellows in 2015: Shalayne Pulia, Riane Lenzer-White and Ashish Valentine.

All three are seniors studying

areas related to writing: Pulia in news-editorial journalism, Lenzer-White in broadcast journalism and Valentine in English literature, text and culture.

The fellowship program will continue each year with a new induction of fellows at each year's Ebertfest. When the center was announced, the College of Media began creating ideas on what programming to offer. It realized that criticism is a difficult area for people to teach because it requires some experience and someone fluent in it, College of Media Dean Jan Slater said.

Chicago Tribune chief film critic Michael Phillips helps mentor and provides feedback for

Because Roger was known for being a mentor to young critics, the Ebert fellowship program takes a professional mentor and matches them with three fellows as Ebert Fellows in Media Criticism.

the fellows' work. Phillips knew Roger Ebert very well and comes to Champaign frequently to spend one-on-one time with the students, Slater said.

"I am proud of how my work has grown through this fellowship and the confidence I have gained in entertainment writing. I have learned that there is absolutely no reason to shy away from a big opportunity like interviewing an Emmy-nominated documentary film director or tracking down a senior editor at Pitchfork Review," Pulia said. "I may be a student, but I have a voice. My questions and critical analysis of these cultural events are no less important than those of seasoned professionals."

Fellows have covered various events in the film industry, such as attending the True/False Film Festival in Missouri, covering the "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" release for WBEZ through a podcast and writing various reviews, which have been published in The Daily Illini.

"I think my favorite part is being able to write creatively," Lenzer-White said. "In journalism, everything is so fact-based, so not having to be

objective has really brought out my more artistic side."

Slater said each year a new mentor will come to teach the fellows, but Phillips is continuing this year due to his close proximity to the campus.

Fellows do not have to be enrolled in the College of Media, but they must attend the University. They receive a \$3,000 stipend.

Beyond fellowships, Ebert's endowment will also provide programming through the Ebert Center. The College of Media has worked with Chaz and a faculty committee to develop ways that students can learn beyond a classroom setting by creating bodies of work and receiving first-hand experience, Slater said. In the future, the center will offer special classes to complement the College's Media and Cinema Studies degree program and invite special scholars to come to campus and give panels. The Ebert Center will also undertake hosting the Roger Ebert's Film Festival.

Slater said one of the center's goals is to bring the film industry and the students together to help develop the

industry. Historically, the University has developed many items for the film industry, so the center is trying to collect data on that to showcase its history in the industry.

"The center itself is about exposing. It is open to the community. We want it to be open to people in the Champaign-Urbana area, but also in Chicago. We want it to have student opportunities and to connect the industry with the campus because Roger was very much a supporter of the storytelling behind film," Slater said.

The center is halfway to its goal to raise \$5 million, and donors can give funds online now at <https://media.illinois.edu/giving/give-now>.

"It's certainly a great opportunity for this community, which was so important to Roger," Slater said. "To have (the Roger Ebert Center) in



Shalayne Pulia



Ashish Valentine



Riane Lenzer-White

his name really epitomizes the things he believed in and the things he always wanted us to know about film. We really want to make sure that we are doing the kinds of programming that would be in his philosophy. It's focusing much broader than just criticism."

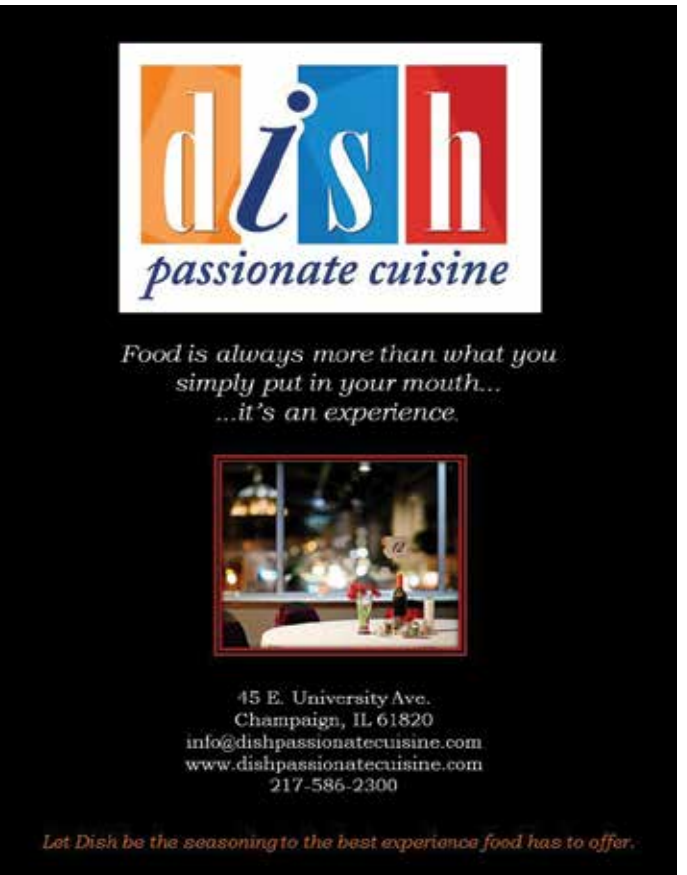
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"The center itself is about exposing. It is open to the community. We want it to be open to people in the Champaign-Urbana area, but also in Chicago."


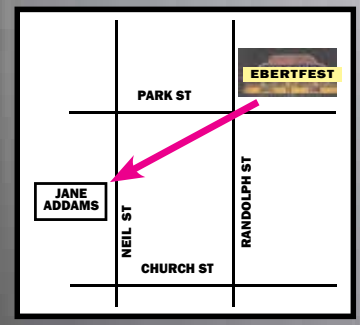
Jan Slater, dean of the College of Media



The 2015 Ebert fellows Shalayne Pulia, Ashish Valentine and Riane Lenzer-White at the True/False Documentary Film Festival in Columbia, Missouri. The festival was held in March.



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New assistant festival director tackles first Ebertfest, joins community effort

By Claire Hettinger, *The Daily Illini*

Casey Ludwig is experiencing Ebertfest and its culture for the first time as the assistant festival director for the 2016 Roger Ebert's Film Festival.

"The energy that I've witnessed leading up to the festival is unmatched by anything I've experienced before," she said in an email. "I can't wait to be a part of it at the festival."

The exciting festival, which is in its 18th year, begins to come together months before the first film lights up the screen.

The job involves all aspects of the film festival, but it isn't just Ludwig, she said. It takes numerous people to plan such a large event and she enjoys working with them.

"It takes a lot of people to make this festival happen," she said. "But being an integral part of the team has been very exciting."

Her first festival is here and Ludwig said the process has kept her active in the months preceding it.

"It has been a great learning experience for me and I've been incredibly busy making sure all the pieces fit together in the end for a successful event."

The assistant festival director's job begins in the summer, when they start the search for festival sponsors and begin to plan the next year's Ebertfest. They handle all newspaper advertisements, media connections and pass sales in the fall.

Once January hits, work begins on planning the film schedule and putting information together for festivalgoers.

The community involved with the festival has been supportive and patient with her as she has planned and finalized her first festival, she said. Her ultimate goal — simply create an event that people will enjoy.

"Everyone from Chaz and Nate to the sponsors and vendors, to the individuals purchasing passes are amazing, kind, and have been so patient and thoughtful with me during my first year," she said.

Mary Susan Britt was the associate director of Ebertfest for the 14 previous festivals but handed the torch on to Ludwig this year after moving home to the South where she grew up.

Britt previously told *The Daily Illini*, "Having had the



Casey Ludwig, assistant festival director

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."

There won't any big changes this year, Ludwig said, Ebertfest is always well-run and successful and she did not see anything major that needed to change after Britt's capable leadership and years of service.

"The festival is really well organized," she said. "Mary Susan Britt did a wonderful job running the festival for the last 14 years and I did not see a need to do any major changes to the program."

The festival culture and the people who create it excite and awe Ludwig.

"I'm learning so much and am completely immersed in the ins and outs of planning this great film festival," she said. "I'm grateful to be a part of something so wonderful."

hettngr2@dailyillini.com

"It takes a lot of people to make this festival happen. But being an integral part of the team has been very exciting."

Casey Ludwig, assistant festival director



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Everybody Wants Some!!

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STEPHEN FEDER (executive producer & host) currently serves as SVP of Production & Development for Annapurna Pictures in LA, where he most recently oversaw production for Richard Linklater's *Everybody Wants Some!!* and served as Annapurna's executive producer on Harmony Korine's *Springbreakers* and Wong Kar Wai's *The Grandmaster*. Among his many accomplishments, Feder was the executive producer of the successful independent film *Kumaré* — which took home the SXSW® Audience Award in 2011. He was also instrumental on the films of Sacha Baron Cohen — working for several years on both *Bruno* and *The Dictator* — each opening at the top box office position. Prior to that he developed and produced TV comedies such as Showtime's series *La La Land*, with British Comedian Marc Wootton, and NBC's *Sports Action Team*, starring members of Chicago's famed Second City and IO. His experience is most certainly varied, having earned his master's degree from the London School of Economics and undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois.

GLEN POWELL (actor) is becoming one of LA's most sought-after actors, having been recently described as the Next Big Thing by *The Hollywood Reporter*.

Powell was recently seen as Chad Radwell on FOX's Ryan Murphy hit new show *Scream Queens* opposite Jamie Lee Curtis. He recently wrapped production on the Iraq War drama *Sand Castle*, in which he plays Sgt. Falvy, a tough-minded and foul-mouthed soldier from the South.

In 2016, Powell will be starring in three major films, including the comedy *Ride Along 2*, portraying a lethal drug lord on the streets of Atlanta, and *Beyond Deceit*, with Anthony Hopkins and Al Pacino. He also has a lead role in *Everybody Wants Some!!*, which is being referred to as the spiritual sequel to Richard Linklater's cult classic *Dazed And Confused*. Powell co-starred in *Expendables 3* (2014) as an expert hacker and drone pilot. Powell was also seen in Russell Friendenberg's independent thriller, *Wind Walkers*. Other film credits include *Sex Ed*, *Red Wing* and the final installment of Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy, *The Dark Knight*. When not in production, Powell resides in LA.

JUSTON STREET (actor) is one of Hollywood's leading up-and-coming actors. Most recently, Street played his own father, legendary University of Texas quarterback James Street, in Angelo Pizzo's biographical sports drama film, *My All American*. He will also star opposite Mark Wahlberg in Peter Berg's action thriller *Deepwater Horizon* due out this fall. Street's past credits include the independent films *Juvenile Transgressions* and *Degenerates*.

A former professional baseball pitcher, Street began his acting career studying at the State Theater School for Acting Training. He then joined a 2-year-long Meisner study, becoming a founding member of A Working Group at The Robichaux Studio in Austin. In his first theatrical production, Juston played the lead role of Chad in *Housebreaking*, a production of New York's Cherry Lane Theatre, where he was on stage for the entire 2.5-hour performance. Street currently resides in LA.

Crimson Peak

Wednesday, April 13, 7 p.m.

GUILLERMO DEL TORO (director) is among the most creative and visionary artists of his generation and whose distinctive style is showcased through his work as a filmmaker, screenwriter, producer and author. Born in Guadalajara, del Toro first gained worldwide recognition for the 1993 Mexican-American co-production *Cronos*, a supernatural horror film, which he directed from his own screenplay after beginning his career as a special effects makeup artist. The film premiered at Cannes 1993, where it won the Mercedes-Benz Award. It also won over 20 international awards, including eight Ariel Awards from the Mexican Academy of Film, including Best Director, Best Screenplay and the Golden Ariel. He then directed and co-wrote the supernatural thriller *The Devil's Backbone*. Both films have appeared repeatedly in Top 10 lists of the best genre films of all time. In 2004, del Toro directed and co-wrote the action adventure sci-fi thriller *Hellboy*; four years later, he wrote and directed the hit sequel, *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*. Del Toro earned international acclaim as the director, writer and producer of the 2006 fantasy drama *Pan's Labyrinth*, which won 3 Oscars® — Art Direction, Cinematography, and Makeup — and received 3 other nominations for Best Original Screenplay, Best Foreign Language Film and Best Score. In all, the film won over 40 international awards and appeared on more than 35 critics' best film lists.

In 2013, del Toro wrote and directed the epic sci-fi action-adventure *Pacific Rim*, which has grossed over \$400 million worldwide. He also created the Couch Gag for the 24th annual "Treehouse of Horror" Halloween episode of *The Simpsons*, which aired in October 2013 and got over 20 million views on YouTube.

His most recent feature is the Gothic romance *Crimson Peak*,

which he also co-wrote with Matthew Robbins for Legendary and Universal Pictures. The film, which was released in October 2015, stars Mia Wasikowska, Tom Hiddleston, Jessica Chastain and Charlie Hunnam.

Del Toro was executive producer for the worldwide horror hit *Mama*, starring Jessica Chastain. Among his other film credits, del Toro produced the supernatural thriller *The Orphanage*, which became the highest-grossing local language film in Spain's history. He partnered with fellow Alfonso Cuarón and Alejandro González Iñárritu to produce *Rudo Y Cursi*, and *Biutiful*. He is co-screenwriter with Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Peter Jackson of the three *Hobbit* films.

On the animation front, del Toro, through his overall deal with DreamWorks Animation, has been an executive producer on the films *Kung Fu Panda 2*, *Puss in Boots* and *Rise of the Guardians*. Upcoming animation projects include *Puss in Boots 2* and *Kung Fu Panda 3*. He produced the *The Book of Life*, and is developing and will co-direct a 3-D, stop-motion adaptation of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*.

In the publishing world, del Toro co-authored the *NY Times* bestselling vampire horror novels *The Strain*, *The Fall* and *The Night Eternal*, which together comprise *The Strain Trilogy*. He is also co-creator of the FX Networks' hit series based on the novels. Del Toro directed the first episode of Season 1 and is executive producer on the series, currently in production on its third season. Dark Horse Comics has published a graphic novel series also adapted from the trilogy. Del Toro also co-authored *Trollhunters* (2015), a fantasy-adventure novel, which will be the basis for a del Toro-produced animated TV series.

In 2013, Harper Design published *Guillermo del Toro Cabinet of Curiosities*, a lavishly illustrated book containing notes, drawings and untold creatures

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from del Toro's private journals and filmmaking diaries, with never-before-seen characters, art and ideas of things to come. In addition, del Toro is currently developing a TV series based on Naoki Urasawa's acclaimed manga series *Monster*.

Grandma

Thursday, April 14, 1 p.m.

PAUL WEITZ (director) was raised in New York City and, along with his brother and long-time collaborator Chris, directed his debut film *American Pie*. In addition to writing the animated film *Antz*, the Weitz brothers also wrote and directed *About a Boy*, for which they earned an Oscar® nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay. Additionally, Weitz is the writer and director of films including *Being Flynn*, *American Dreamz* and *In Good Company*; he also directed the film *Admission*.

As a playwright, Weitz works with Second Stage Theatre in New York. His published plays include *Lonely I'm Not*, which starred Topher Grace, and *Trust*, starring Zach Braff and Sutton Foster.

Weitz is currently an executive producer on the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*, starring Gael Garcia Bernal, which recently won the Golden Globe® for Best Comedy Series and Best Actor in a Comedy. His most recent film, *Grandma*, starring Lily Tomlin, was released by Sony Pictures Classics earlier in 2015, and earned Tomlin a Golden Globe® nomination, among multiple honors.

ANDREW MIANO (producer) has partnered with writer-directors Paul and Chris Weitz in their production company Depth of Field for the last 15 years. His most recent project is the 2015 critically-acclaimed film *Grandma*, named one of the Top 10 Independent Films of the Year by the National Board of Review.

Miano's other credits include *Admission*, starring Tina Fey and Paul Rudd; Tom Ford's *A Single Man*, starring Colin Firth and Julianne Moore; Peter Sollett's *Nick And Norah's Infinite Playlist*, starring Michael Cera and Kat Dennings; and Paul Weitz's *Being Flynn* with Robert DeNiro and Paul Dano. He also produced

American Dreamz and *Cirque Du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant*. Miano also served as executive producer on *In Good Company* and *Little Fockers*, and on *The Golden Compass*, starring Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig.

A native of Buffalo, New York, Miano started his career in entertainment at William Morris Agency. He lives in LA with his wife and son.

Northfork

Thursday, April 14, 4 p.m.

MICHAEL POLISH (director) burst on the film scene at Sundance 1999 with *Twin Falls Idaho*, hailed by the *New York Times* as a work with "style, gravity and originality to spare." He followed that success with *Jackpot* and the film *Northfork*, which Roger called "a masterpiece." *The Astronaut Farmer* followed. Stephen Holden praised Polish's 2013 movie *Big Sur* as "(cracking) the code of how to adapt Jack Kerouac for the screen." His two 2015 releases were *Amnesiac* and *90 Minutes In Heaven*.

The Third Man

Thursday, April 14, 8:30 p.m.

ANGELA ALLEN (script supervisor) found her way to a film studio that no longer exists way back in the late 1940s and managed to get hired as an assistant script supervisor — only then in England they were called "continuity girls." She trained on 3 films and was then told she could call herself a continuity girl. By an incredible stroke of luck she was engaged by the Korda studios to work on the second unit of *The Third Man*. Her first overseas location was Vienna and while there, she discovered opera, of which she is still a fan. What she learned from Carol Reed on that film gave her the confidence to take on bigger projects. Though the youngest in the business, she was given *Pandora* and the *Flying Dutchman* and then *The African Queen*, which started a working relationship with John Huston that endured for another 13 films.

Allen has found films to be a

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wonderful way of traveling and meeting people. She fell in love with New York in the 1960s and worked on a TV program about the New York World's Fair in 1939. She also worked in New York in the office of the late Ray Stark, and was on tour with him for *Funny Girl* in Philadelphia and at opening night in New York. She worked in LA on a few TV series at Universal, one of which involved Lee Marvin, with whom she worked again on *The Dirty Dozen* a few years later. She feels incredibly lucky to have worked with so many fascinating and very different directors, having learned something from all of them.

Disturbing the Peace Friday, April 15, 1 p.m.

STEPHEN APKON (director/producer) is a filmmaker and social entrepreneur. He is the producer of *I'm Carolyn Parker*, directed by Jonathan Demme, and *Enlistment Days*, directed by Ido Haar, as well as co-producer of the soon-to-be-released *Presenting Princess Shaw*, also directed by Haar. He is also the executive producer of *Planetary*, released in 2015. He is the founder and former executive director of the Jacob Burns Film Center, a nonprofit film and education center in Pleasantville, New York, which opened in 2001 and has become one of the premier film institutions in the U.S. The JBFC board of directors includes Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard and Jonathan Demme, among others.

Apkon is the author of *The Age of the Image: Redefining Literacy in a World of Screens* (2013), in which he convincingly argues that now is the time to transform the way we teach, create and communicate so that we can all step forward together into a rich and stimulating future. His most recent endeavor is the formation of Reconsider, a nonprofit media company.

ANDREW YOUNG (director/cinematographer) is an acclaimed filmmaker whose work has received an Oscar® nomination, two Emmy® awards, seven Emmy® nominations, and five Sundance awards, including the Grand Jury Prize. He has directed and photographed over a dozen documentaries, including *Children*

of Fate, *Cutting Loose*, *Americanos*, *The Last Royals*, *Deadly Messengers*, *Lives in Hazard*, *Madagascar: A World Apart*, and *Glacier Bay: Alaska's Wild Coast*. Young is also an award-winning cinematographer who has received the Sundance Excellence in Cinematography prize three times, as well as a Cinematography Emmy® and the cinematography prize at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. His work has been exhibited theatrically and on HBO, Cinemax, National Geographic, the BBC and PBS.

