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**

**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.  #oscarsowhite: 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)
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FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2016
Disturbing the Peace (1 p.m.): 54
L’inhumaine (4 p.m.): 56
with The Alloy Orchestra
Eve’s Bayou (9 p.m.): 60

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2016
Force of Destiny (11 a.m.): 62
Radical Grace (2 p.m.): 66
Love & Mercy (4:30 p.m.): 70
Blow Out (9 p.m.): 72

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2016
Body and Soul (Noon): 74
with Renee Baker and the Chicago Modern Orchestra Project
Welcome to Ebertfest!

W ith 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 Harvey 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 joyfully sit next to Roger and give the Thumbs-Up! I am especially gratified 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 filmmaker Emmanuel Cortés to be rediscovered, including his 2006 masterpiece, “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 director, Steve Apek 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 “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 eases 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 crown-jewel portrait 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 who 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 eases comparison with the family dramas of Ingmar Bergman,” wrote Roger.

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Chaz Ebert, co-founder, producer and host of Ebertfest
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 his 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 rare accompaniment to Marcel L’Herbier’s staggering 1924 landmark, “L’Homme” (“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 Steaks ‘n Shake.

Rooze 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 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 G.B. 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-Sewitz, Sheila O’Malley, Brian Tallerico, Susan Wloszczyna, Matt Fagerholm, Nick Allen, Mark Dujsik, Angelica Jade Bastien, and Chuck Kopulski.

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 Jon Rater of the College of Media for their generous support.

I announced the start of the college’s first Ebertfest 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 Kate Kohout 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. Kate 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 Benton and his cheerful staff at the Virginia Theatre put out the welcome mat. The Champaign-Peoria District and the Champaign Police Department are always helpful. Betsy Hendrick throws her now-legendary Saturday night party. Where would we be without our valued projectionist James Bond, who maintains the highest 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 downtown 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 go to the Illinois 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 continued support.

Thank you to Leontine Advertising, who is our invaluable Webmaster at ebertfest.com; Carlton Broutt, who is responsible for the poster 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 Rays, 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 strangers when they meet.’

Thank you for honoring Roger’s memory
and for keeping his legacy alive.
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 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
University of Illinois Interim Chancellor

Let the lights dim and the reels spin, enjoy

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.

Jan Slater
Dean of the College of Media

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

Join the debate: Buy a ticket, find your seat

Movies — done right — have the power to bring people together, geographically and emotionally.
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 “Chirgunaute,” 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 Paul Robeson’s debut as an actor. “Body and Soul,” a film that marks Paul Robeson’s debut as an actor. “Body and Soul,” a film that marks Paul Robeson’s debut as an actor.

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

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 Gill Robertson and Shaw Edwards to our array of film critics and commentators. Both will participate in a morning panel on diversity in the entertainment industry in 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 finding 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, Dirgent 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 Stater, 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.
Wexler was a perfect guest this year, said Nate Kohn, festival director. What stood out to Kohn at the 2013 Ebertfest was how Wexler walked with his wife, Rita Taggart. After Wexler’s death, 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.

“When he was at the festival, he always walked around with a small digital 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.”

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

Chaz Ebert
**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

**Theatre Guidelines**

- Patrons may enter the theatre ONE HOUR prior to the FIRST screening of the day, with the YIP/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.
- 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.

**No Recording, Please**

Copyright law strictly prohibits the use of any type of unauthorized video or sound recording equipment.
PROUD SPONSOR OF THE 2016
ROGER EBERT’S FILM FESTIVAL
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 fellows as Ebert Fellows in Media Criticism.

Riane Lenzer-White

Because 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.

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Riane Lenzer-White

Ebert continues to assist University students through fellowships, center offering programming
Wether it’s mid-afternoon and you’re hungry, or it’s late night and you need a quick bite to eat, Champaign-Urbana has dining options for everyone. We greatly appreciate our generous restaurant sponsors and encourage you to join us in patronizing them, not only during the Festival but throughout the year. They are our subjective favorites among the many great restaurants in the Champaign-Urbana area.

