



April 20, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject: Detailed D.C. ASL Film Festival Schedule Now Posted

Website: www.ASLFilmFestival.com

Festival Dates: Friday to Sunday, May 1-3, 2009

Washington, D.C. - The D.C. ASL Film Festival, which began last year 2008 as the DCAD Film Festival, is the premier showcase of deaf-related films. Now in its 2nd year, the Festival has exploded from its humble origins into one of the largest of its kind; through three days of the Festival, attendees will get to feast their eyes with over 50 films.

The complete schedule of films is now available at www.ASLFilmFestival.com. Ticket information is also available. It is recommended that attendees buy their tickets ahead of time at the discounted rate to ensure your seat.

With films spanning from around the world, the Festival is categorized into four major themes: "Reel Poetic Justice," "Reel International," "Reel North American," and "Reel D.C. and Youth."

The first day of the Festival opens with the "Reel Poetic Justice" segment, starting with "The Heart of the Hydrogen Jukebox," a feature film that chronicles the evolution of ASL poetry from the beginnings of deaf poets experimenting with the translation of written English poems into ASL renditions by Malz, Panara, and Bragg, to the realization that original poetry could be created in ASL. This led to works by famous ASL poets such as Ella Mae Lentz, Clayton Valli, and Peter Cook. Never-before-seen live performances are also included.

Attendees will also get to see other forms of sign language poetry in various films, including "Bewogen" (Motioning) from Sweden. In this film, poets Wim Emmerik and Giselle Meyer present the visual power of poetry in sign language in their five innovative shorts.

The first day of the 2nd D.C. ASL Film Festival wraps up with the showing of "The Deaf Family," a Mosdeux feature film in its rarely seen uncut format as a light-hearted family sitcom about a dysfunctional deaf family going through trials and tribulations.

The 2nd Day of the Festival "Reel International" gives this Festival its international flair with a line-up of exceptional films. Some select films include "Alice and the Aurifactor" from Germany as a

(more)

mind-bending expressionist fairy tale about a Deaf Alice who saves the land of the deaf from an evil sorcerer that transforms people into hearing mutants.

Another film from South Africa, “The Rubbish Monster,” is a CGI animation masterpiece set in a littered squatter camp where all the litter in the area suddenly transforms into a giant garbage monster, which proceeds to attack the locals. The filmmaker who made this film followed up with another animation, “Sipho the Lion,” that helped South Africa win the 16th World Federation of the Deaf 2011 bid.

The Israeli feature film, “Voices From El-Sayed” brings audiences into the heart of the picturesque Negev desert into the Bedouin village of El-Sayed, believed to be home to one of the largest percentages of deaf people in the world. Through generations, a unique sign language has evolved, making it the most popular language in this rare society that accepts deafness as natural as life itself. This film chronicles how the village’s tranquility is interrupted by a father’s decision to change his deaf son’s fate and give him a cochlear implant, allowing him to hear sounds.

The day concludes with an American award winning feature film, “See What I’m Saying.” This award-winning film follows the journey of four deaf entertainers through a single year as their stories intertwine and culminate in some of the largest events of their lives. Bob, a drummer in the world’s only deaf rock band, Beethoven’s Nightmare, produces the largest show in the band’s 30-year history; C.J., a comic famous around the world but unknown to hearing people, fights to cross over to mainstream audiences by producing the first International Sign Language Theatre Festival in Los Angeles; Robert, a brilliant actor who teaches at Julliard, struggles to survive when he becomes homeless; and T.L., a hard-of-hearing singer is caught between two worlds when she produces her first CD, “Not Enough.”

A private filmmaker’s reception will follow. This event is for filmmakers whose films were accepted for this festival and attendees who buy the combo ticket that includes admission to the filmmaker’s reception.

The third and last day of the D.C. ASL Film Festival will have two theatres open: “Reel North American” and “Reel D.C. and Youth.”

“Reel North American” shares several short films that include “The Blue Box,” an exciting thriller about a wife who finds herself being charged with the murder of her husband. However, she doesn’t remember becoming a widow. A detective, doctor and an interpreter attempt to help Lisa restore the memory of the death of her husband and the Blue Box, which may contain the key to proving her innocence. The suspense of her journey in discovering her lost memories may endanger her life.

Other films not to be missed include “Discovering: Shuktara.” This is the remarkable story of 18 boys and girls in Kolkata, India, who were given a new chance at life after being abandoned by their families or escaping abusive homes. While many non-government organizations (NGOs) in India often overlook homeless children who are deaf or have a disability, Shuktara embraces them. “Before they were written off as incapable of learning, developing as individuals or integrating into society,” says Shuktara Founder, David Earp. “Now, the boys and girls grow in every sense – physically, in confidence, in skills, in communication.” Shuktara is a home filled with love that seeps into your heart. Instead of being reckless, aggressive and angry, these kids show affection, gratitude, and support for each other. They have created a family of their own.

(more)

“Reel D.C. and Youth” will be showing a variety of films made by students at Kendall Elementary School, Model Secondary School for the Deaf as well as Gallaudet University undergraduate films. The festival is excited to also include a variety of works from graduate students from both Gallaudet and within the greater DC area, as well as films from DC locals.

Sunday’s dual programming will conclude with the feature film “The Legend of the Mountain Man.” Set in picturesque Montana, features a typical, dysfunctional family of five. The father, who has been at odds with his parents for many years, decides to send his three children to his parents’ ranch for the summer. The children unexpectedly encounter a creature, one that has never been seen nor recorded in history books. Viewers accompany the children on a heartwarming journey as they navigate the family’s past and try to reconcile some of the estranged family members.

An awards ceremony and a public reception will close out the festival. The festival will start accepting film submissions for the 2010 Festival later this summer.

To see a complete list of films and up-to-date schedule of three days of films and how to purchase tickets on the D.C. ASL Film Festival, visit the website at www.ASLFilmFestival.com.

To obtain more information, please contact Director and Event Co-Chairperson Alexander Zernovoj at ASLFilm@dcdeaf.org.

Note: The District of Columbia Association of the Deaf (DCAD) is the official host of this D.C. ASL Film Festival. This Festival is not affiliated or related to Gallaudet University's WORLDEAF Cinema Festival in any way or form.

###