CHEN ALON (film subject) is a theater activist, actor and director, who wrote his PhD on the Palestinian-Israeli Polarized Model of Theater of the Oppressed, in the theater department at Tel-Aviv University. As a Major (Res.) in the Israeli army, he co-founded Courage to Refuse, a movement of officers and combatant soldiers who refuse to serve in the occupied Palestinian territories, an action for which he was sentenced to prison. Alon is also a co-founder of Combatants for Peace, a movement of Palestinian and Israeli combatants who have abandoned the way of violence and struggle together nonviolently against the occupation. Activism in the complicated reality in Israel/Palestine led him as a professional actor and director in the Israeli-Palestinian repertory theater to search and create new forms of political activism to resist the occupation.

SULAIMAN KHATIB (film subject) is a co-founder and co-director of Combatants for Peace, a non-profit Israel/Palestinian peace building organization. He was the General Director of Al-Qud's Association for Democracy and Dialogue, which he founded with fellow Palestinian peace activists in 2006, working with youth and kids in order to be able to create effective and sustainable projects and programs focusing on the promotion of peace, democracy and civic participation in the Palestinian Territories.

At the age of 14, Khatib was sentenced to 15 years in prison, of which he served 10.5 years, where he spent his time learning about other world conflicts and peace activists such as Gandhi and Mandela, while participating in hunger strikes and developing

his commitment to nonviolent resistance.

MARCINA HALE (story consultant) is a co-founder of Reconsider and story consultant for *Disturbing the Peace*. She is a master therapist and dynamic facilitator whose workshops challenge and inspire others to live their lives more consciously and to take responsibility for their own creations. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and is trained in Traditional Psychology, as well as in systemic, energy and transpersonal psychologies.

L'inhumaine

Friday, April 15, 4 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 U.S. and abroad (The Telluride Film Festival, The Louvre, Lincoln Center, AMPAS, 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.

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

Eve's Bayou

Friday, April 15, 9 p.m.

KASI LEMMONS (director) continues to creatively tantalize with her thought-provoking body of work as an actress, director and

writer. Her work as an actress includes roles in Jonathan Demme's *Silence of the Lambs*; John Woo's first American film, *Hard Target*; Rusty Cundieff's parody of the rap music industry, *Fear of a Black Hat*; *Candyman* with Virginia Madsen; Spike Lee's *School Days*; and *Vampire's Kiss* with Nicolas Cage.

Lemmons' first feature-length film, *Eve's Bayou*, was the highest grossing independent film of 1997, won the Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature, and received seven NAACP Image Award nominations, including Best Picture. In addition, Lemmons received a special first-time director award, created just for her, from the National Board of Review. She also won the Director's Achievement Award at the Palm Springs Film Festival. Her follow-up feature, *The Cave-man's Valentine*, a co-production of Danny Devito's Jersey Films and starring Samuel L. Jackson, opened Sundance 2002 to audience and critical acclaim.

For the 2002 Oscar® telecast, Lemmons directed a touching tribute to Sidney Poitier. She was also involved in an exploration of the roles and representations of black women in film for the 2003 Tribeca Film Festival. Lemmons' third feature, *Talk to Me* (2007), starring Don Cheadle, was released to widespread critical acclaim, winning the NAACP Image Award for outstanding directing and a Gotham Award for best ensemble cast, and Chiwetel Ejifor took home an Independent Spirit Award for Best Support Actor. Lemmons' most recent feature, *Black Nativity* (2013), was an adaptation of the Langston Hughes' musical by the same name.

Lemmons has worked extensively as a mentor and educator. For the past 14 years she has been a board member of Film Independent and has contributed to the Film Independent Filmmaker Labs as a speaker and moderator. She also continues to serve as an advisor for the Sundance Screenwriter and Filmmaker Labs. Her teaching and speaking credits include Yale University, Columbia Film School, MIT, UCLA, USC, The LA Film School and The University of Pristina Film School in Kosovo. Lemmons was the Vassar College 2008 Artist in Residence and the UCLA 2010-2011 Regents' Lecturer in the School of Theater, Film & Television. She was also the lead-

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SAVING THE WORLD
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AT A TIME



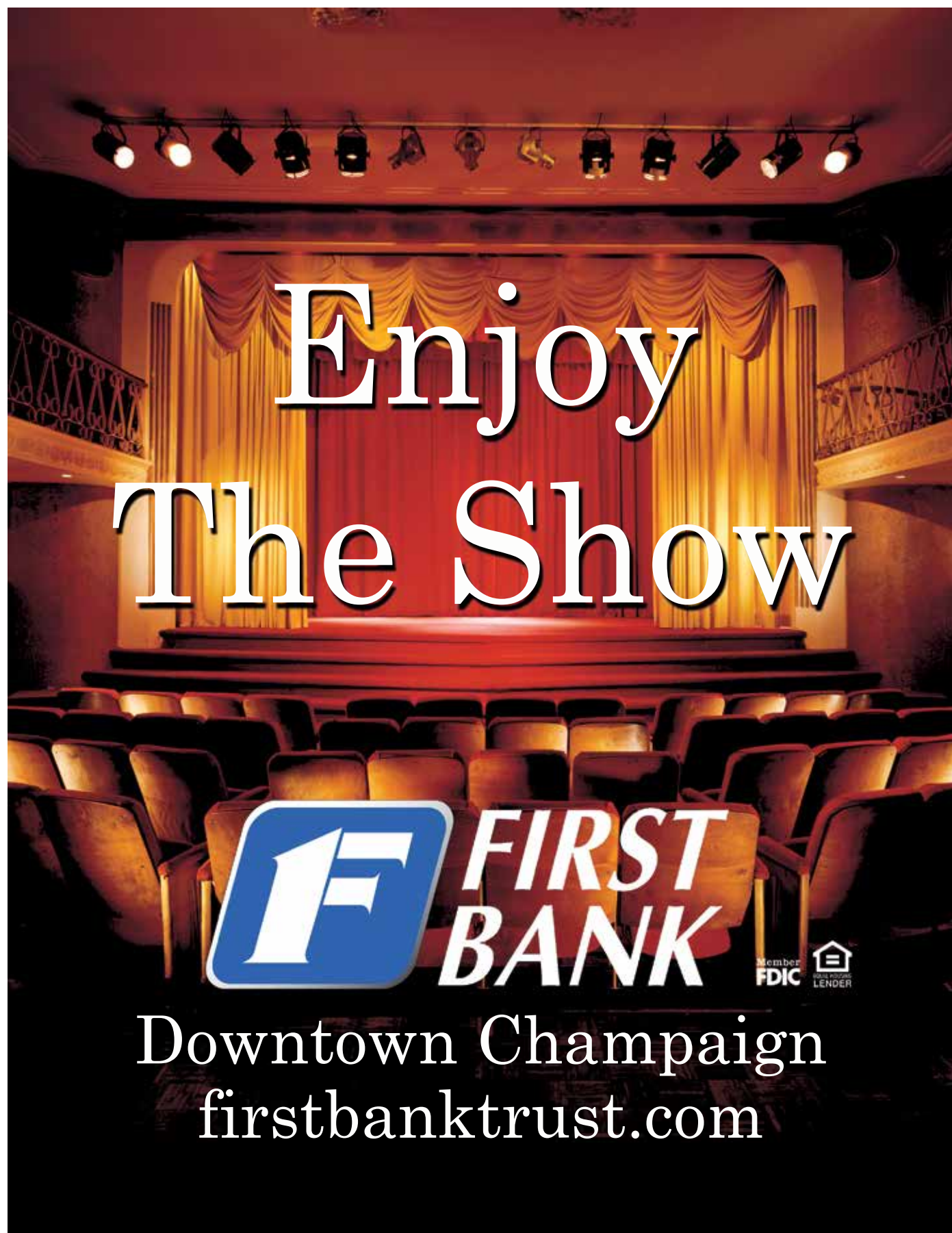
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er/moderator of AFI curriculum's core class, Narrative Workshop. As well as attending NYU School of the Arts, UCLA and The New School of Social Research Film Program, Lemmons was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Salem State College in 1998. Currently, she is an associate arts professor at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

Force of Destiny Saturday, April 16, 11 a.m.

PAUL COX (director) is an auteur of international acclaim. Born in Holland, he migrated to Australia in the mid 1960s. Initially working as a stills photographer and teaching at Prahran College, Cox has retained his love of photography while also becoming one of Australia's most prolific and individualistic filmmakers. Cox's early films were impressionistic shorts, and his early features, *Lonely Hearts* (1981), *Man of Flowers* (1983) and *My First Wife* (1984) were highly acclaimed both locally and internationally. Over a 40-year career, the signature traits of Cox's work are a deep humanism, a poignant and realistic focus on relationships and a profound affinity with the arts, no more evident than in his two stand-out documentaries, *Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh* (1987) and *The Diaries of Vaslav Nijinsky* (2001). Cox tackles subjects that others eschew, evident in the poignant *A Woman's Tale* (1990), exploring terminal illness and aging, for which Sheila Florance won an AFI best actress award, and *Innocence* (2000), about the love affair between two septuagenarians. An international film festival favorite, Cox is one of the true independent filmmakers of Australian cinema.

Radical Grace Saturday, April 16, 2 p.m.

REBECCA PARRISH (director/cinematographer/editor) has run her Chicago-based film company, Interchange Productions, since 2007. She has worked as an editor and cinematographer with Peabody and Sundance award-winner Judith Helfand, Kindling Group and Kartemquin

Films. In 2012 Rebecca produced and directed the interactive Web documentary and engagement campaign, *Protect Our Defenders*, telling the stories of military sexual assault survivors as part of an advocacy campaign to reform the military justice system. The Protect Our Defenders project won the YouTube DoGooder nonprofit video award and the Salsa Labs 2012 Hot Tamale Award for outstanding campaign organizing. Rebecca is also an editor on *Radical Grace*.

NICOLE BERNARDI-REIS (producer) has produced TV series and films for a wide range of broadcast outlets including A&E, E!/Style, HGTV and the Science Channel. With Montrose Pictures, she has produced *Algren*, a feature length documentary that received its world premiere at the 2014 Chicago Film Festival. She credits her passion for storytelling to the nuns at her Adrian Dominican high school, who taught her to always seek the truth and broadcast it as far as you can.

HEATHER MCINTOSH (composer) was already leaving a permanent mark in the music scene before she composed her first movie score. She toured with Lil' Wayne, played bass for Gnarlz Barkley, created music with indie bands like Animal Collective, Norah Jones, and St. Vincent, and has performed on stage with a variety of artists, such as Bright Eyes of Montreal and Cat Power. An indie rocker at heart, she collaborated with the Elephant 6 Collective on various projects.

Her first two feature length narrative films were accepted into the Sundance, *Compliance* (2012, directed by Craig Zobel) and *The Rambler* (2013, directed by Calvin Lee Reeder, co-composed with Scott Honea and Jed Meheu). Heather was one of only four women who made the 2013 Academy Awards® shortlist of composers for Best Original Score for her score to *Compliance*, and again in 2015 with her score to her second collaboration with Zobel, *Z for Zachariah*.

Originally from Athens, Georgia, where she worked at a video store, it quickly became apparent that she was destined to become a film composer, combining her talent and passion for music with her love for cult and art films. Heather currently lives in LA.

FATHER MICHAEL PFLEGER (social activist) was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1975. In 1981, at the age of 31, he became the youngest full pastor in the diocese when he was appointed Pastor of Saint Sabina Church. That same year he became the proud adoptive father of an 8-year-old son, Lamar. In 1992, he also became the adoptive father of Beronti. In 1997, he became a foster father to Jarvis Franklin, who was tragically killed as a result of gang crossfire in 1998.

Since 1968, Father Pfleger has lived and ministered in the African-American community on both the west and south sides of Chicago. He spent two summers working in a Native American community in Oklahoma, and did his seminary internship as a Chaplain at Cook County Jail and at Precious Blood Catholic Church, both in Chicago. He is the founder of the Employment Resource Center, the Ark Youth Center, Saint Sabina Social Service Center, Thea Bowman Spiritual Advance Center, Samaritan House for the homeless, Saint Sabina 80-unit Elders Village and the Beloved Community, Inc.

Father Pfleger has been actively involved in campaigns against racism, drugs, paraphernalia sales, alcohol and tobacco billboards that target children, music and other media that glorify violence and degrade women, and the easy access to guns and the violence that is snatching the lives of children across the country. His activism has been reported in People, Time, Ebony, Newsweek and Jet magazines; The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Reader and numerous other periodicals. He has also been profiled on the following TV shows: *Day One*, *60 Minutes*; the BBC, *Larry King Live* and *Nightline*. Father Pfleger was cited in Crain's Chicago Business as one of the best and most entertaining preachers in Chicagoland, and Ebony cited The Faith Community of Saint Sabina as one of the churches symbolizing the New Black Spirituality.

As a minister, Father Pfleger has sought to break down the walls of racism and denominationalism by building unity among all people founded on

truth and based on Jesus' command to love one another. This holy calling has led him to be a parent, a preacher, a teacher, a lecturer and an activist. However, he believes his most important role is as an errand boy for Jesus!

Love & Mercy Saturday, April 16, 4:30 p.m.

Blow Out Saturday, April 16, 9 p.m.

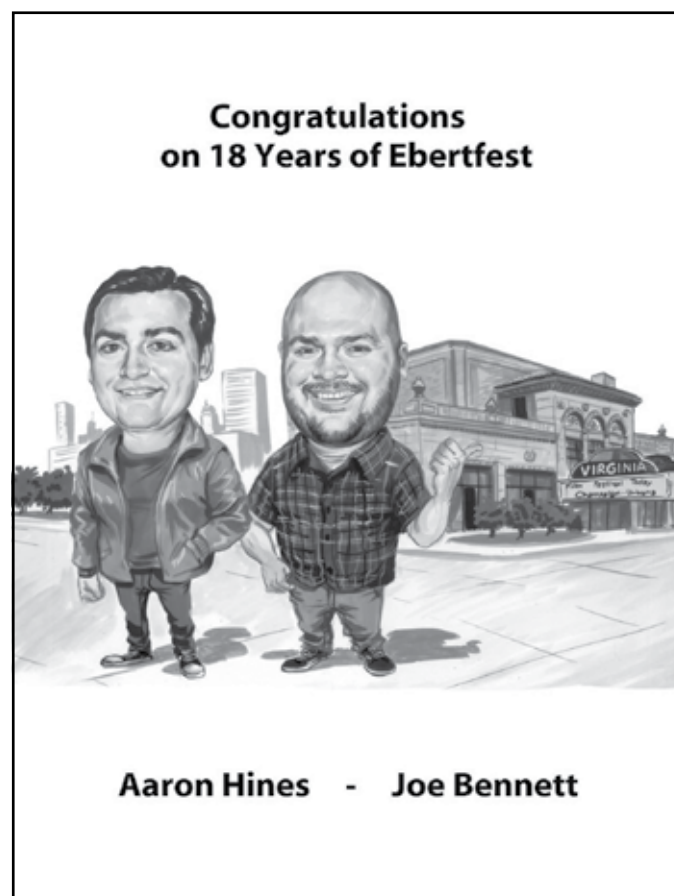

NANCY ALLEN (actress) was born in New York City, the youngest of three children of Eugene and Florence Allen. Her father was a police lieutenant in Yonkers, where she was raised. She was a shy child, so her mother enrolled her in dance classes at the age of 4. She attended the High School of Performing Arts, where she trained for a dancing career before attending Jose Quintano's School for Young Professionals.

Allen has worked with some of Hollywood's biggest directors. Her first major film role was as Jack Nicholson's nervous date in *The Last Detail* (1973). This inspired her to move to LA, where she scored a role in Brian De Palma's horror film *Carrie* (1976). She next appeared in Robert Zemeckis's debut film *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (1978), followed by a string of hit films including Steven Spielberg's *1941* (1979), and De Palma's *Home Movies* (1980), *Dressed to Kill* (1980) and *Blow Out* (1981). She was nominated for the Golden Globe® New Star of the Year for her performance as Liz Blake, a prosperous call girl who dabbles in the stock market, in *Dressed to Kill*.

Throughout the 1980s, Allen starred in numerous films, including *Strange Invaders* (1983), *The Buddy System* (1984), and *The Philadelphia Experiment* (1984), for which she received a best actress Saturn Award nomination. She also starred in *Not for Publication* (1984) and *Sweet Revenge* (1987), and hosted the documentary *Terror in the Aisles* (1984), which highlighted clips from iconic horror films including *Dressed to Kill* and *Carrie*.

In 1987, Allen created the

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role of police officer Anne Lewis in the science fiction classic *RoboCop*, which was a tremendous box office success and earned Allen her second Saturn Award nomination. Following *RoboCop's* success, she starred in *The Gladiator* (1987) and *Poltergeist III* (1988). In 1990, she reprised her role in *RoboCop 2*, for which she studied martial arts and participated in actual police training to make her character tougher and more physical. Also in 1990, Allen showcased her comedic abilities in Richard Martini's *Limit Up*. She also had the distinction of starring in the very first Lifetime Original Movie, the highly-regarded *Memories of Murder* (1990). Her performance in *RoboCop 3* (1993) earned her another Saturn Award nomination. She continued to develop the character, softening the tough-as-nails demeanor seen in the two previous films. She felt more confident displaying the character's feminine side.

Allen co-starred as a psychic opposite Roger Moore in *The Man Who Wouldn't Die* (1994). In 1997, she starred in *Quality Time*, which was officially released in 2008 as *My Apocalypse*. Allen had a small but memorable role as Midge in Steven Soderbergh's crime thriller *Out of Sight* (1998). She continued to work on such projects as *Children of the Corn 666: Isaac's Return* (1999), *Kiss Toledo Goodbye* (1999) and *Secret of the Andes* (1999).

In 2010, Allen was named Executive Director of the weSPARK Cancer Support Center, which was founded by her longtime friend and *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* co-star, Wendie Jo Sperber. Of her work at weSpark, she said: "That is what I do. That is what my life is dedicated to. I'm there, I run it. I've created the whole program format and I fundraise. It is my life's work."

Body and Soul

Sunday, April 17, noon

RENEE BAKER is founding music director and conductor of the internationally acclaimed **CHICAGO MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT** (CMOP), a polystylistic organization that grew from the plums of classical music as well as jazz. A member of the world-renowned collective Association for the Advancement of Creative Musi-

cians (AACM), there are few barriers to the creative turns of this composer, conductor, artist, and instrumentalist. As a featured ensemble, CMOP has been chosen to work with NewMusicUSA and the EarShot program of the American Composers Orchestra. Called the latest AACM visionary by *DownBeat Magazine*, Baker is one of the brightest and most fertile minds in active in composition today.

An expert at ensemble development and training, Baker developed the Mantra Blue Free Orchestra (Chicago), PEK' Contemporary Project (Berlin), is the progenitor of Bleueblue Walkers/Bass Kollektief, Twilight Struggles (Berlin), and has been involved in launching over 20 cutting-edge new music ensembles, including Tuntui, Wrinkled Linen, Chocolate Chitlin' Caucus, Red Chai Watch, FAQtet, Project 6, Renée Baker's Awakening, Baker Artet, a Butoh ensemble Body Strata, and Strings Attached. Baker has performed globally from Bimhuis (Amsterdam) to Symphony Center (Chicago) and was a founding member as well as Principal Violist of Chicago Sinfonietta for 26 years.

She has composed over 2,000 works for ensembles ranging from pieces for instrumental solos, ballet and opera to large orchestral works that bridge the classical, jazz and creative music genres. Her ability to embrace various creative parameters in her work has led to commissions for the Chicago Sinfonietta, Berlin International Brass, PEK' Contemporary Project, and DanceWright Project, among others. As an author/composer, she has self-published 5 graphic score novels and is currently scoring the silent Japanese film *A Page of Madness*.