For a more complete list, check out the Champaign-Urbana Dining Guide: visitchampaigncounty.org

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Dining tips

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Festival Restaurant Sponsors

- **Aroma Café**
  - arom-cafe.com
  - Aroma Café and Kitchen features organic coffee and a wide variety of sandwiches and wraps, as well as other tasty treats that make it easy to grab and go.
  - Hours: Monday through Friday 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 8 a.m.-10 p.m.
  - 118 N. Neil St., Champaign 217-356-3200

- **Big Grove Tavern**
  - biggrovetavern.com
  - Offering the very best in fresh Farm-to-Table New American Cuisine with a wide selection of house cocktails, Midwestern craft beers and carefully curated wines.
  - Kitchen Hours: Monday through Thursday 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5 p.m.-10 p.m., Friday 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and 5 p.m.-11 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 5 p.m.-11 p.m.
  - Bar menu is available all day, but kitchen closes between lunch and dinner hours.
  - 1 E. Main St., Champaign: We validate for the Hill Street parking deck. 217-239-3505

- **Columbia Street Roastery**
  - cocolfie.com
  - Coffee shop and wholesale restaurant offering whole bean coffee and loose leaf tea.
  - Hours: Monday through Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
  - 24 E. Columbia Ave., Champaign 217-352-8713

- **Cream & Flutter**
  - creamandflutter.com
  - Cupcakes, cakes, cookies, brownies, candies, ice cream, coffee, tea and bubbly drinks.
  - Hours: Monday through Thursday 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday and Saturday 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday 1 p.m.-8 p.m.
  - 114 N. Walnut St., Champaign 217-355-5400

- **Einstein Bros Bagels**
  - einsteinbros.com
  - Get bagels here! Einstein Bros Bagels — the best bagels, bagel sandwiches, breakfast sandwiches, coffee and espresso, salads and more.
  - 901 W. University Ave., Urbana 217-344-7520

- **Garlic’s Pizza In A Pan**
  - 313 N. Mattis Ave., Champaign 217-332-1222

- **Guido’s**
  - guidosbeber.com
  - Your bar and grill. Pool tables and dart boards.
  - Hours: 11 a.m.-2 a.m. daily.
  - Food served until midnight on weekdays and 1 a.m. on weekends.
  - 2 E. Main St., Champaign 217-359-3148

- **Jupiter’s Pizzeria & Billiards**
  - jupiterspizza.com
  - The place for “Cues and Brews,” if you choose to peruse. Jupiter’s offers the perfect formula for a good time: beer, pizza and billiards! We offer traditional thin crust pizza as well as gourmet specialty pizzas for the more adventurous.
  - Hours: Monday through Thursday 5 p.m.-9 p.m., Friday and Saturday 2 p.m.-midnight, Sunday and Saturday brunch 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
  - 122 N. Neil St., Champaign 217-398-9463

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Seven Saints

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

- **Miga**
  - miga-restaurant.com
  - Miga is a modern restaurant and bar lounge in Champaign serving American cuisine with Asian flair.
  - Hours: Monday through Thursday 5 p.m.-9 p.m., Friday through Saturday 5 p.m.-10 p.m., Sunday brunch 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
  - 301 N. Neil St., Champaign 217-398-1020

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V.Picasso

V.Picasso is a rustic wine bar featuring vintage on tap and farm-focused cuisine made with local ingredients, grown and raised for us by Willow Creek Farm.

- **V.Picasso**
  - vpicasso.com
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2016 Annual Roger Ebert’s Film Festival

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- **Saturday, May 21, 2016**
  - 8 a.m. - noon
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- **Saturday, October 15, 2016**
  - 8 a.m. - noon
  - **LOCATION:** Parkland College 2400 W. Bradley Ave., Champaign
  - **LIMIT OF 10 ITEMS PER HOUSEHOLD**
  - For a list of accepted items, visit: ci.champaign.il.us/recycling/electronics
The College of Media is proud to host the 18th Annual Roger Ebert’s Film Festival.

The College continues the work we started in 1927 providing outstanding media education and student experiences as we prepare the next generation of media professionals and scholars.

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 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 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

By Claire Hettinger, The Daily Illini

New assistant festival director tackles first Ebertfest, joins community effort
T he following are invited special guests for the festival. As always, their attendance is contingent on factors over which we have little control, such as unforeseen changes in their work schedule. But we hope that most, if not all, will be with us — plus additional surprise last-minute guests.

Everybody Wants Some!!

