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MUSIC MAN BACK TO WINDSOR
AFTER HOLLYWOOD RENOWN



Christopher Plummer and Susan Sarandon in Emotional Arithmetic by Seville.com Theatrical.



Former Windsorite Michael McNamara directed and co-produced 100 Films and a Funeral.



Danny Glover stars in the heartrending Poor Boy's Game which uses boxing as a metaphor as it explores racial tensions in a Halifax community.



Low budget filmmaker Marshall Sfalcin gets a haircut from his grandmother in The Rise and Fall of the Grumpy Burger, co-produced and directed by Windsor's Matt Gallagher.

TWO THUMBS UP

For Windsor's 3rd Annual International Film Festival

STORY BY LORI NEWTON

Love film? Does the thought of sitting in the dark for hours on end watching great films from around the world leave you with a feeling of excitement?

Then whatever you do, don't miss the 2007 installment of the Windsor International Film Festival coming our way November 6th to 11th. This is your opportunity to see films which rarely, if ever, make it this far down the 401; films that promise to amuse, entertain, shock, and challenge audiences to think outside the Hollywood box. WIFF's Executive Director Debi Croucher is excited about the fabulous lineup of great films slated for this year's festival.

"Windsor will be the international destination for film lovers, offering spectacular screenings and numerous receptions geared to all ages and interests."

This year marks the third time around for Windsor's fledgling International Film Festival and once again, organizers have raised the bar by expanding the length of the event to six days and offering more than 20 independent films including features, documentaries and animation films from Canada and around the globe. Screenings will be offered at four local venues: the Windsor Armouries, the Palace Cinemas and the Art Gallery of Windsor downtown, and the Lakeshore Cinemas in the former St. Clair Beach. As always, the lineup runs the gamut from avant-garde artsy films and dramas that will break your heart to small, charming stories that will surprise and delight.

Whatever your taste when you head out to the movies, you will find something out of the ordinary to enjoy.

New this year is an educational component that will be offered mid week as WIFF travels to local classrooms to introduce students to the cinematic arts in partnership with Reel Canada. Students will enjoy an opportunity to check out Canadian feature films,

documentaries and animated programs and chat with special guests including actors, directors, writers, and producers who will be visiting and engaging students and their teachers in discussion groups to illustrate the range and depth of Canadian film.

Franco-Ontarian culture will also be highlighted and celebrated during the week through another initiative called Le Volet Québécois, which will bring the talents of renowned and emerging French Canadian directors, filmmakers and industry professionals to the classroom where they will run full day film related programming for students.

For everyone else, the most anticipated highlight of the festival is the opening night gala and premiere screening that are absolute must attend events to begin a week-end filled with great filmgoing. The films chosen for the two previous gala evening screenings.....Deepa Mehta's Water in 2005 and Snowcave in 2006.....were both acclaimed and award winning films that enjoyed rave reviews and passionate audience followings.


Debi Croucher believes that this year's exciting gala night offering will be just as popular with festival goers. Poor Boy's Game is director Clement Virgo's sixth feature film which explores the challenges of the unspoken racial tensions that underlie our society. The film stars Danny Glover and is set in Halifax, where tough white kid Donnie "Decker" Rose (Rossif Sutherland) confesses to the horrific beating of a black teen who was left severely disabled. When Donnie returns home after a traumatic stay in prison, he finds his community divided as his family and friends celebrate his release from prison and others, especially within Halifax's predominantly African-Canadian community, react with demands for revenge. Like so many of the films chosen for the festival, Poor Man's Game promises a riveting and thought provoking experience.

Other titles joining the roster for this year's Festival include Persepolis, The Bodybuilder and I, A Stone's Throw, When Did You Last See Your Father, Weirdsville, The Union, Breakfast with Scot, Bluff, Amal, Sweet Mud, A Killer of Sheep, and Emotional Arithmetic, which was the closing film for the Toronto Film Festival and stars Christopher Plummer and Susan Sarandon.

The introduction of a local component to the Festival is a much anticipated .

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addition, and two films by local filmmakers will be screened. The Rise and Fall of the Grumpy Burger, directed and co-produced by Windsor native Matt Gallagher, is a crazy ride of a film that is funny (although not laugh out loud funny) and eccentric enough to become a cult classic. Filmed here in Windsor, this "mockumentary" brings us into the messy world of low budget filmmaker Marshall Sfalcin, who dreams of making a "serious" movie documenting the rise and fall of his grandfather's fast food restaurant, the Hi Ho which, he claims, is the world's first fast food outlet.

Alas, there is no money; only a cast of local amateurs and a family that refuses to cooperate with this hard working guy who doggedly persists in fighting the personal demons that plague him as he pursues his dream. What the audience gets is a candid look into the life of a young filmmaker as he desperately tries to overcome self doubt and avoid the failure that remains inevitable.

The second local offering is 100 Films and a Funeral, directed by hometown writer, director, producer and filmmaker Michael McNamara, son of poet Eugene McNamara. This documentary profiles the rise and fall of Michael Kuhn's Polygram Filmed Entertainment Pictures, the British studio that brought us 4 Weddings and a Funeral, The Usual Suspects and Trainpotting. As company CEO, Kuhn had a vision of challenging Hollywood's predominance over the international motion picture industry and for a while he was wildly successful. He operated Polygram like a record company giving artists total control over their work and offering several niche labels, a concept that was a major phenomenon until 1999 when the company folded. The film maintains a sense of humour and features Jodie Foster and Alan Parker as themselves.

Don't let another year of fabulous Festival parties and film screenings pass you by. Check out the full program of exciting events that will be listed online by October 25th at www.windsorfilmfestival.ca. You can sign up for WIFF Alerts any time and receive email updates with the latest scoop on exciting Festival news and notable event dates. Or, join the Windsor International Film Festival group on www.facebook.com.

With a rich program offering a variety of engaging film for everyone, and right here on our own doorstep, this promises to be an intriguing festival.

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