As a disruptive force in composition, she has create a gestured conducting language she calls CCL/FLOW (Cipher Conduit Linguistics), which she has employed when working with numerous cutting-edge groups in Cologne, Berlin, Netherlands, London, Chicago, Portland (OR) and other international ensembles. Another aspect of her composition skills is the development of her painted score exploratorium pieces for ensembles of variable sizes. Baker is also in demand as a lecturer and expert in nontraditional composition techniques, as well as large en-

semble improvisation/improvisation development.

Aspects of the art world permeate Baker's work. Her performance art work, *Sunyata: Towards Absolute Emptiness*, premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago in May 2015, and her tactile score sculpture works will be featured as part of MCA Chicago's *Sunyata* premiere.

Baker has composed four operas, and is currently working on two film scores, having composed and released a new score for Oscar Michaeux's masterpiece *Body And Soul* (1925), with the music performed by her CMOP ensemble, premiering at MCA Chicago in April 2015. She is currently embarking on a 3-year project to produce original music scores for 20 forgotten film masterpieces of Oscar Michaeux, Spencer Williams, and D.W. Griffith.

2016 Critics & Special Guests

NICK ALLEN is an assistant editor at RogerEbert.com. He has been writing about film online since 2007, contributing to various publications including *The Film Stage*, *Movie Mezzanine*, *HollywoodChicago.com*, *The Scorecard Review*, and now RogerEbert.com. His film reviews can also be found in your local library's recent copy of *Magill's Cinema Annual*. He has been a member of the Chicago Film Critics Association since 2010. You can follow him on Twitter @nickallen_redux

MICHAEL BARKER, Co-President and Co-Founder of Sony Pictures Classics, has (with Tom Bernard) distributed, and 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.

Barker's films have received 159 Academy Award® nominations and 36 wins, including 5 for Best Documentary Feature and 12 for Best Foreign Language Film and 23 Golden Globe® Awards. Barker has collaborated with some of the world's finest filmmakers including Woody Allen, Pedro Almodovar, Mike Leigh, Louis Malle, and Zhang Yimou, all of whom he's worked with on multiple occasions. In additional

to his award-winning feature releases, he and his colleagues have also restored and theatrically reissued some of the great films of the past.

In recognition of his work, Barker has received many honors and awards. Most recently, he and Bernard were awarded the esteemed French Legion of Honor in acknowledgment for their contributions to French culture over the past 30 years.

ANGELICA JADE BASTIÉN is an essayist and pop culture critic based in Chicago. She has been published by *The Atlantic*, *Bright Wall/Dark Room*, *Oprah Magazine* and RogerEbert.com. She writes regularly for Vulture. You can find her on Twitter @angelicabastien and on her website *madwomenandmuses.com*.

MARK DUJSIK has been writing about film since 2001. He is a contributor for RogerEbert.com and is also the sole writer, editor and publisher of *Mark Reviews Movies*. Mark was a staff writer/co-critic at *UR Chicago Magazine* from 2007 until the end of its print edition in 2008, has written reviews for various online publications, and currently contributes to *Magill's Cinema Annual*. He has been a member of the Chicago Film Critics Association since 2006 and the Online Film Critics Society since 2002. When he's not watching and writing about movies, Mark works as a grant writer in the non-profit sector, with experience in the fields of secondary education, the arts, and human services.

SHAWN EDWARDS is a journalist, pop culture guru and TV and film producer. As a nationally recognized film critic for Fox 4 News in Kansas City, Missouri, he has won numerous national awards, including Best TV Film Critic twice by the LA Press Club's National Entertainment Journalism Awards. Edwards, the co-founder of AAFA (African American Film Critics Association), also created *I Love Black Movies*, the popular Web series and movie community. He is a life-long lover of movies who began making his own films in the 7th grade. He is currently writing a book on the history of black film and the executive producer of Fox 4's "Movie Trip TV."

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MATT FAGERHOLM is an assistant editor at RogerEbert.com and is a member of the Chicago Film Critics Association. He has been covering the film beat in Chicago for the past decade, and has contributed to publications including Time Out Chicago, The A.V. Club, *HollywoodChicago.com* and *Magill's Cinema Annual*. He is a monthly guest on Vocolo radio's "The Morning Amp" program, and is also the founder of *Indie Outlook*, a blog and podcast featuring exclusive interviews with some of the most exciting voices in modern independent filmmaking.

CHUCK KOPLINKSKI had his first conscious opinion about a movie when he was 8 years old, but had to wait 20 years before being able to express his views about film to the public. Having studied cinema at Columbia College in Chicago, he's been reviewing films for over 20 years in various Central Illinois publications, until settling at Champaign's *News-Gazette* and Springfield's *Illinois Times*, where his reviews and writing appear each week. A member of the Broadcast Film Critics Association and Chicago Film Critics Association, he has a weekly film segment on WCIA-TV Channel 3 and MIX 94.5 FM.

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 *Entertainment Tonight*. He teaches at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, appears regularly on Reelz Channel and Turner Classic Movies, and hosts the weekly podcast *Maltin on Movies with Baron Vaughn* for the Earwolf network. 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 TV programs and documentaries. He is the recipient of awards from the LA Film Critics Association, American Society of Cinematographers, the Telluride Film Festival, George Eastman House, 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.

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 to talk about new releases. Her writing about movies and popular culture has appeared in many outlets, including RogerEbert.com, *The Huffington Post*, *USA Today*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Kansas City Star*, and the MPAA's *The Credits*. Her books include *The Movie Mom's Guide to Family Movies*, *101 Must-See Movie Moments*, and the *50 Must-See Movies* series.

RICHARD NEUPERT teaches Film Studies at the University of Georgia, where he is the Charles Wheatley Professor of the Arts and Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor. His recent books include the *History Of The French New Wave Cinema*, *French Animation History*, and *John Lasseter* (U of Illinois Press, 2016).

SHEILA O'MALLEY received a BFA in Theater from the University of Rhode Island and a Master's in Acting from the Actors Studio MFA Program. She is a regular film critic for RogerEbert.com. She has written for *The Criterion Collection*, contributing a video-essay on Gena Rowlands for Criterion's release of John Cassavetes' *Love Streams* (1984) and an essay on *Gilda* (1946) for Criterion's

release of that film. Her film reviews, articles, and interviews with actors and directors have appeared in *The Dissolve*, *Masters of Cinema*, *Movie Mezzanine*, *Flavorwire*, *Capital New York*, *Fandor*, *Press Play*, *Noir of the Week*, *Salon.com* and *Bright Wall/Dark Room*. For this year's Lifetime Achievement Oscars® ceremony, she wrote the narration (read by Angelina Jolie) for the tribute reel to legendary actress Gena Rowlands. O'Malley writes about actors, movies, and Elvis Presley at her personal site, *The Sheila Variations*. *July and Half of August* is her first full-length script, with recent readings at The Vineyard Theatre in New York and Theatre Wit in Chicago. A short version of it premieres on April 23, 2016, at the Albuquerque Film and Music.

MICHAEL PHILLIPS has been the Chicago Tribune film critic since 2006. He's a monthly guest on the Filmspotting podcast (also broadcast on Chicago Public Radio) and, earlier this year, the host of *The Film Score*, a 28-episode celebration of movie music broadcast on WFMT-FM. On TV he co-hosted 100 episodes of the long-running nationally syndicated *At the Movies*, first opposite Richard Roeper, then A.O. Scott. Other TV appearances include guest-hosting stints on Turner Classic Movies along with appearances on *Charlie Rose*, *CBS Saturday Morning*, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and *The View*. After serving as arts editor of the Twin Cities weekly *City Pages*, he worked as drama critic of the *Dallas Times-Herald*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, the *LA Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*, which Phillips joined in 2002. He lives with his wife, Tribune columnist Heidi Stevens, and their three children in Logan Square. He's happy and honored to be back at Ebertfest, and to be working with the inaugural trio of Roger Ebert Fellows graduating this spring from the University of Illinois.

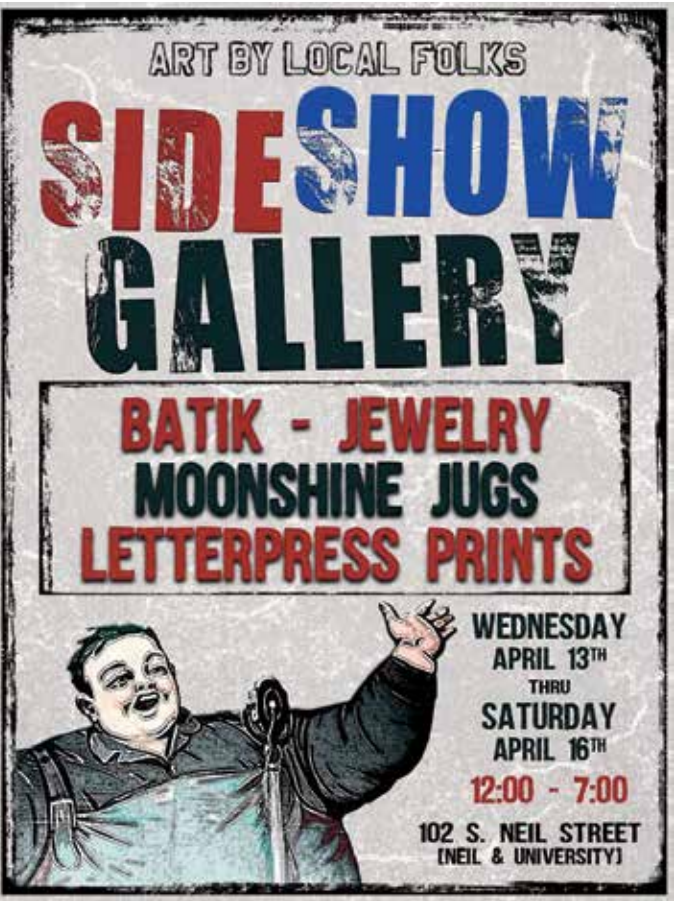
ERIC PIERSON is professor of Communication Studies and former chair of the Communication Studies Department at the University of San Diego. His work on black images and audiences has appeared in *Beyond Blaxploitation*, *Documenting The Black Experience*, *Screening Noir*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* and *Watching*

While Black: Centering the Television of Black Audiences. 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.

GIL L. ROBERTSON IV is a co-founder and president of the African American Film Critics Association (AAFCA), the leading body of Black American film critics in the world, that produces the annual AAFCA Awards, and which has developed into an important event on the Hollywood Awards Calendar. During a 20-year career as a journalist, Gil has written over 50 national magazine covers and penned articles for the *LA Times*, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Billboard*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *Fortune* and *USA Today* among others. He is the founder and editor of the 18-year-old nationally syndicated Arts & Lifestyle column, the *Robertson Treatment*, that boasts a readership in excess of 2 million, and also writes the weekly "Hollywood Insider" column for *Black Enterprise*.

As an author, Gil has written/edited four books, with his most recent being *Where Did Our Love Go: Love and Relationships in the African American Community* (2013). His previous titles include the bestselling anthologies *Family Affair: What it Means to be African American Today* (2008), selected as a Pick of the Week by *Publisher's Weekly*, and *Not in My Family: AIDS in the African American Community* (2006), both of which were nominated for NAACP Image Awards for Outstanding Nonfiction. Robertson's first book was *Writing as a Tool of Empowerment* (2001), a resource book for aspiring journalists. He also executive produced the music CD that accompanied his second book, *Not in My Family* (Verity Records). For the past decade he has been a regular contributor to *The African American Almanac* (Gale Press), writing the chapter dedicated to TV & Film. Forthcoming projects includes his first Children's book, *Great African American Political Leaders* (Just Us Books) and *Unheralded Icons of the Civil Rights Movement* from the University of Georgia Press.

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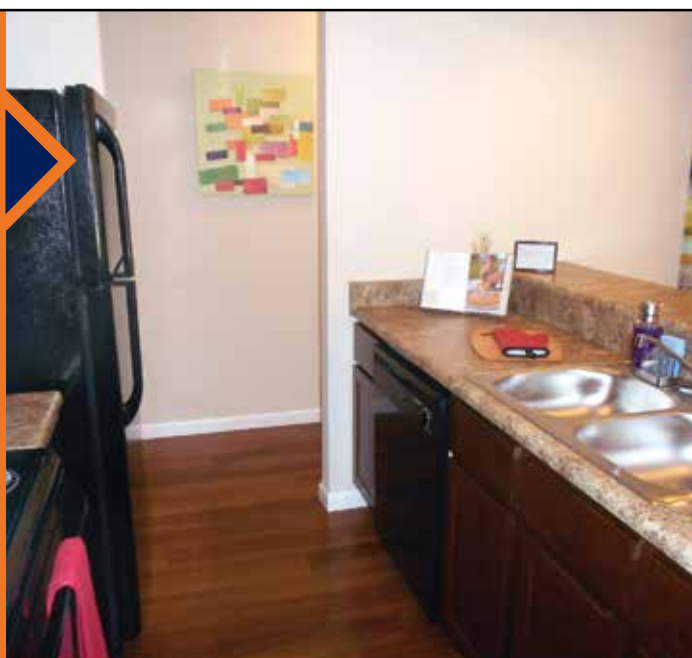
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MATT ZOLLER SEITZ is the editor-in-chief of RogerEbert.com. He is also the TV critic for *New York Magazine* & *Vulture.com* and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in criticism.

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 *New York Times* bestsellers *The Wes Anderson Collection* (2013) and *The Wes Anderson Collection: Grand Budapest Hotel* (2015). Seitz's other books including the forthcoming *The Oliver Stone Experience* (September, 2016) and *TV (The Book)* (also September, 2016, co-written with Alan Sepinwall). Seitz is the founder and original editor of *The House Next Door*, now a part of *Slant*, and the co-founder and original editor of *Press Play*, a blog of film and TV criticism and video essays.

CHRISTINE SWANSON, a multiple award-winning filmmaker, earned her MFA in Film from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she was selected by faculty as the Willard T.C. Johnson Fellow, the prestigious fellowship awarded to the student who has achieved high standards in his or her work. CNN identified Christine as one of the most promising filmmakers to emerge from NYU's graduate film program since Martin Scorsese, Ang Lee, Oliver Stone and Spike Lee (Christine's NYU directing teacher). Christine also earned a BA from the University of Notre Dame, double majoring in Communications and Japanese.

Christine has developed, written and/or directed movie projects for various companies including HBO Films, Magnolia Pictures, State Street Pictures, TV One, and Faith Filmworks, her own independent film company. Christine has written and/or directed numerous award-winning feature films, commercials and short films, including *Two Seasons*, *All About You*, *All About Us*, and *Woman Thou Art Loosed*.

In 2015, Christine directed 3 original cable TV movie premieres, *To Hell and Back*, *Come Share My Love*, *The Miki Howard Story*, and *For the Love of Ruth*, for which

she received an NAACP Image Award nomination for outstanding directing in a TV motion picture.

Christine currently has numerous projects in development, including the feature film version of her highly celebrated short film, *Two Seasons*. She was also tapped to adapt the award-winning book, *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson, into a screenplay. A dynamic keynote speaker, guest lecturer and symposium leader, Christine is invited to speak at conferences, colleges and universities. She is also a professor at the MFA Screenwriting Program at the University of Georgia as well as an advisor to the Film and TV program at the University of Notre Dame. Christine resides in LA with her husband, Michael, and their children.

BRIAN TALLERICO has covered TV, film, video games, Blu-ray/DVD, interviews and entertainment news for 15 years. He is the managing editor of RogerEbert.com. In addition, he is the editor of *Magill's Cinema Annual*, does TV recaps for *Vulture*, 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 spent much of her nearly 30 years at *USA Today* doing her dream job as a film critic as well as a senior entertainment reporter, including a visit to the New Zealand set of *The Lord of the Rings*, being a zombie extra in George Romero's *Land of the Dead* and interviewing hundreds of show-biz figures ranging from icons Vincent Price, Shirley Temple and Peter O'Toole to A-listers such as George Clooney, Meryl Streep and Denzel Washington. Since 2013, she has been a critic and regular contributor to RogerEbert.com and has written for the blogs *Anne Thompson on Hollywood* and *Women and Hollywood* on *Indiewire* and *AARP The Magazine*.

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Crimson Peak

Del Toro brings the supernatural to life in gothic romance

By Sheila O'Malley | Oct. 16, 2015

In the 1831 introduction to “Frankenstein,” Mary Shelley described the genesis of her classic story. During an evening with her husband Percy Shelley, Lord Byron and another guest, they got the idea to entertain one another by writing ghost stories. Mary Shelley couldn’t come up with anything and went to bed, still thinking, and then became possessed by an image of a man lying on a table and slowly coming to life. Shelley recalled that she bolted awake thinking, “I have found it! What terrified me will terrify others; and I need only describe the spectre which had haunted my midnight pillow.”

Director Guillermo del Toro has a similar belief that the images crowding his brain can come to life. He creates intricate worlds, overwhelming viewers with



Director and writer Guillermo del Toro is one of this year’s festival guests.

detail and drowning them with symbolism. The fact that most of what is onscreen is physical, rather than computer-generated, helps. “Crimson Peak’s” atmosphere crackles with sexual passion and dark secrets. There are a couple of monsters (supernatural and human), but the gigantic emotions are the most terrifying thing onscreen. Del Toro’s films can take Grand Opera emotion. In Victorian-era England, the Lyceum Theatre awed audiences with revolutionary stage effects designed to bring the horror of “Macbeth” (for example) to the audience in visceral new ways. Del Toro’s style would have fit in with that. He has placed himself in a long tradition and he deserves to be there.

American heiress Edith Cushing (Mia Wasikowska), the heroine of “Crimson Peak,” saw the ghost of her dead mother when she was a child, the shadow of its long fingers creeping along the wall (a steal from “Nosferatu”). As a young woman, living with her supportive father (a wonderful Jim Beaver), she prefers books to beaus, and is busy writing a ghost story (“Ghosts are a metaphor for the past,” she states). When silly women sneer, “Jane Austen died a spinster,” Edith replies coolly, “I’d rather be Mary Shelley and die a widow.” Edith’s bookish isolation vanishes when the

Best of all though is (Guillermo del Toro’s) belief that “what terrifies him, terrifies others.” He’s right.

mysterious British brother and sister Thomas and Lucille Sharp (Tom Hiddleston and Jessica Chastain) arrive in town. The two have fancy English titles, but are penniless, begging for financial backing for one of Thomas’ inventions. Thomas pursues Edith with burning sensitive eyes, all under his sister’s watchful glare, and Edith falls hard. An optometrist named Alan McMichael (Charlie Hunnam, who was so sensitive and heroic in del Toro’s “Pacific Rim”) is also interested in Edith, but cedes ground to Thomas, albeit with misgivings. Thomas marries Edith, and he, Edith and Lucille go back to England to the family estate, Allerdale Hall.

Allerdale Hall is when the movie really begins, but those preliminary sections and the immersion into Edith’s world are equally important. America is shown as a land of garden parties, flickering gas lamps, intellectual pursuits and family life. The colors are autumnal mustards and oranges. Lucille slashes through that mellow golden landscape in fiery-crimson dresses or heavy all-

black gowns. It’s often raining, creating underwater, wavery shadows on the walls. But it’s a civilized world with recognized rules. Allerdale Hall, on the other hand, is a black turreted ruin of a mansion standing in the middle of empty fields. Red clay oozes up through the rotting floorboards, coating the walls of the basement. The hall inside the main entrance reaches up three stories, and because of the roof’s deterioration the hall is always filled with outside weather: falling leaves or snow. Allerdale Hall is a masterpiece of design, (Thomas E. Sanders was the production designer) but also of conception. The house creaks, moans and shifts. And that red clay is always, always threatening to engulf them all.