Tuesday, April 12, 7 p.m.
Free and open to the public
Feoalinger Auditorium, UI campus

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 Kumpan — which took home the SXSW® Audience Award in 2011. He was also instrumental in the films of Sacha Baron Cohen — working for several years on both Borat and The Dictator — each opening at the top box office positions. Prior to that he developed and produced TV comedies such as Showtime’s series Ed & Oz, with British comedian Marc Woot- ton, and NBC’s Action Show, starring members of Chicago’s famed Second City and 3d. His ex- perience is most certainly varied, having earned his master’s degree from the London School of Eco- nomics and undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois.

GLEN POWELL (actor) is becom- ing 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 Wildrick in Fox’s Ryan Murphy hit new show Scream Queens opposite Jamie Lee Curtis. He recently wrapped production on the D20 War drama Sand Castle, in which he plays Sgt. Fairly, 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 Decoit, with Anthony Hopkins and Natalie Dormer. He also has a lead role in Everybody Wants Some!, which is being referred to as the spiri- tual sequel to Richard Linklater’s cult classic Dazed And Confused. Powell co-starred in Expendedables 3 (2014) as an expert hacker and drone pilot. Powell was also seen in Russell Fren- denberg’s independent thriller, Wind Walkers. Other film credits include Sex Ed, Red Wing and the recently released Anchorman 2, starring Will Ferrell.

JUSTON STREET (actor) is one of Hollywood’s leading up-and-com- ing actors. Most recently, Street played his own father, legendary University of Texas quarterback Jamaal James, in Angelo Pizzo’s biographical sports drama film, My All-Americans. 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 independ- ent films Juvenile Prodigies and Deader Than Deacon.

A former professional base- ball pitcher, Street began his acting career studying at the State Theater School for Acting Training. He then joined a 2-year Wexler study, becoming a founding member of A Working Group at The Relache Studio in Austin. In his first theatrical pro- duction, 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 genera- tion 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-prodution Cronos, a supernatural horror film, which he directed and co-wrote 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 interna- tional awards, including eight Ariel Awards from the Mexican Academy of Films, 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 films of all time. In 2004, del Toro directed and co-wrote the action adventure sci-fi thriller Hellboy II: The Golden Army. del Toro also co-authored the comic book series based on the novels. Del Toro directed the first episode of Season 1 and is executive producer on the series, cur- rently 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 Trollhunt- ers (2015), a fantasy-adventure novel, which will be the basis for a del Toro-produced animated TV series. In 2013, Harper Design pub- lished Guillermo del Toro Cabinet of Curiosities, a lavishly illus- trated book containing notes, drawings and untold creatures.

continued on page 27
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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 Im Not, which starred Tophier 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, Grandmo, 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. Miando’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 Cheque Du Feval: The Hangover’s Assistant. Miando also served as executive producer on 3rd Good Company and Little Fockers, and on The Golden Compass, starring Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig.

A native of Buffalo, New York, Miando 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 1998 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 Jackie 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 Amusement and 80 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 Pandoro and the Flying Butcherman and then The African Queen, which started a working relationship with John Huston that endured for another 80 releases.

As a continuity girl, she continued on page 28
John Wayne: The Legend of the West. From his early days as a child actor and cowboy to his iconic roles in classics like The Searchers (1956) and True Grit (1969), Wayne carved out a legacy that continues to inspire new generations of actors. His enduring legacy is a testament to his talent and hard work, and his influence on Hollywood cannot be overstated.

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. She is the highest grossing independent film, Fear of a Black Hat, with Spike Lee's School Days; and gangster's film with Nicolas Cage. Lamon's first feature-length film, Eve's Bayou, was released in 2001 and has become one of the most critically acclaimed films. She received a special first-time director award.

L'humaine
Friday, April 15, 4 p.m.

ALLEY 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, AMPLS, the National Gallery of Art and others), the Alley 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 state-of-the-art electronics, the group generates beautiful music in a spectacular variety of styles. They can conjure up a simple German symphony or swept radio signals from Mars, or swept their famous "rack of junk" and state-of-the-art electronics, the group generates beautiful music in a spectacular variety of styles. They can conjure up a simple German symphony or swept radio signals from Mars, or swept
en/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, Lemons was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Salem State College in 1998. Currently, she is an associate arts professor at NFU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

Force of Destiny

Saturday, April 16, 11 a.m.

PAUL COX (director) is an author 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 individualist 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 as a deep humanist, a poignantly realist 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), exquisitely tender Terminal illness, a loving, aging, for which Sheila Florance won an AFI best actress award, and Innocence (2000), about the love affair between two captivagins. 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/ writer) lives in Chicago and 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 DoSomething nonprofit video award and the Salsa Labs 2012 Hull Tamale Award for outstanding campaign organizing. Rebecca is also an editor on Radical Grace.

NICOLE BERNARDO-REIS (producer) has produced TV series and films for a wide range of broadcast outlets including A&E, E/Style, HBO 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 nun 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) is already leaving a permanent mark in the music scene before she composed her first movie score. She toured with U2, Wayne, played bass for Snails Barkley, created music with indie bands the Animal Collective, Norah Jones, and St. Vincent, and has been profiled in the New York Times. Heather has performed on stage with a variety of artists, such as Bright Eyes, Montreal and Cat Power. An indie rocker at heart, she created music with indie bands and for her score to The Rambler, she composed her first movie score for Ebertfest 2012, directed by Craig Zobel.

FATHER MICHAEL PFLEGER is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1975. In 1981, at the age of 31, he became the youngest and only full pastor in the diocese when he was appointed Pastor of Saint Sabina Church. That same year he became the adoptive father of Beronti, a film composer, combining her skill 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 individualist 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 as a deep humanist, a poignantly realist 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).

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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 and acclaim, she starred in The Gladiators (1987) and Poltergeist II (1986). 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 Martin’s cimex 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 had a small but memorable role as Nurse Yamashita in the crime thriller Out of Sight (1998). She continued to work on low budget projects as Children of the Corn 666: Zoan’s Return (1999), Kiss Tidelines (2000) and Secret of the Andes (1999). In 2000, she was named Executive Director of the exARPK Cancer Support Center, which was founded by her long-time friend and Fox 4 hold Your Hand co-star, Wendie Jo Sperber. Of her work aswendie, she said: “That is what my life is dedicated to. I love it. 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

RENE BAKER is founding musical director and conductor of the internationally acclaimed CHICAGO MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT (CMOP), a poly stylistic organization that grew from the plumes of classical music as well as jazz. Baker is a member of the world-renowned collective association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), there are few barri- ers 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 compo- sition today.

An expert at ensemble development and training, Baker developed the Metra Blue Free Orchestra (Chicago), PKE Contemporary Project (Berlin), is the progenitor of Bluebelle Walkers/Bass Kollektiv/Twilight Struggles (Berlin), and has been involved in launching over 20 cutting-edge new music ensem- bles, including Tuntui, Wrinkled Liners, Chocolate Chip/Cassio, Red Chai Watch, FAQtet, Project Linen, Chocolate Chitlin’ Caucus, and Strings Attached. Baker has performed globally from Binhuis (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 not to get involved in various creative parameters in her work has led to commissions for the Chicago Sinfonietta, Berlin International Brass, PKE Contemporary Project, and DanceWright Project, among others. As an avid composer, she has self-published 6 graphic score novellas and has curated the scoring the silent Japanese film A Page of Madness.

As a disruptive force in composition, she has created a genre-defining language. She calls CCL/FLUOK (Cyper Conduct/Unscripted), which she has employed when working with numerous cutting-edge groups in Cologne, Berlin, Movies, London, Chicago, Portland (OR) and numerous ensem- bles. Another aspect of her composition skills is the develop- ment of her painted score explor- atory 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-

seemble comprovisation/improv- isation development.

Aspects of the art world per- mitted Baker’s work. Her perform- ance art work, Sunyata: Towards Absolute Emptiness, premiered at the JCC Manhattan Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago in May 2015, and her second scored works will be featured as part of MCA Chicago’s Sunyata premiere.

Baker has composed four op- eras, and is currently working on two film scores, having composed and released a new score for Oscar Micheaux’s masterwork Body And Soul (1924), 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 Micheaux, Spencer Wil- liams, and D.W. Griffith.

2016 Critics & Special Guests

NICK ALLEN is an assistant edi- tor at RogerEbert.com. He has been writing about film online since 2001, contributing to vari- ous publications including The Film Stage, Movie Mezzanine, Hol- lywoodChicago.com, The Scoopervolt Review, and RogerEbert.com. His film reviews can also be found in your local library’s recent copy of RogerEbert.com. He has been a member of the Chicago Film Critics Associa- tion since 2010. He can follow him on Twitter @nickallan_redx

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 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 Mike Leigh, 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 in 2015, he and Bernard were awarded the esteemed French Legion of Honor in acknowledgment for 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 Blvd, Room, Open Magazine and RogerEbert.com. She writes regularly for Variety. You can find her on Twitter @angeliacabastie and on her website madewom- enandmuse.com.