Edith, at sea in her new life and intimidated by Lucille, explores the house (by the end of the film the layout is clear, essential to the suspense of the finale). She is informed by both Thomas and Lucille that there are rooms she must not go into. Edith is surrounded by secrets, with a husband she barely knows and a sister-in-



Mia Wasikowska plays Edith Cushing, an American heiress, in “Crimson Peak.”

law gliding through the house with a heavy key chain rattling at her waist.

“Crimson Peak” is reminiscent of Hitchcock’s “Notorious” in more ways than one (although “Rebecca” is also a clear influence). In “Notorious,” Alicia Huberman (Ingrid Bergman) marries Alexander Sebastian (Claude Rains) as a cover for her attempt to infiltrate a Nazi cartel. Once in the house, she is dominated by Alexander’s mother (Leopoldine Konstantin), a monstrous Fraulein from hell. Both “Crimson Peak” and “Notorious” feature ongoing visual motifs of tea cups and key-chains. There are shots in “Crimson Peak” that mirror “Notorious”. A close-up of the ubiquitous key-chain with the desired key lying on the top of the heap, or the camera following a tea cup as it is carried across the room. Like Alicia Huberman in “Notorious,” Edith feels if she could just get a hold of that key, and find the right

lock, she might understand the secrets buried in that house, and her own destiny.

As in “Pan’s Labyrinth,” “Crimson Peak” creates an environment where these high stakes can operate at full throttle. The visuals of Allerdale Hall call to mind German Expressionist filmmakers, as well as directors as various as Mario Bava and Hitchcock. But while “Crimson Peak” launches associations (Gothic/Romantic tradition, Hitchcock, Shirley Jackson, Murnau, Bava, Kubrick’s “The Shining,” The Brothers Grimm, “Jane Eyre”), it’s not just a tribute, it’s a hybrid all del Toro’s own. The images themselves have tremendous power: A blonde woman sneaking through a dark house holding a candelabra; a black-haired woman stalking through an interior snowfall, carrying a tray of rattling tea cups; a man in his workshop creating toys that open their mouths to vomit silver balls. Edith sees horrors at night through doorways and down hallways.

She must be brave enough to face these phantasms, to look them in the eye, to see what she is not supposed to see. On the opposite side, Thomas and Lucille must prevent Edith from seeing.

Del Toro uses a lot of old-fashioned camera tricks like wipes (as transitions from scene to scene), and there are also multiple iris wipes (where a circular shape surrounded by blackness hones in on one small image). Del Toro is old-school in his framing and camera moves and in his understanding of spatial relationships. There are times when Edith hugs Thomas, his black coat taking up half the screen, and as the camera moves to the side Edith is slowly engulfed by blackness.

The final act features a couple of monologues, as secrets pour out, and some audience members may find them too expository. But again, in the long tradition of cinema, suspenseful films often featured such final-act monologues. There is strong

FILMCREDITS

CRIMSON PEAK

(2015) Rated R

Written by
Guillermo del Toro and
Matthew Robbins

Directed by
Guillermo del Toro

CAST:
Mia Wasikowska as Edith Cushing
Jessica Chastain as Lucille Sharpe
Tom Hiddleston as Thomas Sharpe

Running time: 119 minutes

Print courtesy:
NBC Universal Pictures

precedent for the effectiveness of these devices, and they’re effective here too. Kitchen-sink realism is a recent phenomenon, and del Toro’s films are not bound by those requirements, although the emotions in his films are always real. As actors from before the advent of cinema (and the closeup) understood, acting needed to be big enough to fill a theatre. This did not necessarily mean hollow declaiming. It meant that their emotions had to be big enough to travel, to reach the cheap seats, to fit the scope of the story. The cast of “Crimson Peak” understands that. They’re all gripping.

Watching del Toro’s films is a pleasure because his vision is evident in every frame. Best of all, though, is his belief that “what terrifies him will terrify others.” He’s right.

THURSDAY 1PM

Grandma

Weitz's comedy-drama creates impressively emotional ride

By Glenn Kenny | Aug. 21, 2015

"Grandma" is a modestly scaled character comedy-drama that winds up exerting an almost shockingly strong emotional force by the end. I walked into a screening of the film a mild skeptic, and I left nearly in tears, and grateful for where writer-director Paul Weitz and a remarkable cast led by Lily Tomlin took me.

Written and directed by Paul Weitz, whose well-intentioned but spotty track record (prior films include "Admission," "Being Flynn," and "About A Boy," which for me ran a gamut from mildly enjoyable to actively irritating) was part of what lowered my expectations, "Grandma" opens with Tomlin's character, Elle, an aged poet with a strong feminist cult rep, apparently, being super unpleasant to Olivia (Judy Greer), the younger girlfriend she's dumping. Left alone in her house, she sits in a commencement cap and gown looking over old photographs; the shutting out of Olivia, the viewer can infer, isn't the only loss Elle has recently suffered. Turning up at the door is Elle's curly-headed, gaminesque granddaughter Sage (Julia Garner). Sage is in a



Julia Garner (left) and Lily Tomlin (right) star in "Grandma."

non-gaminesque predicament: pregnant, broke and scheduled to have an abortion in about eight hours.

Why Sage hasn't gone to her own mom, from whom Elle is somewhat estranged, why Elle herself only has about forty bucks available at the moment, why Elle and Sage set out in a perhaps-not-impeccably maintained vintage Dodge: All these are questions answered in ways that are best actually seen, rather than described in a review. I really didn't think Weitz had this

kind of screenplay in him. It's incredibly literate — the movie actually has more pertinent things to communicate about both the inner and outer life of a writer than the unfortunately-much-bruited "The End of the Tour" does — and amusingly literary, with one character dropping the word "solipsist" as an epithet in a funny argument scene. He divides the scenes as chapters, with their titles typed in lower case on a simulation of fine bond paper. Sage and Elle get to know each other better, even as Elle can't get over the fact that her granddaughter's never heard of "The Feminine Mystique." But Elle's politics and aesthetics get shaken up at the same time as their quest for cash begins "rattling the skeletons" of the characters' respective pasts.

At the outset I was kind of concerned that the movie was making a point of evoking Elle's counterculture values the better to caricature them for comedic purposes. But no. The movie examines those values, not entirely uncritically, but it also largely ends up affirming them, particularly with respect to women's rights. One of the film's most striking scenes, titled "the ogre," finds Elle, who's lived as a lesbian for longer than her granddaughter's been alive, meeting up with an old acquaintance, Karl, played by an initially genial Sam Elliott. The scene's almost a pocket history of the 1960s — its glories and its foibles. And Elliott gives a performance that sets the movie on emotional fire. It's absolutely spectacular stuff. By the time this scene turns up, it's clear

that this movie is not one that seeks to use the one-time edginess of Tomlin's comedic persona as a repository for sentimentality, but rather to set it afire and let it burn. This is a much neater film than those in which Tomlin worked with director Robert Altman, but its commitment to emotional truth is as strong as any Altman movie you could name. And it holds true to that commitment with the introduction of Sage's mom, played beautifully by Marcia Gay Harden.

Is this a political movie? Well, in the United States, any movie in which abortion is treated as a standard medical procedure performed by trained and concerned medical professionals as opposed to Something Not Done, or a Traumatic Life Ruining Moment, is by definition a political



Andrew Miano (left) and Paul Weitz (right) will be guests at Ebertfest.

movie. For that reason alone the movie will attract controversy; it approaches women's self-determination without even the vaguest hint of apology. I don't want to set the comments section on fire, but I've got to say I'm entirely sympathetic to this perspective. But the politics — including the way the movie doesn't just "pass" the "Bechdel Test" but gets 100



on it — are only a part of this really special movie. The other part is, yes, the humanity. The way the movie shows the toll taken by bonds sundered, and the healing made possible by bonds that are restored, however tentatively. And there's also humor, and plenty of it. While brief in running time, "Grandma" is a small movie that doesn't feel slight.

FILMCREDITS

GRANDMA

(2015) Rated R

Written and directed by
Paul Weitz

Produced by Andrew Miano
and Paul Weitz

CAST:

Lily Tomlin as Elle
Julia Garner as Sage
Marcia Gay Harden as Judy
Judy Greer as Olivia
Laverne Cox as Deathy
Sam Elliott as Karl
Nat Wolff as Cam
John Cho as Chau

Running time: 79 minutes

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THURSDAY 4PM

Northfork

Bleak fable explores death, man’s empty existence on earth

By Roger Ebert | July 11, 2003

There has never been a movie quite like “Northfork,” but if you wanted to put it on a list, you would also include “Days of Heaven” and “Wings of Desire.” It has the desolate open spaces of the first, the angels of the second, and the feeling in both of deep sadness and pity. The movie is visionary and elegiac, more a fable than a story, and frame by frame, it looks like a portfolio of spaces so wide, so open, that men must wonder if they have a role beneath

The movie is visionary and elegiac ... it looks like a portfolio of spaces so wide, so open, that men must wonder if they have a role beneath such indifferent skies.

such indifferent skies.

The film is set in Montana in 1955, as the town of Northfork prepares to be submerged forever beneath the waters of a dam. Three

two-man Evacuation Teams travel the countryside in their fat black sedans, persuading the lingering residents to leave. The team members have a motivation: They have all

been promised waterfront property on the lake to come. Most of the residents have already pulled out, but one stubborn citizen opens fire on Evacuators, and another plans to ride out the flood waters in his Ark, which does not have two of everything but does have two wives, a detail Noah overlooked.

Other lingerers include Irwin (Duel Farnes), a pale young orphan who has been turned back in by his adoptive parents (Claire



Michael Polish is one of this year’s Ebertfest guests.

Forlani and Clark Gregg) on the grounds that he is defective. “You gave us a sick child, Father,” they tell Father Harlan, the parish priest (Nick Nolte). “He can’t stand the journey.” The priest cares for the child himself, although the lonely little kid is able to conjure up company by imagining four angels who come to console him. Or are they imaginary? They are real for little Irwin, and that should be real enough for us.

The town evokes the empty, lonely feeling you get when you make a last tour of a home you have just moved out of. There is a scene where the six Evacuators line up at the counter in a diner to order soup. “Bowl or cup?” asks the waitress, and as they consider this choice with grave poker faces, we get the feeling that only by thinking very hard about soup can they avoid exploding in a frenzy of madness. One of Harlan’s final church services is conducted after the back wall has already been removed from his church, and the landscape behind him looks desolate.

This is the third film by the Polish twins. Michael directs, Mark acts, and Mark and Michael co-produce and co-write. Their first was the eerie, disquieting “Twin Falls, Idaho,” about Siamese twins who deal with the fact that one of them is dying. The next was “Jackpot,” about a man who tours karaoke contests, looking for his big break. Now “Northfork,” which in its visual strategy presents Montana not as a scenic tourist wonderland, but as a burial ground of foolish human dreams.

Indeed, one of the subplots involves the need to dig up the bodies in the local cemetery, lest the coffins bob to the surface of the new lake; Walter O’Brien (James Woods), one of the Evacuators, tells his son Willis O’Brien (Mark Polish) that if they don’t move the coffin of the late Mrs. O’Brien, “When this small town becomes the biggest lake this side of the Mississippi, your mother will be the catch of the day.” Funny? Yes, and so is the soup scene in the diner, but you don’t laugh out loud a lot in this film because you fear the noise might echo under its limitless leaden sky. This is like a black and white film made in color. In some shots, only the pale skin tones contain any color at all. In talking with the Polish brothers after the film premiered at Sundance 2003,

I learned that they limited all the costumes, props and sets to shades of gray, and the cinematographer, M. David Mullen, has drained color from his film so that there is a bleakness here that gets into your bones.

Against this cold is the pale warmth of the angels, who are evoked by Irwin. To console himself for being abandoned by his adoptive parents, he believes that he is a lost angel, fallen to Earth and abducted by humans who amputated his wings. Indeed, he has scars on his shoulder blades. The angels include Flower Hercules (Daryl Hannah), who seems neither man nor woman; Cod (Ben Foster), a cowboy who never speaks; Happy (Anthony Edwards), who is blind and mute, but perhaps can see something through the bizarre glasses he wears, with their multiple lenses, and Cup of Tea (Robin Sachs), who talks enough to make up for Happy.

Of these the most moving is Flower Hercules, who seems to feel Irwin’s loneliness and pain as her/his own. Daryl Hannah evokes a quality of care for the helpless which makes her a tender guardian angel. Since the Evacuators have a stock of angel’s wings which they sometimes offer as inducements to reluctant homeowners, the thought persists that angels are meant to be real in the film, just as

The town evokes the empty, lonely feeling you get when you make a last tour of a home you just moved out of.

FILMCREDITS

NORTHFORK

(2003) Rated PG-13

Written by Michael Polish and Mark Polish

Directed by Michael Polish

CAST:

James Woods as Walter O’Brien

Nick Nolte as Father Harlan

Douglas Sebern as Mayor

Claire Forlani as Mrs. Hadfield

Duel Farnes as Irwin

Mark Polish as Willis O’Brien

Daryl Hannah as Flower Hercules

Anthony Edwards as Happy

Running time: 103 minutes

Print courtesy:
Paramount Classics

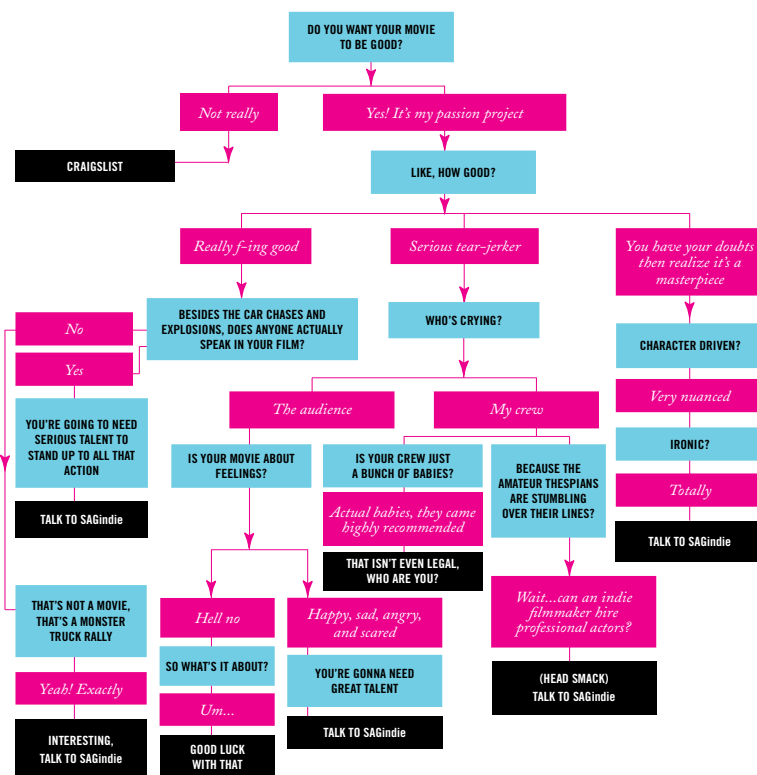
they are in “Wings of Desire,” and only those who cannot believe think Irwin has dreamed them up.

“Northfork” is not an entertaining film so much as an entrancing one. There were people at Sundance, racing from one indie hipness to another, who found it too slow. But the pace is well chosen for the tone, and the tone evokes the fable, and the fable is about the death of a town and of mankind’s brief purchase on this barren plat of land, and it is unseemly to hurry a requiem. The film suggests that of the thousands who obeyed the call “Go West, young man!” some simply disappeared into the wilderness and were buried, as Northfork is about to be buried, beneath the emptiness of it all.



“Northfork” is the story of a town preparing for its impending doom.

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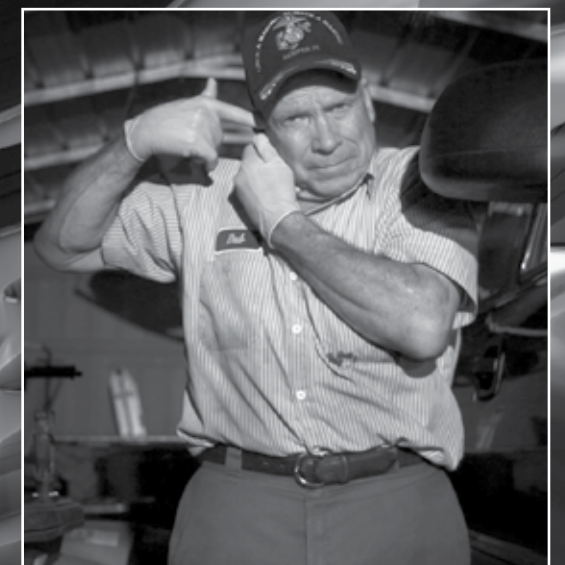
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The Third Man

Reed’s convention-defying film captures post-war ennui

By Roger Ebert | Dec. 8, 1996

Has there ever been a film where the music more perfectly suited the action than in Carol Reed’s “The Third Man”? The score was performed on a zither by Anton Karas, who was playing in a Vienna beerhouse one night when Reed heard him. The sound is jaunty but without joy, like whistling in the dark. It sets the tone; the action begins like an undergraduate lark and then reveals vicious undertones.

The story begins with a spoken prologue (“I never knew the old Vienna, before the war ...”). The shattered postwar city has been divided

into French, American, British and Russian zones, each with its own cadre of suspicious officials. Into this sinkhole of intrigue falls an American innocent: Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten), alcoholic author of pulp Westerns. He has come at the invitation of his college chum Harry Lime. But Lime is being buried when Martins arrives in Vienna.

How did Lime die? That question is the engine that drives the plot, as Martins plunges into the murk that Lime left behind. Calloway (Trevor Howard), the British officer in charge, bluntly says Lime was an evil man, and

Reed defied convention by shooting entirely on location in Vienna, where mountains of rubble stood next to gaping bomb craters.

advises Holly to take the next train home. But Harry had a girl named Anna (Alida Valli), who Holly sees at Lime’s grave, and perhaps she has some answers. Certainly Holly has fallen in love with her, although his trusting Yankee heart is no match for her defenses.

“The Third Man” (1949) was made by men who knew the devastation of Europe at first hand. Carol Reed worked for the British Army’s wartime documentary unit, and the screenplay was by Graham Greene, who not only wrote about spies but occasionally acted as one. Reed fought with David O. Selznick, his American producer, over every detail of the movie; Selznick wanted to shoot on sets, use an upbeat score and cast Noel Coward as Harry Lime. His film would have been forgotten in a week. Reed defied convention by shooting entirely on location in Vienna, where mountains of rubble stood next to gaping bomb craters, and the ruins of empire supported a desperate black market economy. And he

insisted on Karas’ zither music (“The Third Man Theme” was one of 1950’s biggest hits).

Reed and his Academy Award-winning cinematographer, Robert Krasker, also devised a reckless, unforgettable visual style. More shots, I suspect, are tilted than are held straight; they suggest a world out of joint. There are fantastic oblique angles. Wide-angle lenses distort faces and locations. And the bizarre lighting makes the city into an expressionist nightmare. (During a stakeout for Lime, a little balloon man wanders onto the scene, and his shadow is a monster three stories high). Vienna in “The Third Man” is a more particular and unmistakable *place* than almost any other location in the history of the movies; the action fits the city like a hand slipping on a glove.

Then there are the faces: Joseph Cotten’s open, naive face contrasts with the “friends” of Harry Lime: the corrupt “Baron” Kurtz (Ernst Deutsch); the shifty



Orson Welles, who plays Harry Lime, makes one of the most famous entrances and speeches in film history in “The Third Man.”