MARK DUSIK has been writing about film since 2001. He is a Love Local. He is also the sole writer, editor and publisher of Move Reviews. Mark was a staff writer/co- editor at The Chicago Magazine from 2007-2009. He is the print edition in 2008, has written reviews for various online publications, and currently contributes to Magnific’s Film Critic’s Association since 2006 and the Online Film Critics Society since 2002. He is a Love Local and writing about movies. Mark works as a Love Local. In 2010, Allen was named the grant writer of the arts, arts and human service sector, with experience in the fields of secondary education, the arts, arts and human services sector, with experience in the fields of secondary education.

SHAWN EDWARDS is a journalist, pop culture guru and TV and film producer. As a nationally re- gned film critic for Fox 4 News in Kansas City, Missouri, he has already numerous awards and on his website shawnmovies.com, including Best TV Film Critic twice by the LA Press Club’s Na- tional Entertainment Journalism Awards. Edwards, the co-founder of AAFTA (African American Film Critics Association), also created the Black Movie Series, 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 about the history of the Black film producer and on his website shawnmovies.com.

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• START USING WORDS THAT WORK

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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 (2011) 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 Filmsworks, her own independent film company.

Christine has written and/or directed numerous award-winning Nature 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 WH 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 Mikaelsen, 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 entertain ment news for 15 years. He is the managing editor of RogerEbert.com. In addition, he is the editor of Movieline’s annual TV escapist 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 worth-while without the support of his wife Lauren and 3 boys: Lucas, Miles, and Noah.

SUSAN WŁOSZCZYNA 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 of RogerEbert.com, does entertainment news for 15 years. He is the managing editor of RogerEbert.com. In addition, he is the editor of Movieline’s annual TV escapist 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 worth-while without the support of his wife Lauren and 3 boys: Lucas, Miles, and Noah.

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FREE SCREENING

Everybody Wants Some!!

Tuesday, April 12 | 7 p.m. | Foellinger Auditorium

This pre-festival screening will be on the University of Illinois campus and is free and open to the public.

Richard Linklater’s new film, "Everybody Wants Some!!," is being referred to as the spiritual sequel to his cult classic “Dazed and Confused.” The film centers on a rowdy group of college baseball players in 1980s Texas.

Tuesday, April 12 | 7 p.m. | Foellinger Auditorium

This pre-festival screening will be on the University of Illinois campus and is free and open to the public.

Actor Glen Powell stars as Finnegan in "Everybody Wants Some!!" and is one of this year’s Ebertfest guests.

Actor Juston Street stars as Jay Niles in "Everybody Wants Some!!" and is one of this year’s Ebertfest guests.

Executive Producer Stephen Feder will host the free screening of "Everybody Wants Some!!"

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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, Mary 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, his brain can come to life. 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 “Marbeth” (for example) to the audience in vicarious 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 her 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 beauis, and is busy writing a ghost story ("Shots 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 mysterious British brother and sister Thomas and Lucille Sharp (Tom Holland 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.

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As in “Pan’s Labyrinth,” emotions had to be big enough. Best of all though is (Guillermo del Toro’s) belief that “what terrifies him, terrifies others.” He’s right.

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 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 monstrosities (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 “Marbeth” (for example) to the audience in vicarious 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.

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Watchng del Toro’s films is a 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 declaims. 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.
"Grandma" is a modestly scaled character comedy-drama that winds up entertaining 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 gaminesque granddaughter suffered. Turning up at the only loss Elle has recently the viewer can infer, isn't the the shutting out of Olivia, in her house, she sits in a unpleasant to Olivia (Judy with a strong feminist cult "Grandma" opens with Tomlin's what lowered my expectations, gamut from mildly enjoyable to "Being Flynn," and "About Mystique." But Elle's politics films include "Admission," and Weitz, whose well-intentioned nearly in tears, and grateful for film a mild skeptic, and I left walked into a screening of the emotional force by the end. I

Sage and Elle in a 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 four 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 "trust" 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 a writer than the unfortunately-much-bruited "The End of the counterculture's rejection of material possessions. But no. The movie makes a point of evoking Elle's counterculture values the better 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.

The movie will attract controversy; it approaches women's self-determination without even the vaguest hint of apology.

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"I’d hire her on any paper I edited."

– Roger Ebert

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 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.

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 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 pouter 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 karoke 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 coffin 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 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 unsuited to hurry a requiem.

The town evokes the empty, lonely feeling you get when you make a last tour of a home you have just moved out of.
You could rely on a quiz, leave it to fate, or wait for a sign from the universe – but if you want to end up with a professional quality film, you’ll need to cast experienced talent. As a FREE resource, SAGindie guides filmmakers like you through the SAG-AFTRA signatory process so you can cast the talent you need, regardless of budget. Be Independent. Act Professional. sagindie.org

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April 13-17, 2016 • The Virginia Theatre
The Third Man

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 muck that Lime left behind. Calloway (Trevor Howard), the British officer in charge, bluntly says Lime was an evil man, and 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 Academy Award-winning cinematographer, Robert Krasker, also devised a reckless, unforgettable visual style. More shots, Reed insisted on, 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.

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:

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 ball porter (Paul Möhring) who tells Holly, “There was another man … a third man …” and the bony 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 (Wolfdi Hyde-White), the head of the discussion group, chatters about culture while smoothly maneuvering his mistresses out of sight through doors and up stairs.

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“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 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. Winkel insists on “VINKEll.” The name on Harry Lime’s tombstone is wrong, too.

The chase sequence in “The Third Man” is another joining of the right actions 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 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 kiss 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 continued on page 52

The Third Man

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

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

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 ball porter (Paul Möhring) who tells Holly, “There was another man … a third man …” and the bony 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 (Wolfdi Hyde-White), the head of the discussion group, chatters about culture while smoothly maneuvering his mistresses 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:

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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 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?

“The Third Man” reflects the optimism of Americans and the bone-weariness of Europe after the war.
Waging Peace

A crowd of Palestinians holding oversized 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.

Unauthorized 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 Pleasantsville, 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. 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 outrun. 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 changed on the same truth. And they knew it was good. And 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 can see the 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 powerful.

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 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 Jamal 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 guerrilla 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 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. She 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 unfortunat 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.
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." - Adolph Loos

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, can match its sheer stylistic and imaginative force. 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 idealistic young scientist (played by L’Herbier’s close friend and protegé 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).

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 toneless 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 56 years old, almost 30 years older than her delicate and androgynous protégé Jaque-Catelain. "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." 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 Albert 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 on his back amid the undulating black-and-white lines of the floor. He juggles, with his legs, a drum shaped painted in elongated black-and-white diamond patterns. Seen in an overhead shot, the even-shifting clash of one geometric form with another is compulsive, almost hypnotic. (Far more so than the question of which continued on page 58)

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE
The Alloy Orchestra

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 outful 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 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.

TERRY DONAHUE (junk percussion, accordion, musical saw, banjo)
KEN WINOCKER (director, junk percussion and clarinet)
ROGER MILLER (synthesizer, percussion)
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.\footnote{Alan Williams, Republic of Images: A History of French Filmmaking, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA & London, 1992, p. 105.} 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.” Wilde died a quarter of a century too early to see “L’inhumaine,” but his ghost would definitely have approved.

Endnotes
Friday 9PM

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 the film. This will not be a simple-minded story that happens in that summer of 1962, when Eve’s handsome, dashing father — a doctor and womanizer — took one 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 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 inside of a mental hospital and the gift of telling fortunes.

The story is told through the eyes of Eve Batiste, played with fierce truthfulness by Jurnee Smollett-Bell. 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 premier 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 unashaply 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 fishermen, and by the presence of a voodoo woman (Shiah Anne Carroll) whose magic may or may not be real. Certainly Aunt Mozelle’s gift of reading fortunes has 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 stranger (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 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.

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Force of Destiny

Cox’s film mirrors his personal journey with cancer


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. The vaccine late that year. The disease and received a liver transplant was an extraordinary experience and one that was too amazing to let go. I have a quite rare blood group and 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 Cannon 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. 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 madness that comes with cancer treatment. 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’re involved in the filmmaking process.

**RP:** How was living on the edge of the void, or 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” is 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 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 we can’t escape it.

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.

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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 love 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 in all of us. As Anne Frank said though to show the humanity approach. We were determined and a total lack of what sheer tenacity, madness in the early days came out — and it took me a long this morning makes me further realize how lucky I was to make 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.