Dr. Winkel (Erich Ponto), the ratlike Popescu (Siegfried Breuer). Even a little boy with a rubber ball looks like a wizened imp. The only trusting faces are those of innocents like the hall porter (Paul Hoerbiger) who tells Holly, “There was another man ... a third man ...” and the beefy Sgt. Paine (Bernard Lee), Calloway’s aide, who levels the drunken Holly with a shot to the chin and then apologizes. Even the resident exiles are corrupt; Crabbin (Wilfrid Hyde-White), the head of the discussion group, chatters about culture while smoothly maneuvering his mistress out of sight through doors and up stairs.

As for Harry Lime: He allows Orson Welles to make the most famous entrance in the history of the movies, and one of the most famous speeches. By the time Lime finally appears we have almost forgotten Welles is even *in* the movie. The sequence is unforgettable:

the meow of the cat in the doorway, the big shoes, the defiant challenge by Holly, the light in the window, and then the shot, pushing in, on Lime’s face, enigmatic and teasing, as if two college chums had been caught playing a naughty prank.

The famous speech comes during an uneasy ride on a giant Ferris wheel; at one point, Lime slides open the door of the car they are riding in, and Holly uneasily wraps an arm around a post. Harry tries to justify himself: “You know what the fellow said: In Italy for 30 years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love — they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock.” (Greene says this speech was written by Welles.)

The emotional heart of the movie is Holly’s infatuation with Anna, who will love Harry and be grateful to him no matter what she learns. The scenes between Holly and Anna are enriched by tiny details, as when they visit Harry’s apartment and she opens a drawer without looking — because she already knows what will be inside. Or the way she sometimes slips and calls Holly “Harry.” Everyone in the movie has trouble with names. Holly calls Calloway “Callahan,” and Dr. Winkle insists on “VINK-ell!” And the name on Harry Lime’s tombstone is wrong, too.

The chase sequence in “The Third Man” is another joining of the right action with the right location. Harry escapes into the sewer system like a cornered rat, and Reed edits the pursuit into long, echoing, empty sewer vistas, and closeups of Lime’s sweaty face, his eyes darting for a

FILMCREDITS

THE THIRD MAN

(1949) Not rated

Directed by **Carol Reed**
Written by **Graham Greene**

CAST:
Orson Welles as Harry Lime
Joseph Cotten as Holly Martins
Alida Valli as Anna Schmidt

Running time: 104 minutes

Print courtesy:
Rialto Pictures

way out. Presumably there would be no lights in the Vienna sewers, but there are strong light sources just out of sight behind every corner, throwing elongated shadows, backlighting Harry and his pursuers.

The final scene in “The Third Man” is a long, elegiac sigh. It almost did not exist. Selznick and Greene originally wanted a happy ending. (Greene originally wrote, “... her hand was through his arm”). Reed convinced Greene he was wrong. The movie ends as it begins, in a cemetery, and then Calloway gives Holly a ride back to town. They pass Anna walking on the roadside. Holly asks to be let out of the jeep. He stands under a tree, waiting for her. She walks toward him, past him, and then out of frame, never looking. After

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The Third Man

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a long pause, Holly lights a cigarette and wearily throws away the match. Joseph Cotten recalled later that he thought the scene would end sooner. But Reed kept the camera running, making it an unusually long shot, and absolutely perfect.

"The Third Man" reflects the optimism of Americans and the bone-weariness of Europe after the war. It's a story about grownups and children: Adults like Calloway, who has seen at first hand the results of Lime's crimes, and children like the trusting Holly, who believes in the simplified good and evil of his Western novels.

"The Third Man" is like the exhausted aftermath

"The Third Man" reflects the optimism of Americans and the bone-weariness of Europe after the war.

of "Casablanca." Both have heroes who are American exiles, awash in a world of treachery and black market intrigue. Both heroes love a woman battered by the war. But "Casablanca" is bathed in the hope of victory, while "The Third Man" already reflects the Cold War years of paranoia, betrayal and the Bomb. The hero doesn't get the girl in either movie — but in "Casablanca," Ilsa stays

with the resistance leader to help in his fight, while in "The Third Man" Anna remains loyal to a rat. Yet Harry Lime saved Anna, a displaced person who faced certain death. Holly will never understand what Anna did to survive the war, and Anna has absolutely no desire to tell him.

Of all the movies I have seen, this one most completely embodies the romance of going to the

movies. I saw it first on a rainy day in a tiny, smoke-filled cinema on the Left Bank in Paris. It told a story of existential loss and betrayal. It was weary and knowing, and its glorious style was an act of defiance against the corrupt world it pictured. Seeing it, I realized how many Hollywood movies were like the pulp Westerns that Holly Martins wrote: naive formulas supplying happy endings for passive consumption. I read the other day that they plan to remake "The Third Man." Do you think Anna will cave in to Holly — or will she remain true to her bitter cynicism and unspeakable knowledge?



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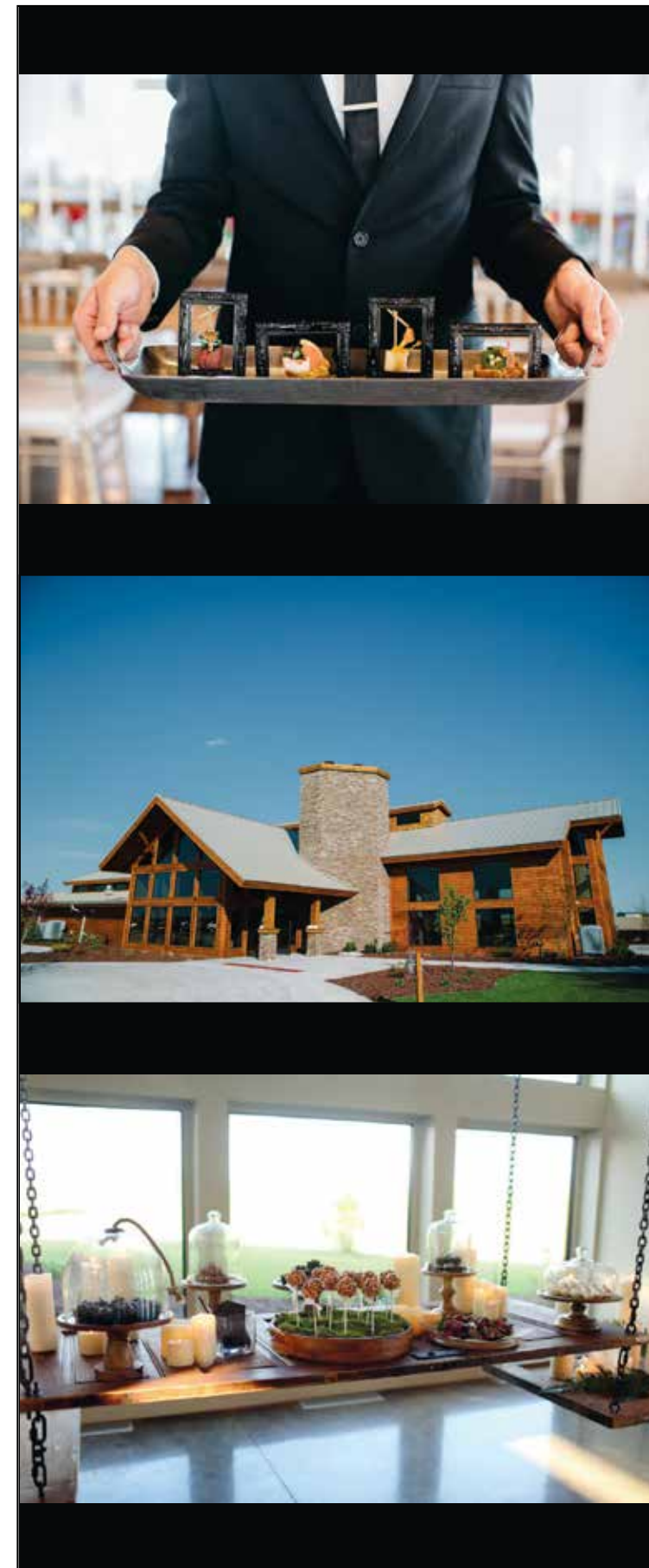
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Disturbing the Peace

Documentary weaves narrative about human nature, history

By Ben Cheever | March 24, 2016

Waging Peace

A crowd of Palestinians holding over-sized puppets in the air is marching at the wall that separates them from Israeli land. They're making a lot of noise. No rifles can be seen, but Palestinian fighters often conceal their weapons. Some of these men have a history as soldiers in the war that never ends.

On the far side of the wall other people are waving puppets and making a racket. The men are all in mufti, but we know that many are Israeli soldiers. This is Israel after all.

The crowds converge at a place where the border is a narrow no-man's land, separated by a towering

concrete wall that gives way to two lines of barbed wire reinforced fence. This dog-run like enclosure is the obvious weak link in fence meant to separate the two people.

As the parades converge and call to each other, it is into this dog kennel that a band of Israeli soldiers pour themselves. The soldiers are in uniform. The soldiers carry guns and greet the nonviolent protesters with a stun grenade. Caged and outnumbered, as odd as it sounds, the soldiers are the ones in danger.

Unarmed and disorganized, the puppet-wielding citizens were free to write their own story. The uniformed soldiers had had their story written

for them long ago. The former combatants call out to them and invite them to join their non-violent band of brothers, explaining that they understand that transformation can happen even in moments of violence because "it happened to us." Often in these demonstrations soldiers will arrest the non-violent resisters. The charge: "Disturbing the Peace."

This fresh and intimate documentary by a first-time director and his veteran partner has changed the world I know. Some stories we inherit. Some stories we invent ourselves. We live in these stories. Change those stories and we change our world.

Stephen Apkon has a reputation for turning fairy tales into stories and stories into buildings and buildings into movie theaters. When Apkon came to Pleasantville, New York, to start the Jacob Burns Film Center few of us thought he had a prayer. An art house in Westchester? And started just when the storied theaters in Manhattan were dying off.

But Steve didn't understand why it wouldn't work. Apkon might have an optimism that borders on insanity, but often he's right. Steve Apkon gave life to an institution that changed thousands of lives. He started a community in a part of the world where there was no such thing. Opened in 2001, the film center has grown its own community and along the way, engaged filmmakers like Ron Howard and Jonathan Demme, among many others.

In Andrew Young, Apkon found a more than able partner. An exceptionally talented cinematographer, Young has directed or shot many documentaries, including the Academy Award nominated "Children of Fate." Together, the two men turned their lens on one of the most challenging of subjects — the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The subjects of the film are an unlikely group. Once they were sworn enemies with blood on their hands. Now they

work together. Now they are fighting a different war. They are breaking an old story and birthing a new one.

They were heroes in the story that's called war. As pacifists they are outcasts. They stopped being able to hear the voices of hate. Instead they turned to Gandhi, Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. This sort of thing doesn't happen often in this world, but unbeknownst to many of us, it's happening in Israel and Palestine.

These tough men and women all chanced on the same truth. And they knew it was good. They also knew that they were in the fight of their life. They call themselves Combatants for Peace, and this movie tells their stories. The movie is a story about old stories that are broken, and new ones that are forming in the heart.

Movies are meant to draw an audience. Anyone who's been stuck in traffic behind a line of drivers craning their rubbernecks for a glimpse of blood knows that carnage draws a crowd. This is just one of the many factors that make "Disturbing The Peace" so precious.

Conflict is at or near the heart of every narrative. And every nation every person has a narrative. It's us against the others. We are good. The others? Not so much. For decades now, America



Producer and co-director Stephen Apkon (left) and co-director and cinematographer Andrew Young (right) will be guests at Ebertfest.



has watched the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. And mainstream media has only perpetuated this narrative of violence and conflict.

Therefore it's profoundly disorienting when Apkon and his co-director Young, zoom in on Arab freedom fighters and Israeli combat veterans and find — to one's confusion — that they dress, look and think alike. What's even more confusing is that the personal histories of the Palestinian freedom fighters mirror those of the Jews.

The "crazy Zionist" grandfather of tank commander, Chen Alon, left Poland for Palestine in the 1930s. "All his brothers and sisters and cousins and aunts ... none of them survived."

In 1948, the boy who would grow into freedom fighter Jamil Qassas and his family were forced out of their village. The grandfather refused to move.

The grandfather was shot. Years later he would watch his 14-year-old brother shot by the Israeli army for going out during a curfew.

Children of both narratives grew up to become heroes in their own national struggle — elite fighters in the Israeli Defense Forces and heads of local cells in the Palestinian guerilla militia. Along the way, amidst war, they each came to the realization that while they love their country and people, violence could only lead to more violence. No one can win.

A group of Israeli soldiers sent a letter to their government. They would do their utmost to defend the state of Israel, but they'd had enough of conquest. They would no longer serve as part of an occupying army. The reaction was explosive. The former heroes were accused of lacking conscience. They were "an embarrassment to the state of Israel and the Jewish people."

Palestinians who were also fed up with the cycle of violence, learned of non-violent movements around the world, mostly while sitting in Israeli prisons, and embraced the philosophy after finding that hunger strikes change more minds than bombs do. It wasn't easy for them within their society either. One veteran of many years in jail is castigated

FILMCREDITS

DISTURBING THE PEACE

(2016) Rated N/A

Directed by
Stephen Apkon and Andrew Young

CAST:
Chen Alon as himself
Sulaiman Khatib as himself

Running time: 86 minutes

by his wife. He cradles his laptop against his chest. She drinks her coffee. She's not buying.

One of the Combatants for Peace muses about why they are unpopular. They were threatening everybody's story, he said. "It is indispensable for a fighting system to deny the humanity of the other side."

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall." That's Robert Frost, but the wisdom of an American poet is echoed in the courage of a Palestinian turned pacifist. After watching "Disturbing the Peace," we see how much we look like that unfortunate band of soldiers on the border. We are the prisoners of ourselves. When we shuck off our national narratives, it becomes impossible to deny the humanity of the other side. In the rubble of these antique stories, we can plant some peace.



Protestors march in "Disturbing the Peace," a documentary about the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

FRIDAY4PM

L'inhumaine

An absurd national treasure that endures through time

By David Melville, Courtesy of Senses of Cinema website | September 2015

"On leaving the theatre one has the impression of having witnessed the birth of a new art." - Adolf Loos¹

What to say about a film that, 90 years on from its release, is still so far ahead of most of what passes for cinema today? "L'inhumaine" was made by Marcel L'Herbier in 1924; no other silent film, perhaps, could match its sheer stylistic and imaginative daring. Since the coming of sound, only a few directors have even attempted what L'Herbier pulled off with such flair: Alain Resnais with "Last Year in Marienbad" ("L'Année

Dernière à Marienbad," 1961), or maybe Marguerite Duras with "India Song" (1975), perhaps? Films whose hypnotic, languorous surface are not just a matter of style but also the very substance of the works themselves.

Of course, "L'inhumaine" must be one of the most absurd Great Movies ever made. The ludicrous plot by L'Herbier and the best-selling author Pierre Mac Orlan concerns a femme fatale and her four suitors. A crass American showman wants her to become the world's greatest star. A crazed Russian mystic wants her to inspire a new revolution. A sinister

The aim was less to tell a story than to evoke a subjective and profoundly interior world through objective visual means.

Hindu maharajah wants her to take the throne as his queen. An idealistic young scientist (played by L'Herbier's close friend and protégé Jaque-Catelain) loves her purely and poetically, for herself. None of these relationships is at all convincing, least of all that of the lady and the scientist (which wins out).

Georgette Leblanc stars in "L'inhumaine" and also financed it. She was not a film actress but an opera diva, famous for creating the lead role in Claude Debussy's tuneless but atmospheric opera "Pelléas et Mélisande" in 1902. She was, for two decades, the wife and muse of the Belgian Symbolist poet Maurice Maeterlinck, on whose play that opera was based. She had no inkling of how to act for the camera and her performance is predictably stilted and "operatic." Moreover, she was 55 years old, almost 30 years older than her delicate and androgynous leading man. "L'inhumaine" seems designed to give the term "vanity project" a bad name.

Granted that "L'inhumaine" ought not — by any sane standards — to be a great film, our wonder lies in discovering how and why it is one. It is essential that cinema, for L'Herbier and his team, was not about narrative. Writing of L'Herbier and his more famous and bombastic contemporary Abel Gance, Dudley Andrew points out how "their real concern all along was with style, visual tempo, subjective states, delicate textures and private sensibility."² The aim was less to tell a story than to evoke a

subjective and profoundly interior world through objective visual means.

Film historians have labelled this style "Impressionist" but the term is lazy and misleading. L'Herbier's films in no way resemble the work of the Impressionist painters in the way those of a Realist filmmaker like Jean Renoir so often do. The prevailing mood as "L'inhumaine" opens is closer to Surrealism or even Abstraction. The diva's coterie of admirers gathers for a banquet in her mansion (a set designed by the future directors Claude Autant-Lara and Alberto Cavalcanti). The dining table stands on a pontoon floating in a pool, with a family of geese swimming happily in and out of shot. An army of footmen wear painted masks so they can remain "deaf and always smiling," say the inter-titles. The ideal audience, perhaps, for the film we are about to behold?

After dinner, an acrobat lies

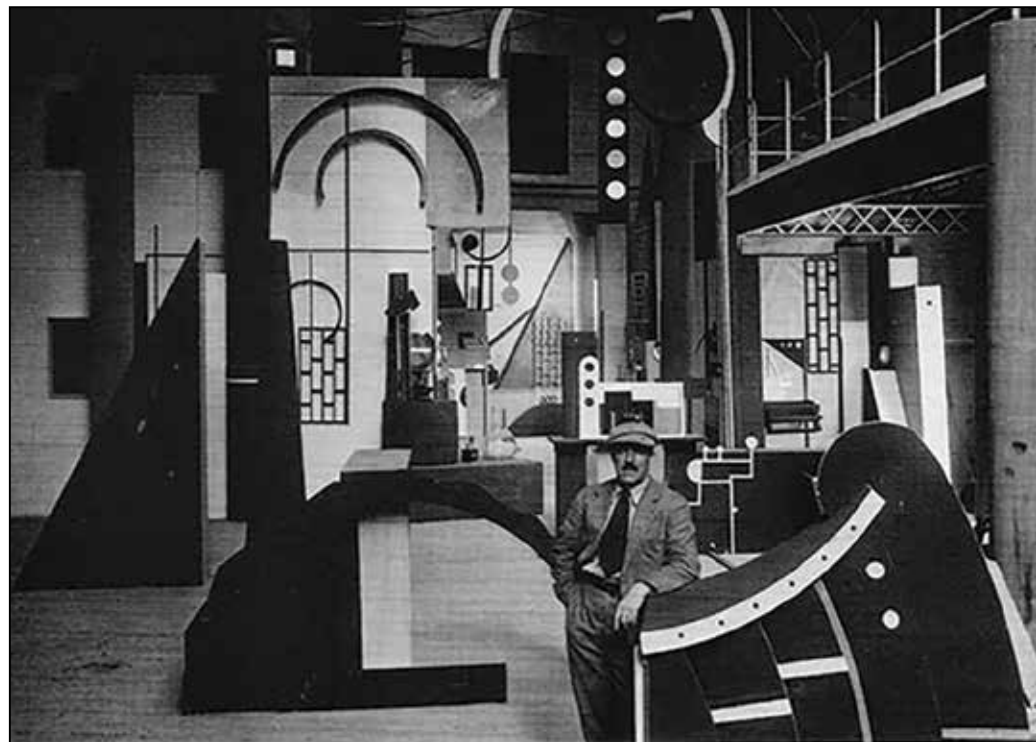


The stars, Jaque Catelain and Georgette Leblanc, in "L'inhumaine."

on his back amid the undulating black-and-white lines of the floor. He juggles, with his legs, a drum shape painted in elongated black-and-white diamond patterns. Seen in an overhead shot, the ever-

shifting clash of one geometric form with another is compulsive, almost hypnotic. (Far more so than the question of which

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Fernand Leger posing on the set of L'inhumaine 1924.