RP: Continued from page 63
Radical Grace

Undervalued in Hollywood, female filmmakers prove worth

By Matt Foyeholm | 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 women filmmakers are criminally underrepresented in Hollywood, female filmmakers are criminally undermined by women. At a time when this year’s festival) directed by women should’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 in need. She asks, “identify as a spiritual seeker.” Parrish said that although she’s nonreligious, 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 filmmakers 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 their quest while watching “Angel of Light,” the 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 was 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 undertakes 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 grow 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 vicariously 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 him among the last people one would want to be headshooting 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

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

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.

66 18th Annual Roger Ebert’s Film Festival

Films of note: where to watch (Continued)

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

18th Annual Roger Ebert’s Film Festival

April 13-17, 2016 • The Virginia Theatre
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 unabridged “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 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.
The most heartening surprise about director Bill Pohlad’s “Love and Mercy” is also to my mind, a pretty impenetrable one. That is, that it’s such a good and at times better than good movie. The rise and fall and rise again of Brian Wilson, a life story that disproves Fitzgerald’s adage about there being no second rate actors to play Wilson … (although we soon see he’s got it in him), and that Wilson’s music. John Cusack’s landscapes he’s written are the words he’s written are as “Lonely/Frightened/Scared.”

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 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. 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 psychotic state that is not helped by an exposure to LSD. Cusack plays the Wilson of the late ‘60s, 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), chars a 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 intersect with scenes of the younger Wilson shrugging 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 hector him over joky 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 corals 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 summonness 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 wrong-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 it is. And while I have to say it didn’t quite work for me, I’ve 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.
**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 Lincoln 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 is convinced that he rescued 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 has heard a gunshot just before the 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. 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, Travolta photographs 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 “Obession,” 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 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 believe 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 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.

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**FILM CREDITS**

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 Harry

Running time: 108 minutes

Print courtesy: Park Circus, Inc.
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 Series. This film marks the debut of actor Paul Robeson, best known for his unforgettable performance of “Ol’ Man River” in 1935’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 when an Italian girl haunts me to this day.

Kitzmiller played a role in the film “Senza Pianta” (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-1990s. 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 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 Renée’s silent film, “San Un de Charlestown” (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/Filmaker Tatsu Aoki have been doing silent Japanese films. One of my former employers, Mitz 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, OMG, 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, being place from 1982 to 1995.

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 know 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 member of their film center. 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.

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PART II: WORDS FROM RENEE BAKER

The screening came about when I contacted Floyd Webb about additional screening opportunities for my recently finished composed 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, Jen Birkola, 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 continued on page 76

FILM CREDITS

1925 Not Rated

CAST:
Paul Robeson as Rev. Isaiah T. Jenkins, as Jenkins’ brother Sylvester
Marshall Rogers as Sylvester’s brother
Sylvester
Kirk Montgomery as the Chicago Modern Orchestra

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

Print courtesy: Dirigid Media
Body and Soul
continued from page 75

and as I happen to also be an AACN composer, I have a rich lineage to pull from — Muhlu 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 on the orchestra’s work. Ironically, about four years back, Floyd approached me about scoring with BNS with him, but the project never materialized.

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 with 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.

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

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE
Renee Baker and The Chicago Modern Orchestra Project

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.  "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.
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.

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

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.

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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."

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

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

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

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.

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

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All Q&A sessions and panel discussions will be streamed live at www.ebertfest.com and on the Ebertfest Facebook Fan Page April 13-17, 2016 • The Virginia Theatre
Thanks to those who made the 2016 festival possible

FESTIVAL GUESTS
Angela Allen  
Nancy Allen  
Nick Allen  
Alloy Orchestra  
Chen Alon  
Stephan Apkon  
Renee Baker  
Michael Barrie  
Angelica Jade Bastién  
Nicole Bernardi-Reis  
Chicago Modern Orchestra  
Project  
Paul Cox  
Guillermo del Toro  
Mark Duplass  
Shawn Edwards  
Matt Fagerholm  
Stephen Feder  
Marcha Hale  
Sulaiman Khazbi  
Chuck Kopilinski  
Kasi Lemmons  
Leonard Maltin  
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All Q&A sessions and panel discussions will be streamed live at www.cebtrift.com and on the Chambertin Facebook Page.
April 13-17, 2016 • The Virginia Theatre

All downtown parking meters accept CashKeys. For more information, call 217.402.7040 or visit getdownchampaign.com.
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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