FILMCREDITS

L'INHUMAINE

(1924) Not Rated

Written and directed by
Marcel L'Herbier
Edited by **Pierre Mac Orlan**

CAST:
Georgette Leblanc as Claire Lescot
Jaque Catelain as Einar Norsen
Philippe Hériat as Djorah de Nopur
Léonid Walter de Malte as Wladimir Kranine
Fred Kellerman as Frank Mahler

Running time: 135 minutes

Print courtesy:
Flicker Alley, LLC

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

The Alloy Orchestra



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

L'inhumaine

continued from page 57

man the diva may or may not agree to marry!) Viewers new to "L'inhumaine" should be warned that much of it is given over to languid atmospherics of this kind: an Italian VHS copy, in which I first saw the film, runs a full hour shorter than the official restored print. The continuity is a bit awkward, but at no point does it ever feel rushed.

The juggling ends. A muscular hunk wanders in and runs a flaming torch sensuously over his bare skin. In extreme close-up, he pushes this distinctly phallic object repeatedly in and out of his mouth in an image that would not go amiss in Jean Genet's oneiric and erotic "Un chant d'amour" (1950). Frankly, anyone who is not hooked by this point is unlikely to enjoy "L'inhumaine." The rest

Frankly, anyone who is not hooked by this point is unlikely to enjoy "L'inhumaine." The rest is a dreamlike succession of one feverishly extreme décor after another.

is a dreamlike succession of one feverishly extreme décor after another. It culminates in the young scientist's gleaming abstract laboratory (designed by Fernand Léger) where the dying diva is saved by a miracle of science. As Alan Williams rightly warns:

For the coherence of a stable fictional world with suitably "round" characters ... "L'inhumaine" substitutes a fundamentally incoherent

*world of pastiche, parody and quotation. Its flat characters provide no stability; they are but puppets in the hands of an unpredictable, perhaps even mad storyteller.*³

That may or may not be what we want from cinema. The fascination of "L'inhumaine" does not lie in anything its characters say or do, but in the worlds they inhabit, the way those worlds are created for us and — most

important, perhaps — the way in which we as an audience choose to observe them. For Oscar Wilde, "it is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors."⁴ Wilde died a quarter of a century too early to see "L'inhumaine," but his ghost would definitely have approved.

Endnotes

1. Donald Albrecht, *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture in the Movies*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1987, p. 50.
2. Dudley Andrew, *Mists of Regret: Culture and Sensibility in Classic French Film*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1995, p. 34.
3. Alan Williams, *Republic of Images: A History of French Filmmaking*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA & London, 1992, p. 105.
4. Oscar Wilde, 'The Preface' to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Penguin Classics, London, 2003, p. 4.

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Eve’s Bayou

A tale of memory and a young girl understanding the world

By Roger Ebert | Nov. 7, 1997

“Memory is a selection of images, some elusive, others printed indelibly on the brain. The summer I killed my father, I was 10 years old.” With those opening words, “Eve’s Bayou” coils back into the past, into the memories of a child who grew up in a family both gifted and flawed, and tried to find her own way to the truth. The words explain the method of the film. This will not be a simple-minded story that breathlessly races from A to B. It is a selection of memories,

filtered through the eyes of a young girl who doesn’t understand everything she sees — and filtered, too, through the eyes of her older sister, and through the eyes of an aunt who can foretell everyone’s future except her own. As these images unfold, we are drawn into the same process Eve has gone through: We, too, are trying to understand what happened in that summer of 1962, when Eve’s handsome, dashing father — a doctor and womanizer — took one

“Eve’s Bayou,” one of the very best films of the year, is the debut of its writer and director, Kasi Lemmons.

chance too many. And we want to understand what happened late one night between the father and Eve’s older sister, in a moment that was over before it began. We want to know because the film makes it perfectly possible

that there is more than one explanation; “Eve’s Bayou” studies the way that dangerous emotions can build up until something happens that no one is responsible for and that can never be taken back. All of these moments



Director and writer Kasi Lemmons is one of this year’s festival guests.

unfold in a film of astonishing maturity and confidence; “Eve’s Bayou,” one of the very best films of the year, is the debut of its writer and director, Kasi Lemmons. She sets her story in Southern Gothic country, in the bayous and old Louisiana traditions that Tennessee Williams might have been familiar with, but in tone and style she earns comparison with the family dramas of Ingmar Bergman. That Lemmons can make a film this good on the first try is like a rebuke to established filmmakers. The story is told through the eyes of Eve Batiste, played with fierce truthfulness by Jurnee Smollett. Her family is descended from a slave, also named Eve, who saved her master’s life and was rewarded with her freedom and with 16 children. In 1962, the Batistes are the premiere family in their district, living in a big old mansion surrounded by rivers and swampland. Eve’s father Louis (Samuel L. Jackson) is the local doctor. Her mother Roz (Lynn Whitfield) is “the most beautiful woman I ever have seen.” Her sister Cisely (Meagan Good) is on the

brink of adolescence, and the apple of her father’s eye; Eve watches unhappily at a party, and afterward asks her father, “Daddy, why don’t you ever dance with me?” Living with them is an aunt, Mozelle (Debbi Morgan), who has lost three husbands, “is not unfamiliar with the inside of a mental hospital” and has the gift of telling fortunes. Dr. Batiste is often away from home on house calls — some of them legitimate, some excuses for his philandering. He is a weak but not a bad man, and not lacking in insight: “To a certain type of woman, I am a hero,” he says. “I need to be a hero.” On the night her father did not dance with her, Eve steals away to a barn and falls asleep, only to awaken and see her father apparently making love to another man’s wife. Eve tells Cisely, who says she was mistaken, and the doubt over this incident will echo later, on another night when much depends on whether Cisely was herself mistaken. Lemmons surrounds her characters with a rich setting. There is a marketplace, dominated by the stalls of farmers and fisherman, and

by the presence of a voodoo woman (Diahann Carroll) whose magic may or may not be real. Certainly Aunt Mozelle’s gift is real; her prophecies have a terrifying accuracy, as when she tells a woman her missing son will be found in a Detroit hospital on Tuesday. But Mozelle cannot foresee her own life: “I looked at each of my husbands,” she says, “and never saw a thing.” All three died. So when a handsome painter (Vondie Curtis Hall) comes into the neighborhood and Mozelle knows she has found true love at last, she is afraid to marry him, because it has been prophesied that any man who marries her will die.

The film has been photographed by Amy Vincent in shadows and rich textures, where even a sunny day contains dark undertones; surely she looked at the Bergman films photographed by Sven Nykvist in preparing her approach. There is a scene of pure magic as Mozelle tells Eve the story of the death of one of her husbands, who was shot by her lover; the woman and the girl stand before a mirror, regarding the scene from the past, and then Mozelle slips out of the shot and reappears in the past. There is also great visual precision in the scenes involving the confused night when the doctor comes home drunk, and Cisely goes downstairs to comfort him. What happened? We get two accounts and we see two versions, and the film is far

FILMCREDITS

EVE’S BAYOU

(1997) Rated R

Written and directed by Kasi Lemmons

CAST:
Jurnee Smollett-Bell as Eve Batiste
Meagan Good as Cisely Batiste
Lynn Whitfield as Roz Batiste
Samuel L. Jackson as Louis Batiste

Running time: 109 minutes

Print courtesy: ChubbCo Film Co.

too complex and thoughtful to try to reduce the episode to a simple formula like sexual abuse; what happens lasts only a second, and is charged with many possibilities of misinterpretation, all of them prepared for by what has gone before. “Eve’s Bayou” resonates in the memory. It called me back for a second and third viewing. If it is not nominated for Academy Awards, then the academy is not paying attention. For the viewer, it is a reminder that sometimes films can venture into the realms of poetry and dreams.

For the viewer, it is a reminder that sometimes films can venture into the realms of poetry and dreams.



Roz (Lynn Whitfield) and Eve Batiste (Jurnee Smollett-Bell) in “Eve’s Bayou,” a film about memories and a family’s complicated relationships.

SATURDAY11AM

Force of Destiny

Cox’s film mirrors his personal journey with cancer

By Richard Phillips, Courtesy of wsws.org (World Socialist Web Site) | Nov. 16, 2015

In the fall of 2015, film director Paul Cox appeared at special screenings throughout Australia for “Force of Destiny,” his first dramatic feature in seven years. The semi-autobiographical work was inspired by Cox’s ongoing struggle with liver cancer. The Dutch-born, Australian-based writer and director, was diagnosed in early 2009 with the disease and received a liver transplant late that year.

Cox, 75, spoke at length with the World Socialist Web Site during a visit to Sydney. In this

edited interview he discusses the background and nature of his new film, his artistic approach, concerns about militarism and the commercial and cultural pressures on contemporary filmmakers.

Richard Phillips: Could you begin by explaining why you decided to make “Force of Destiny?”

Paul Cox: Having a liver transplant was an extraordinary experience and one that was too amazing to let go. I have a quite rare blood group and

“The film has a fantastic cast and has all the hallucinations and madness that comes with cancer treatment.”

for a while it looked like I wouldn’t survive. I waited for seven-and-a-half months, slowly going down the drain, and then on Christmas Day, during Christmas dinner, I received a phone call and was told that there was a donor. It was only a few weeks before I was supposed to die.

I wrote “Tales from the Cancer Ward,” which somebody read when I was at Cannes about a year later and they said I had to make the film. I began writing a script but couldn’t get any finance for the film. Someone having a transplant is not exactly regarded as hot material by the bean-counters.

We collected some money and then received financial support from someone in India. This meant that Screen Australia could not refuse me anymore and they provided some money and off we went. Once it was complete, we tried to get Roadshow involved, but they weren’t interested. They didn’t regard it as a commercial film. We were then invited to open the Melbourne International Film Festival

and since then it has been gathering momentum.

We’ve been travelling to all the screenings and doing Q&As, which is a bit exhausting, but there seems to be a lot of satisfied customers. It’s a bit of an odd-ball film, but the audience reaction is strong and that pleases me. We hope a distributor will come forward and run it in the cinemas for a while.

The film has a fantastic cast and has all the hallucinations and the madness that comes with cancer treatment. It is also a love story and it nourishes. We believe that there’s an audience for this and hopefully it will encourage more organ donations and therefore help to save lives.

RP: Was it painful re-living some of these experiences?

PC: No. I was too determined. Nobody thought I’d finish the film; that I’d die in the midst of it. But even in India, with temperatures of up to 50 degrees Celsius, I just kept on going; I was obsessed. It was a wonderful experience and one that kept me alive.



Actress Jacqueline McKenzie and Actor David Wenham in “Force of Destiny.”

Unfortunately the cancer has come back and has now infected the transplanted liver. All the chemo business has stopped and apparently there’s nothing anyone can do. I should have died many times, but I’m still alive, have managed to make a film and shared it with others, and that gives me great satisfaction.

I’ve been told to take things easy and just relax have a good time before I die, but I’m just not the type for that. You somehow get used to living on the edge of the void.

RP: How did living on the edge of the void, as you say, influence your artistic approach?

PC: I felt very free making this movie. Music and film

are similar mediums, and I think we should be making movies with this understanding in mind. “Force of Destiny” flashes back and forth to India several times without any establishing shots of airports or airplanes. Normally I wouldn’t have done it this way, but since the transplant I’ve lost my fears about the things that can go wrong when you’re involved in the filmmaking process.

RP: I thought the scenes in public hospital wards were particularly moving.

PC: I’m not insured — I don’t believe in it — and so I had the fortunate experience of being with people in the public wards. What you see in the film happened in my ward.

“You somehow get used to living on the edge of the void.”

There was the Russian man who came and sang for his wife and put flowers on her bed, and the painter who came with a picture of a flower. It still breaks my heart to remember the mother who insisted on putting on make-up because she didn’t want her child to see or remember her suffering. She died the next day.

Hospitals are astonishing places. Suddenly you’re in an environment where extraordinary people are doing everything they can to help you. This is far different from a world dominated by taking things from people.

Although the public health system is crumbling in Australia, I was given incredible treatment. My partner Rosie, who also has a transplant, was insured and she got exactly the same treatment. If I’d been living in America, I wouldn’t have survived.

The government is doing insane things. Budgets and jobs are being cut from public

FILMCREDITS

FORCE OF DESTINY

(2015) Not Rated

Written and directed by Paul Cox

CAST:
David Wenham
as Robert
Jacqueline McKenzie
as Hannah

Shahana Goswami
as Maya

Terry Norris
as Derek

Running time: 92 minutes

Print courtesy:
Illumination Films

health while millions are being spent on military aircraft and war equipment. We also have this constant celebration of war. I can’t even stand hearing the word Gallipoli anymore.

I came from a war zone in Europe and the first five years of my life was war and destruction. We never knew whether our house would be standing or not. The smell of death was everywhere.

On May 5 each year in my little town in Holland, the people walk silently through the streets commemorating the fact that at least half the population of the town perished during the war. There’s no brass bands or flags just an immense sadness. But here in Australia we have this nonsensical celebration of war and you can’t escape it.

continued on page 64

Force of Destiny

continued from page 63

RP: This is to condition the population, and particularly young people, for new wars.

PC: That's right. The national war memorial in Canberra is obscene. It has spaces reserved for the names of the next lot of war dead and even multi-media war experiences for children. And all the politicians are involved in this war mongering. Today there's not an ounce of humanity in any of the official politicians, not just here but everywhere in the world. We seem to be governed by a pack of criminals.

RP: You were recently quoted somewhere saying: "If I could live my life again I'd be crazier, more radical." Do you mean that politically or artistically?

PC: I meant artistically, but it's probably a bit too late now. Perhaps I just want to be forgiven.

RP: What for?

PC: I'm not sure. Perhaps I'd like to try and mend things a little with the people I might have offended. I don't want to leave behind all sorts of unfinished issues. But if I was younger I'd like to be more radical artistically, as well as being more politically involved. I was quite shy — didn't really know what the hell was going on — and it took me a long time before I found my own voice.

Most of the films we made in the early days came out of sheer tenacity, madness and a total lack of what was considered the normal approach. We were determined though to show the humanity in all of us. As Anne Frank said at the end of her diary, "You have to keep believing that



Actor David Wenham in "Force of Destiny."

people are basically good."

We are surrounded today by so much evil and ignorance and it's pretty frightening, but I have to remain optimistic and be honest with the feelings inside me.

Every thinking artist aims to create something that is true. Although you can't claim it as "the truth," I always strove for artistic honesty and that meant I never had any interest in compromising with the pressures and demands of the commercial film industry. As soon as I see a film that has the ring of the dollar to it — whether it's about cancer or anything else — I turn off. I make films for fellow dreamers, not bums on seats.

Maybe it's my old Catholic upbringing, but I'd feel very guilty if I made something driven by money or profit. There can't be any fooling around with this. I may be a little mad and abstract at times, but that's all I have to offer.

Talking about this with you

this morning makes me further realise how lucky I was to make the films I did. They probably wouldn't be produced today.

I had many chances to do Hollywood things and out of sheer perversion I agreed, just to find out what it was like. There was "Molokai: The Story of Father Damien" and an IMAX film — The Hidden Dimension — but these were unhappy, "never again" experiences. I made enemies of quite a few producers because I refused to listen to them and they butchered the movies.

RP: What advice would you offer to young filmmakers today?

PC: Cinema is now over 100 years old and a powerful gift to humanity but it is now dominated by major commercial interests. This is a problem because films have enormous power and can influence people.

Any filmmaker that thinks and feels is acutely aware of this fact. I can think of ten

films that literally changed my life. They crept into my bones and had a very profound influence on my outlook, not just for a few days or weeks but throughout my entire life.

So my advice to any young filmmaker is first understand that you have a social obligation, you must have something of substance to say. Don't become a filmmaker if you're only interested in making money. If it's money you're after, just bugger off. Cinema is too precious for that and it must have a social conscience.

This was always at the back of our minds when we made our movies, irrespective of whether they were commercially successful or not. That is why the best of the films we made still endure. People should be given something that enriches them. They should leave the cinema with thinking more deeply, more sensitised, instead of feeling empty and numbed, as is usually the case today.

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Rabin, The Last Day (2016)

The 1995 murder of then-Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, ended all efforts of peace and with him the whole left wing of Israel died. This docu-drama shows Rabin's last days as Prime Minister, and the events that led up to his assassination. Directed by Amos Gitai. Not rated; 153 min.



Tikkun (2015)

An ultra-Orthodox scholar is revived after dying for 40 minutes. After coming back to life, he suddenly feels a strange awakening in his body and suspects that God is testing him. Directed by Avishai Sivan. Not rated; 120 min.



Zero Motivation (2014)

The Human Resources Office at a remote desert base serves as the setting for a unit of young, female Israeli soldiers who bide their time pushing paper and battling in computer games, counting down the minutes until they can return to civilian life. Directed by Talya Lavie. Not rated; 97 min.



An American Tail (1986)

Introduce your children to this beloved tale of Fievel, a young Russian mouse who gets separated from his family while immigrating to the US. Featuring the voice talents of Dom DeLuise and Christopher Plummer; and the Oscar-nominated song, "Somewhere Out There". Rated G; 80 min.



The Great Dictator (1940)

In this Charlie Chaplin classic, dictator Adenoid Hynkel tries to expand his empire while a poor Jewish barber tries to avoid persecution by Hynkel's regime. Starring Charles Chaplin and Paulette Goddard. Rated G; 125 min.

Radical Grace

Undervalued in Hollywood, female filmmakers prove worth

By Matt Fagerholm | June 21, 2015

Saturday at AFI Docs 2015 gave me a triple feature I won't soon forget. At Washington D.C.'s Naval Heritage Center, I saw three films about revolutionary movements that have the potential to change the world. They are fueled by compassion and require their participants to take moral stands that may be widely unpopular in the eyes of society. I find it especially striking that these films about ruffling feathers are (like most of the pictures I've seen at this year's festival) directed by women. At a time when female filmmakers are criminally undervalued in Hollywood, these movies offer inarguable proof

of the tremendously talented women behind the camera that deserve to have as many opportunities as their male counterparts. If a man had made "Boys Don't Cry" and "Monster," rather than Kimberly Peirce and Patty Jenkins (respectively), his career would've taken off long ago.

Which brings us to the U.S. premiere of Rebecca Parrish's "Radical Grace," an exhilarating portrait of the "Nuns on the Bus" that easily ranks among the year's best films. Coming off like a real-life "Sister Act," this heroic group of women rebelled against a Vatican-ordered censure by becoming

engaged in social activism. When Representative Paul Ryan claimed his proposed budget cuts for services aiding the poor were inspired by his "Catholic social teaching," the sisters decided to take their crusade on the road in order to do their part in ensuring that President Obama's Affordable Care Act would be upheld in its entirety. After delivering a rousing speech during her first stop on the nationwide bus tour, the camera remains on Sister Simone Campbell as she sits back down and mutters incredulously to herself, "We have 14 more days of this? Holy s---." It's in countless small

moments like this one where Parrish's film achieves greatness by humanizing its subjects rather than portraying them as one-note saints or martyrs. The late Sister Jean Hughes, who repeatedly brought down the house at the screening I attended, confesses how she finds herself slipping away from Roman Catholicism, while maintaining her spirituality and tireless need to help those around her (she insists on holding the door for others even while walking with a cane). An especially fascinating sequence follows Sister Chris Schenk on her trip in Rome as she visits various ancient sites housing



Producer Nicole Bernardi-Reis (left) is one of this year's Ebertfest guests. Director, cinematographer and editor Rebecca Parrish (right) is also an Ebertfest guest.



artwork that illustrate the history of female involvement in the Catholic church conspicuously missing from the male-authored Gospels.

Enhanced immeasurably by a beautiful, wholly unobtrusive score from Heather McIntosh ("Compliance," "Black Box"), "Radical Grace" moved me to tears with its portrayal of good people putting their beliefs into action in ways that transcend all ideological boundaries. During the Q&A afterward, Parrish said that although she's a nonreligious person, she does "identify as a spiritual seeker." "What drew me to their story was how they demonstrated that social justice work could be approached as spiritual practice," Parrish explained. "I realized that this idea was something that I could take into my own life and share more broadly." The filmmaker had begun filming the nuns' story before they even came up with the notion of stepping foot on a bus, and became all the more motivated to continue on their quest while watching

Parrish "drag camera equipment around for three years." Sister Simone and Sister Chris were present at the screening, and voiced their gratitude for the director's achievement. "From our faith perspective, gifts are given before you know you need them," Sister Simone noted. "This film, quite frankly, was a gift because it spreads the story out much further. ... We never directly took on the Vatican, we just did it in the shadow of the conflict that gave us all this press attention, and then used the press attention for our mission."

When director Abigail Disney stepped before the audience to introduce her film, "The Armor of Light," she asked festivalgoers to participate in a moment of silence to honor the recent victims of gun violence at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston. Her subject, Evangelical minister Rob Schenck, had just spent the past day at the church and was understandably exhausted, yet still decided to be present for the Q&A to follow. The first

act of Disney's film interweaves the narratives of Schenck, a vocal anti-abortion activist who is rattled when various fatal shootings (including one at an abortion clinic) hit unsettlingly close to home, and Lucy McBath, a mother fighting for justice after her son is killed by a man who may evade punishment (a la George Zimmerman), thanks to Florida's Stand Your Ground law. After McBath meets with Schenck, pleading for him to reconsider his stance on gun ownership, the minister undergoes a gradual moral awakening that he likens to sobriety. Once Schenck gets on the road to discuss his newfound belief in gun control with fellow Evangelicals, Disney's film turns into a brilliant exploration of the appeal that firearms have for many white religious conservatives in America, and how that appeal is, in many ways, in direct conflict with their supposed beliefs. "So you need Jesus ... and the Gospel ... and a sidearm?" Schenck asks a pro-gun man of faith. The bravery and civility that Schenck exudes during these confrontations is astonishing to behold.

In between these tense discussions with church members, Schenck shares his evolving opinions in voice-overs. He realizes that guns are an invitation for those operating them to give into their fear, that the notion of living one's life with a constant defensive posture is inherently unhealthy and that the racial dimensions of the debate cannot be ignored. One of the most viscerally impactful scenes in recent cinematic memory occurs in D.C., as Schenck talks with three other pro-lifers and sees one of them go completely off the deep end, displaying the sort of short fuse that would make

FILMCREDITS

RADICAL GRACE

(2015) Not Rated

Produced by
Nicole Bernardi-Reis

Directed and written by
Rebecca Parrish

Cinematography by
Rebecca Parrish

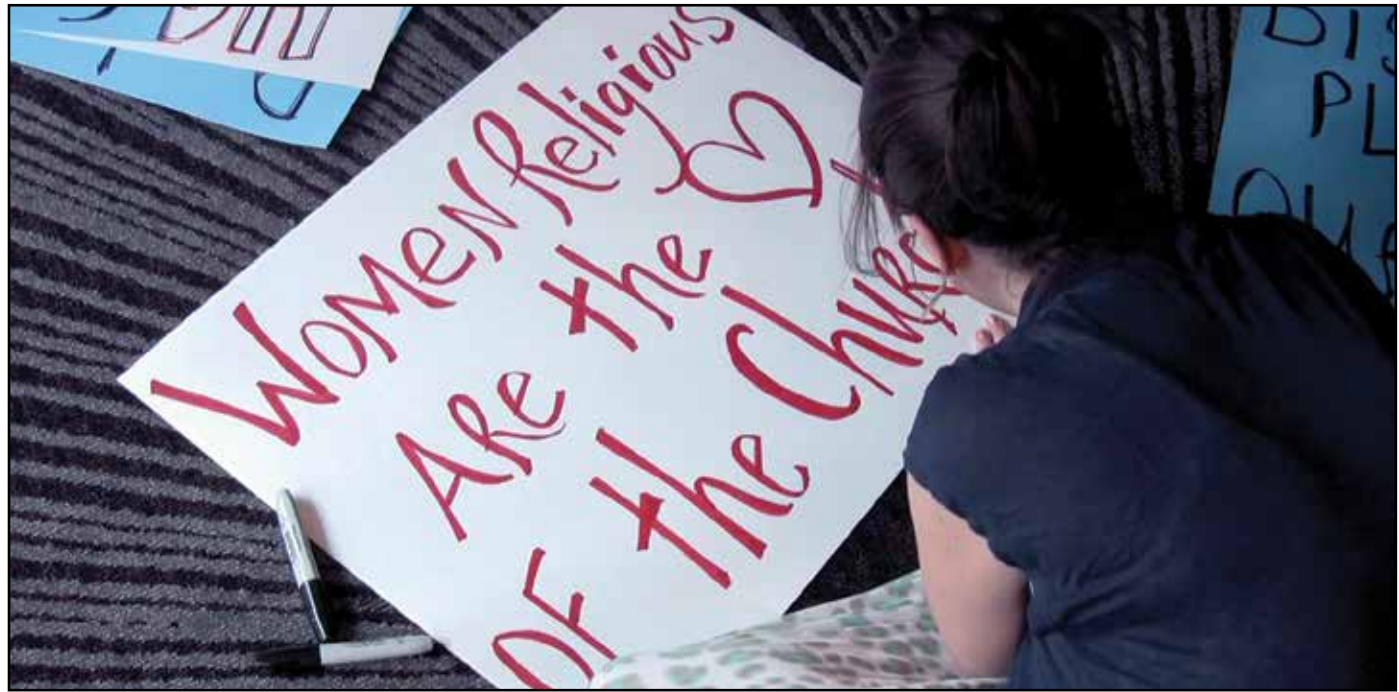
CAST:
Sister Simone Campbell
as herself
Sister Chris Schenk as herself
Sister Jean Hughes as herself

Running time: 75 minutes

Print courtesy:
Kindling Group and
Interchange Productions

him among the last people one would want to see brandishing a gun. His fiery argument that less people would die if everybody was armed is calmly and eloquently demolished by Schenck, who says that such a black-and-white worldview indicates a detachment from reality. In an excellent sermon delivered toward the end, Schenck reminds his followers that Fox News and the NRA are not spiritual authorities and should never be blindly obeyed. The Washington Post's religion reporter Sarah Pulliam Bailey moderated the post-film discussion, and boldly asked Schenck about his current stance on abortion, an issue that he and Disney have disagreed on, leading to the only moments of tension between them during production. Schenck says that while his opinion

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Organizer Erin Saiz Hanna prepares for a rally in support of the nuns. After the Vatican censured the sisters, Catholics across the United States organized prayer vigils and rallies to show their solidarity with the nuns.

These movies offer inarguable proof of the tremendously talented women behind the camera.

Radical Grace

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remains the same, making this film has brought him closer to understanding the perspectives of others and appreciating the complexity of their experiences. Though his activism has caused him to lose significant financial support, he has “come to the conclusion that some things are worth the cost,” and his recent visit to Charleston only affirmed his convictions. An unbridled “love fest” was taking place in the church in the wake of the tragedy. “No one told me that they wished there had been a gun fight,” Schenck replied, while visibly moved.

Just like Rob Schenck and the Nuns on the Bus, Larry Kramer has committed his life to creating a more humane world that values the worth of every life that inhabits it, and his activism is well chronicled in the HBO documentary, “Larry Kramer in Love & Anger,” set to air Monday, June 29. Directed by Kramer’s longtime friend, Jean Carlomusto, the film covers territory familiar to anyone who saw David France’s Oscar-nominated 2012 doc, “How to Survive a Plague,” and doesn’t get quite as close to its subject as one would hope, yet the picture succeeds as a provocative study of the persona that the controversial writer and

activist utilized in order to give AIDS victims the attention and care they deserved. What the film reminds us is that Kramer was not an especially popular figure among his fellow members in the gay community after publishing the 1978 novel, “F-----,” in which he argued that the practice of “treating each other like meat devalues us as people.” Kramer stood for the dignity of his sexual orientation, promoting the importance of a loving relationship, and when the AIDS epidemic began to sweep the nation, his message of love took on an even deeper meaning. Ignored by their own government and left to die, gay men took to the streets in angry demonstrations led by Kramer in an effort to make visible the urgency of their plight and the necessity of research to find a cure.

Carlomusto does not sidestep the more difficult aspects of Kramer’s character, nor his current health problems. He may appear frail, but after having survived a liver transplant that nearly resulted in his death, Kramer still proves to be as resilient a warrior as ever (Carlomusto had arrived in D.C. just after visiting Kramer to celebrate his upcoming

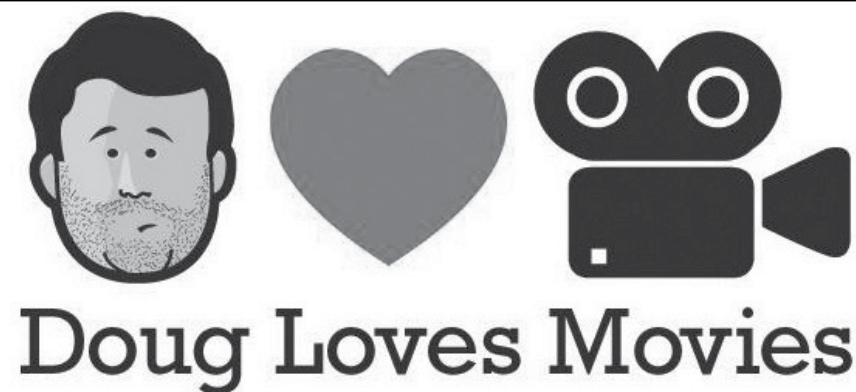


Rev. Dr. Michael Louis Pflieger of St. Sabina (left) and Heather McIntosh, composer, are guests of this year’s Ebertfest.



80th birthday on June 25). Joining her at the screening was Kramer’s enemy-turned-ally Anthony Fauci, an immunologist who was a target of many well-intentioned diatribes from the activist. “The demonstrations changed me,” Fauci recalled. “I learned from Larry that the FDA could be flexible with the rigidity of its process.” When certain figures in the government caught wind that Fauci had sided with the demonstrators, he got a call from the White House, causing him to fear that he would be fired. Instead, he became a key contributor in HIV/AIDS research, while Kramer grew

to the status of an icon with his groundbreaking 1985 play, “The Normal Heart,” which was adapted for TV last year on HBO. By the end of “Larry Kramer in Love & Anger,” the activist is out of the hospital, newly married to his longtime lover and shows no signs of ceasing in his efforts to shed light on the untold history of gay people in America. Just as Sister Chris found visual traces of Catholic women’s history hidden in plain sight throughout Rome, Kramer has unearthed photographs displaying gay couples from past eras captured in loving embraces. Their story may be untold, but it has always existed, hidden in plain sight.



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SATURDAY 4:30PM

Love & Mercy

A look into the tumultuous life of musician Wilson

By Glenn Kenny | June 5, 2015

The most heartening surprise about director Bill Pohlad's "Love and Mercy" is also to my mind, a pretty improbable one. That is, that it's such a good and at times better than good movie. The rise and fall and rise and fall and rise of genius musician Brian Wilson, a life story that disproves Fitzgerald's adage about there being no second acts in America in what seems like the most perverse way imaginable, looks on paper to be too sprawling, too chaotic, to be distilled into a coherent, never mind compelling, cinematic narrative of conventional length.

But longtime producer Pohlad ("Brokeback Mountain," "12 Years A Slave"), working from a daring script by Oren Moverman and Michael Alan Lerner, and using two first-rate actors to play Wilson at two turning points in his life, lavishes his material with love, attention to detail, and empathetic imagination. The result is a story that's hair-raisingly watchable and frequently moving, regardless of what you believe you might already know of Wilson's life.

The movie shuttles back and forth between two distinct



Actor John Cusack and actress Elizabeth Banks in a still from "Love and Mercy."

periods. In the mid '60s, Paul Dano's Wilson is the baby-faced musical genius of the Beach Boys who's burning out on the road life. He's got this amazing music in his head, and he manages to get quite a bit of it out, despite the resentful sniping of his abusive ex-manager father, the hostility of at least one bandmate who doesn't get why Brian isn't writing more hits, and an increasingly fragile psychic state that is not helped by an

exposure to LSD. Cusack plays the Wilson of the late '80s, supposedly brought back from a complete psychotic break by psychological miracle worker Dr. Eugene Landy, who became such a part of Wilson's life that he presumed to make himself a partner in the creation of Wilson's music. John Cusack's Wilson wanders desultorily into a Cadillac dealership (although we soon see he's got a bodyguard trailing him, and a mini-entourage trailing the bodyguard), charms attractive young salesperson Melinda (Elizabeth Banks), who at first has no idea who the sweetly eccentric fellow is. After telling her he wants the car in which they've stolen a few precious moments removed from the

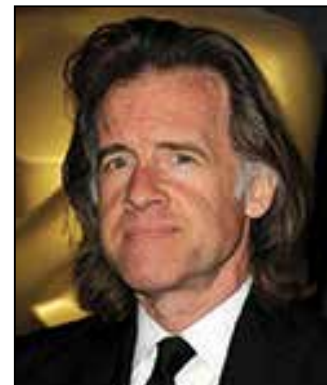
outside world, he scrawls on her business card and leaves it on the steering wheel of the car. The words he's written are "Lonely/Frightened/Scared." Landy, played with terrifying intensity and smarm by Paul Giamatti, has by this point in time morphed from someone in service of Wilson to a malignant Svengali. His monstrous manipulations are bad enough in isolation, but when intercut with scenes of the younger Wilson shrinking at the disapprobation of the father — who beat him to deafness in one ear, but from whom Brian still craves approval — or the cousin/bandmate who hectors him over jokey song lyrics and musical direction, they are genuinely heart-rending and angering. The movie creates a

rather effective suspense story: As Melinda gets closer and closer to Brian, under Landy's paranoid gaze, one wonders just how much fortitude Mr. Wilson's new love interest has, and if she has that fortitude, can she get what she needs to deliver Brian from what he describes as his "hell." It gets pretty tense.

Meanwhile, back in the '60s, Pohlad and Dano and a host of excellent supporting players simulate the creation of such ground-breaking pop works as Pet Sounds and "Good Vibrations." Usually fictionalized scenes of music-making are as convincing as cinematic depictions of painters painting (that is, not at all), so the very compelling scenes in which young Brian corrals the crack LA session players known as "The Wrecking Crew" into accepting and then conjuring

his sometimes eccentric musical visions feel almost miraculous. And Banks, who brings equal notes of beauty-queen sunniness and Girl Scout rectitude to her portrayal of Melinda (who did, spoiler alert, become Mrs. Wilson after the events depicted in this film) has an interesting chemistry with the haltingly charming and sometimes tragically wrung-out Cusack.

The movie isn't perfect: The hairpiece Giamatti sports throughout is so unconvincing that the filmmakers ought to have found away to make a joke of it. But even when Pohlad puts a foot wrong, he does so in an interesting way. This isn't the kind of movie in which you expect to find a resonating allusion to "2001: A Space Odyssey," and yet there one is. And while I have to say it didn't quite work for me, I've



Director Bill Pohlad

got to give Pohlad credit for nerve. In any event, there's more than enough of real value in the movie in spite of that. Not just its content, but its bedrock belief in people, in spite of all the awful things people can do. This philosophy is also a big part of Wilson's music, a point that's brought home as the end titles roll.

FILMCREDITS

LOVE & MERCY

(2014) Rated PG-13

Written by: Oren Moverman and Michael A. Lerner

Directed by: Bill Pohlad

CAST:
Paul Dano as Brian-Past
John Cusack as Brian-Future
Elizabeth Banks as Melinda
Ledbetter

Running time: 121 minutes

Print courtesy:
Swank Motion Pictures

The result is a story that's hair-raisingly watchable and frequently moving, regardless of what you believe you might already know of Wilson's life.

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SATURDAY 9PM

Blow Out

De Palma's film provides an original take on classic thrillers

By Roger Ebert | Jan. 1, 1981

There are times when "Blow Out" resembles recent American history trapped in the "Twilight Zone." Episodes are hauntingly familiar, and yet seem slightly askew. What if the "grassy knoll" recordings from the police radio in Dallas had been crossed with Chappaquiddick and linked to Watergate? What if Jack Ruby had been a private eye specializing in divorce cases? What if Abraham Zapruder — the man who took the home movies of President John F. Kennedy's death — had been a sound-effects man? And what if Judith Exner — remember her? — had been working with Ruby? These are some of the inspirations out of which Brian De Palma constructs "Blow Out," a movie which continues his practice of making cross-references to other movies, other directors, and actual historical events, and which nevertheless is his best and most original work.

The title itself, of course, reminds us of "Blow-Up," the 1966 film by Michelangelo Antonioni in which a

photographer saw, or thought he saw, a murder — and went mad while obsessively analyzing his photographs of the "crime." Was there a dead body to be found on that fuzzy negative? Was there even such a thing as reality? In "Blow Out," John Travolta plays the character who confronts these questions. He's a sound man for a sleazy Philadelphia B-movie factory. He works on cheap, cynical exploitation films. Late one night, while he's standing on a bridge recording owls and other night sounds, he becomes a witness to an accident. A car has a blowout, swerves off a bridge, and plunges into a river. Travolta plunges in after it, rescues a girl inside (Nancy Allen), and later discovers that the car's drowned driver was a potential presidential candidate. Still later, reviewing his sound recording of the event, Travolta becomes convinced that he can hear a gunshot just before the blowout. Was the accident actually murder? He traces down Nancy Allen, discovers



Nancy Allen plays Sally, the lead female role in "Blow Out," starring John Travolta.

that she was part of a blackmail plot against the candidate, and then comes across the trail of a slimy private eye (Dennis Franz) who wanted to cause a blowout, all right, but didn't figure on anybody getting killed.

The plot thickens beautifully. De Palma doesn't have just a handful of ideas to spin out to feature length. He has an abundance. We meet a gallery of violent characters, including Burke (John Lithgow), a dirty-tricks specialist who seems inspired by G. Gordon Liddy. The original crime is complicated by a series of other murders, designed to lay a false trail and throw the police off the scent of political conspiracy.

Meanwhile, the Travolta character digs deeper. For him, it's a matter of competence, of personal pride. Arguing with a cop about his tapes, Travolta denies that he's just imagining things: "I'm a sound man!" He stumbles across a series of photos of the fatal accident. In a brilliantly crafted sequence, we follow every step as he assembles the film and his recording into a movie of the event, doggedly extracting what seem to be facts from what looks like chaos.

De Palma's visual images in "Blow Out" invite comparison to many Alfred Hitchcock films, and indeed De Palma invited such comparisons when the posters for "Dressed to Kill" described him as "Master of the

Macabre." In "Blow Out" there are such Hitchcock hallmarks as a shower scene (played this time for laughs rather than for the chills of "Dressed to Kill"), several grisly murders in unexpected surroundings, violence in public places, and a chase through Philadelphia on the anniversary of the ringing of the Liberty Bell. This last extended chase sequence reminds us of two Hitchcock strategies: His juxtaposition of patriotic images and espionage, as in "North by Northwest" and "Saboteur," and his desperate chases through uncaring crowds, reminders of "Foreign Correspondent" and "Strangers on a Train."

But "Blow Out" stands by itself. It reminds us of the violence of "Dressed to Kill," the startling images of "The Fury," the clouded identities

of "Sisters," the uncertainty of historical "facts" from "Obsession," and it ends with the bleak nihilism of "Carrie." But it moves beyond those films, because this time De Palma is more successful than ever before at populating his plot with three-dimensional characters. We believe in the reality of the people played by John Travolta, Nancy Allen, John Lithgow and Dennis Franz. They have all the little tics and eccentricities of life. And although they're caught in the mesh of a labyrinthine conspiracy, they behave as people probably would behave in such circumstances — they're not pawns of the plot.

Best of all, this movie is inhabited by a real cinematic intelligence. The audience isn't condescended to. In sequences like the one in which Travolta



Actress Nancy Allen is one of this year's festival guests.

reconstructs a film and sound record of the accident, we're challenged and stimulated: We share the excitement of figuring out how things develop and unfold, when so often the movies only leave us as passive witnesses.

FILMCREDITS

BLOW OUT

(1981) Rated R

Written and directed by
Brian De Palma

CAST:

John Travolta as Jack
Nancy Allen as Sally
John Lithgow as Burke
Dennis Franz as Manny

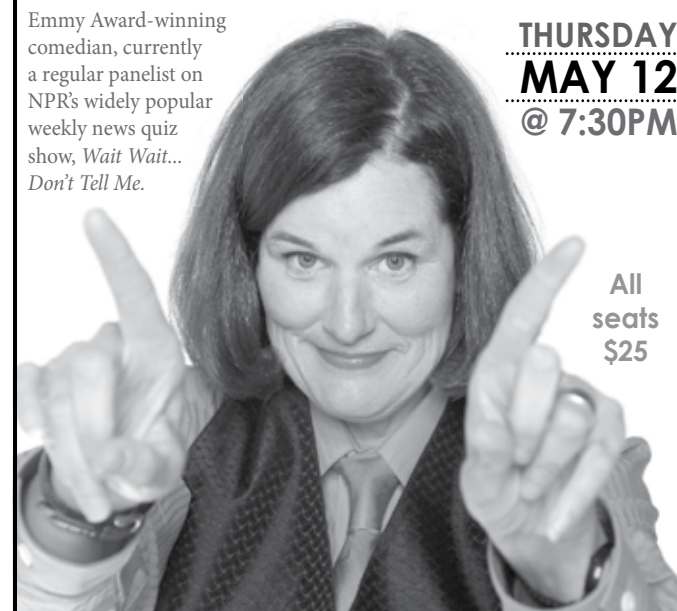
Running time: 108 minutes

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Body and Soul

1925 silent film comes together with new jazz score

By Chaz Ebert | Sept. 23, 2015

Editor’s note: The following article’s introduction has been updated.

Fans of silent cinema in Chicago have a treat in store for them. Trailblazing filmmaker Oscar Micheaux’s 1925 silent feature “Body and Soul” will screen with a live orchestra performing a brand new jazz score by composer Renee Baker, as part of the Black World Cinema Film Series. This film marks the debut of actor Paul Robeson, best known for his unforgettable performance of “Ol’ Man River” in 1936’s “Showboat.” He stars in a dual role as a wicked preacher and his righteous brother, two ideologically opposed siblings whose rivalry reaches its peak once they set their sights on a particularly lovely member of the congregation.



Portrait of composer Renee Baker

I spoke with Baker as well as Black World Cinema curator Floyd Webb for this exclusive two-part interview.

PART I: CONVERSATION WITH FLOYD WEBB

How did this screening come about?

I have always loved silent film. When I was a child living in the Ickes Projects, they were plentiful on WTTW and even WGN. It (led to) my first real curiosity regarding film as artistic expression — no sound, but lots of emotion in movement and gesture, in music and editing and human expressions. As I watched foreign films on WTTW, I noticed how the Italian Neo-Realists continued to use silent film techniques within sound films. African-American John

I have always loved silent film. When I was a child living in the Ickes Projects, they were plentiful on WTTW and even WGN.

Kitzmiller played a role in the film “Senza Pietà” (1948), partly written by Fellini, and the music in that film (that accompanies) his love affair with an Italian girl haunts me to this day.

I went to the Association for the AACM (Association of Advancement of Creative Musicians) School of Music and have known a lot of the AACM members since the late 1970s. It was during my association with composers like Edward Wilkerson that I started thinking about doing programs like this in the mid-1980s. I was directing the Blacklight International Film Festival in partnership with Richard Pena, who was then head of the Film Center of the Art Institute. “Within Our Gates” had recently been found in the Spanish Film Archives. It took several years, but I, with Richard’s help, finally obtained a copy when it was placed with the Library of Congress. My friend Edward Wilkerson had a dynamic Octet called 8 Bold Souls and I asked him to write the track and to feel free to improvise their tails off within the composition. I

wanted something different. “Within Our Gates” returned to Chicago for the first time in 70 years at the Film Center on Columbus Drive before a sold out audience in 1991.

A few years ago, I was working with the Great Black Music Project’s director, the late Godfrey Mason. We had contracted Nicole Mitchell to do a track for Micheaux’s Body and Soul. I have done visualizations for Nicole’s compositions, one was for her project Xenogenesis Suite: A Tribute to Octavia Butler. Nicole was too busy and she directed me to Renee Baker, who was rehearsing the Chicago Symphony and working with the Chicago Modern Orchestra Project.

We have two more projects planned. She is going to score Micheaux’s lesser known “Symbol of the Unconquered” and help me with a personal project utilizing Renoir silent film, “Sur Air un de Charleston” (1928).

Who decided to add the Chicago Modern Orchestra to accompany the film?

Renee Baker brought the Chicago Modern Orchestra

Project. She essentially did the score for “Body and Soul” as part of a (AACM) School (of Music) project. I only expected a recording!

Can you give us a bit more info about the orchestra? Will this be a silent film series/ orchestra series? Or just one event?

I would like to do this as often as possible. Edward Wilkerson and bassist/filmmaker Tatsu Aoki have been doing silent Japanese films. One of my former employers, Nitin Sawhney, did a score for “A Throw of Dice” with the British Film Institute. It toured and even came here to Millennium Park. These are worthy projects to pursue. And a lot of people I know have a love and interest in how to explore contemporary music and arts to re-explore silent film.

I have been talking to Edward and Tatsu about doing the silent Chinese Wuxia (martial arts) film “Red Heroine,” if I can get permission. I am going to always do this when I can. I love it. It is part of my essential PERSONAL film history.

What is the importance of holding it at the Studio Movie Grill, SMG, Chatham theater?

I have been doing the Black World Cinema series at Chatham since May 2005. I stopped doing the Blacklight Film Festival in 1994, I think. The Blacklight Film Festival of International Cinema was a rare event taking place from 1982 to 1995.

The audiences love to engage in compelling conversation after the films. These dialogues are just as important to them as seeing the film.



Paul Robeson starts as Rev. Isaiah T. Jenkins, as well as Jenkins’ brother, Sylvester in the 1925 silent film “Body and Soul.”

My mate and I had a kid and festivals are not money-makers. Our funding was not steady and I really sort of “just did it.” I knew Richard Pena at the Film Center, Brenda Webb and Joh Hoffman at Chicago Filmmakers when it was on Hubbard Street where I volunteered as a projectionist and made my own film. They helped me create the festival.

After 12 grueling years. I walked away from it and ended up in the U.K. working for a 3-D animation and multimedia company with David Allen, a former producer of The Cure and for fine artist David McKean on his early films for Neil Gaiman’s “Mr. Punch” DVD, and his own “The Week Before,”

shot prior to him directing “Mirrormask” for Sony.

I was asked by Alisa Starks, who then owned the theater, to do Black World Cinema there because the community wanted to see the films I screened at Blacklight. We opened to large audiences. I think it is important to maintain my relationship at Chatham with the new owners, Studio Movie Grill, and keep bringing programs like this to the South outside of the usual formal institutions.

The audiences love to engage in compelling conversation after the films. These dialogues are just as important to them as seeing the film. They come armed with notebooks seeking references for what they have seen. They love the films I show. So do I.

PART II: WORDS FROM RENEE BAKER

The screening came about when I contacted Floyd Webb about additional screening

FILMCREDITS

BODY AND SOUL

(1925) Not Rated

Written and directed by Oscar Micheaux

CAST:
Paul Robeson as Rev. Isaiah T. Jenkins and as Jenkins’ brother Sylvester
Marshall Rogers as Speakeasy proprietor
Lawrence Chenault as Yello-Curley’ Hinds

Running time: 102 minutes

Print courtesy: Dirigent Media

opportunities for my recently finished/produced score for “Body and Soul.” I am a composer and also a music director of a full symphony in Chicago, the Chicago Modern Orchestra Project. My producer, Don DiNicola, had heard some of my music and suggested that we collaborate on this project.

I happen to be an African-American woman with a full orchestra that I formed in 2010. After marrying the music to this marvelous film, we discovered that we had given BNS (“Body and Soul”) what amounts to musical dialogue. So our approach was quite unique, giving voices to the characters and allowing them to establish sonic dialogues.

I premiered BNS in April 2015 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago as part of their Creative Music Summit 2015

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Body and Soul

continued from page 75

and as I happen to also be an AACM composer, I have a rich lineage to pull from — Muhal Richard Abrams, George Lewis, Henry Threadgill, Roscoe Mitchell, the Art Ensemble of Chicago. My large symphony, CMOP, is my answer to the third stream genre uniting the idioms of classical music, creative avant garde stylings and jazz.

Producer Don DiNicola and I have produced two creative works with BNS. One is the DVD we released independently on July 1 of a newly crafted score composed by me and performed by CMOP. That score has been married to the film and this new project with BNS involves a newly funded project

by New Music USA for the live full orchestra scoring and performance. This performance will take place on October 1 with the new score. There is only one performance scheduled with the full orchestra as of this moment.

So, an African-American woman with a full symphony decides to become a film composer, attracts (the) interest of producer Don DiNicola as mentor/collaborator/partner and off we go. Chicago Modern Orchestra Project is a marvelous vehicle to have and my backstory is that as an AA (African-American) composer, I was not going to wait for others to perform my music. So

My backstory is that as an AA (African-American) composer, I was not going to wait for others to perform my music.

along with many other small ensembles, I formed CMOP. Success is coming — I've had works premiered by Chicago Sinfonietta at Symphony Center and am currently working with orchestras and ensembles all over the country. I have also formed my chamber ensemble, PEK Contemporary Project, abroad in Berlin. CMOP has performed primarily in the Chicago area, but I have performed, and still do so, all

over the world.

I encountered Floyd Webb as a film producer but knew of his affiliation with Black World Cinema, so I asked for an opportunity to expose Chicago audiences to my and the orchestra's work. Ironically, about four years back, Floyd approached me about scoring BNS with him, but the project never materialized.

I know in this day it is easier to score and produce music

with electronic samples, but when you have an orchestra at your disposal, I decided that using live accompaniment was the more ideal goal. Originally I was going to present the version of the movie that we produced for DVD, but how often in the black community does one get to see and hear a Micheaux masterpiece with a live orchestra? Chatham 14 is uniquely situated in a community/neighborhood setting with reasonable admission so that families et al can be introduced to the history of black cinema, the oeuvre of Oscar Micheaux and the current/future work of (myself), Don DiNicola and CMOP.

Floyd Webb and I are planning to do "Symbol of the Unconquered" by Micheaux in the coming months. Ultimately I would like CMOP to produce scores for all discovered Micheaux films, possibly some Spencer Williams works and then branch out into other forgotten gems of the silent era. In January 2016, we are premiering "A Page of Madness" with my original score performed by CMOP at Dominican University.

The stand-out part of this, for me, is that the formation of a symphony in this socioeconomic climate may have been a dream but the ensuing dream of the production of "Body and Soul" validates that decision.



Composer Renee Baker is one of this year's Ebertfest guests.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Renee Baker and The Chicago Modern Orchestra Project



Renee Baker (middle) accompanied by the Chicago Modern Orchestra Project, a world-renowned polystylistic orchestra that she directs and conducts.

The Chicago Modern Orchestra Project, CMOP, is a polystylistic orchestra that combines influences of classical music as well as the creative freedom of jazz. The CMOP is headed by founding music director and conductor Renee Baker.

Internationally renowned, the CMOP has been chosen to work as a featured ensemble with NewMusicUSA and the EarShot program of the American Composers Orchestra

Baker and the CMOP recently released a DVD of their newly composed score that accompanies the movie.

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Last year

A look back at the 2015 festival
Photos courtesy of Thompson-McClellan Photography



Festivalgoers watch the opening film "Goodbye to Language" at the 17th Annual Festival. 3-D glasses were graciously donated by Ebertfest projectionist James Bond.



"Goodbye to Language" actor Heloise Godet speaks on stage after her screening.



College of Media Dean Jan Slater welcomes everyone to the 17th Annual Ebertfest at the Opening Reception hosted by former University President Robert Easter and his wife, Cheryl.



Alloy Orchestra accompanies "The Son of the Sheik," a 1926 silent film following the tumultuous love story of young man and a dancer.



Festival Director Nate Kohn, Chaz Ebert and outgoing Associate Festival Director Mary Susan Britt on stage at the opening of the 17th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival.



Michael Barker of Sony Pictures Classics discusses the film "Wild Tales" with actress Julieta Zylberberg and casting director Javier Braier. The film was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the 87th Academy Awards.



The Roger Ebert sculpture outside the Virginia Theatre at the 17th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival. The sculpture was unveiled at the 2014 Festival as a tribute to Roger and Ebertfest.



Chaz Ebert presents director Alan Polsky with a Golden Thumb prior to discussing his directorial debut, "The Motel Life."



Producer Johan Carlsson laughs on stage after his screening of "A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence."



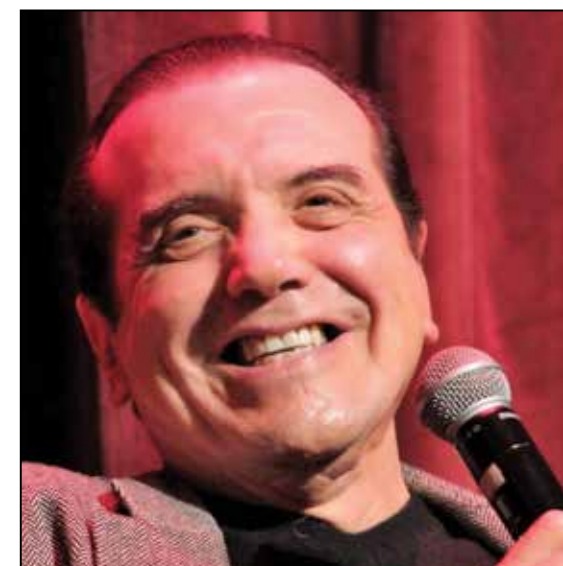
Actor Jason Segel discussing his role as respected American author David Foster Wallace in "The End of the Tour."



Director Ramin Bahrani (right) talks with actor Noah Lomax (left) after the screening of their film "99 Homes."



Director Godfrey Cheshire of "Moving Midway" moderates a critics panel at the Pine Lounge in the Illini Union.



Actor Chazz Palminteri onstage after the screening of his crime film, "A Bronx Tale." Palminteri also wrote the film's screenplay.



World-renowned pianist Seymour Bernstein conducting an on-stage class with a University of Illinois Music student. Bernstein is also the subject of the documentary "Seymour: An Introduction."



Susan Wloszczyna, Glenn Kenny, Trevor Albert, Erica Ramis and Chaz Ebert speaking to the audience after "The Harold Ramis Tribute." The 17th Annual Roger Ebert's Film Festival was dedicated to Mr. Ramis.



Director Godfrey Cheshire (on stage) speaks to larger than life Dr. Robert Hinton via Skype projected on the 70-foot screen after the film "Moving Midway." The documentary explores the move of Cheshire's ancestral plantation.



Ebertfest guests enjoy Sunday brunch with Chaz Ebert, hosted by Steak 'n Shake, one of Roger's favorite restaurants.



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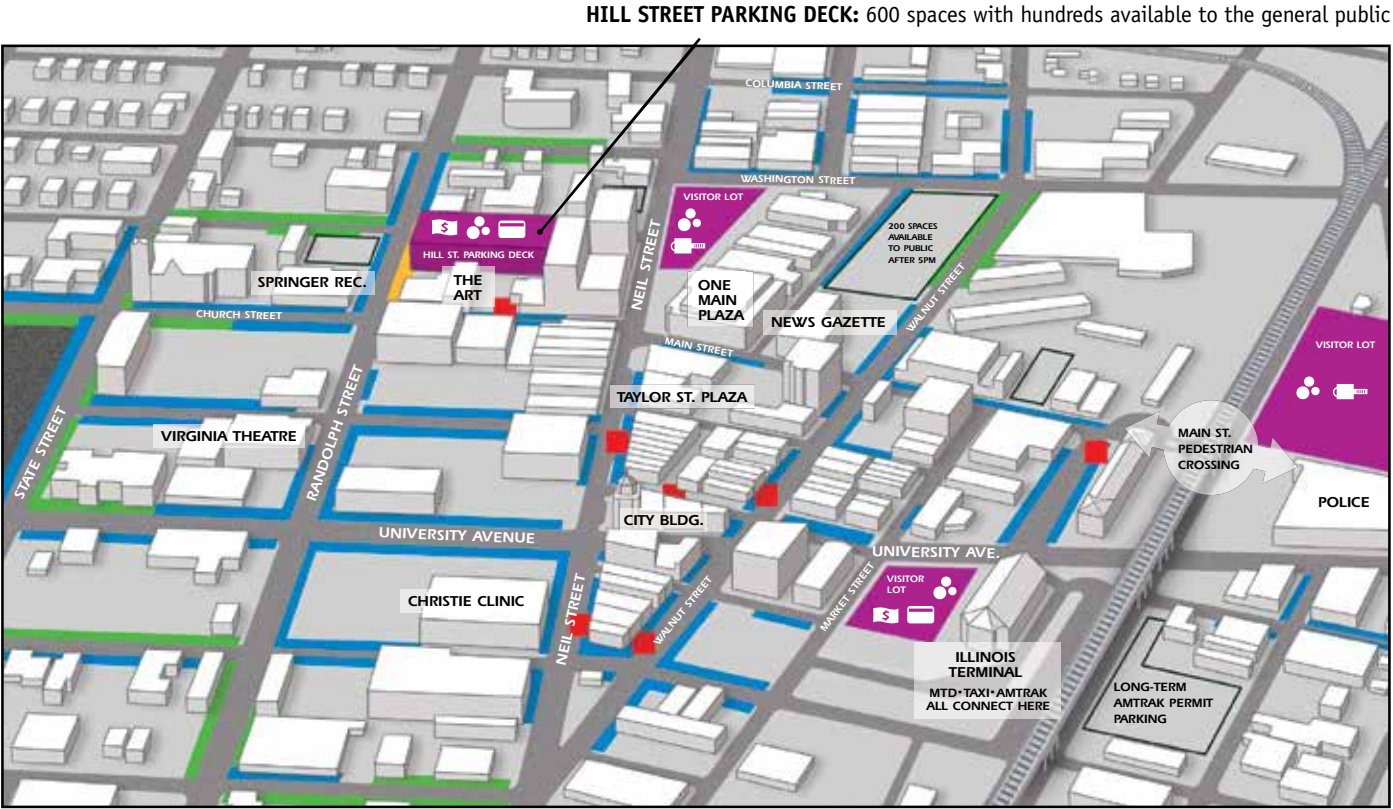
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In the spring of 2012, the Champaign Park District launched the largest renovation project yet for the Virginia Theatre since taking ownership of the historic facility in 2000. Major components of the project included restoration of the auditorium 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.

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