



## NEWS RELEASE

### 12th Stony Brook Film Festival, July 19-28, Presents Cinephiles with a Satisfying Ten Days

Contact: Julie Rulon Greene, (631) 632-7233  
julie@stonybrookfilmfestival.com

For photos:  
[http://staller4.staller.sunysb.edu/2007\\_Stony\\_Brook\\_Film\\_Festival/](http://staller4.staller.sunysb.edu/2007_Stony_Brook_Film_Festival/)  
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Updated July 5, 2007, Stony Brook, NY -- The 12th Annual Stony Brook Film Festival opens on Thursday, July 19 with ten days of new independent features, documentaries, and shorts screened in the Main Theatre of Staller Center for the Arts at Stony Brook University, Long Island, NY. Among the many firsts at Stony Brook this year are Ghyslaine Côté's *A Family Secret* and Douglas Horn's *Entry Level*. The two U.S. Premieres are from filmmakers who have won awards at Stony Brook in the past. Both directors will be on hand for the screenings and many directors and actors are expected throughout the Festival. Christopher Plummer is expected on Monday, July 23, for the screening of Michael Schroeder's *Man in the Chair* in which he stars.

Opening Night features Ghyslaine Côté's *A Family Secret*, (*Le Secret de ma mère*), a satiric French-Canadian comedy screening on July 19. Ms. Côté returns to Stony Brook for the third time. Her short film shown in 2000, *Meanwhile*, won the Festival Grand Prize (winning highest marks from both audience and jury). *The Five of Us* (*Elles Étaient Cinq*), a dramatic feature shown in 2005, was the Closing Night film and received recognition for Excellence in Directing. *A Family Secret* is one of five Canadian films screening at this year's festival. Ms. Coté will be accompanied by Ginnette Reno,

an actress in the film who is also a renowned singer in Quebec (her generation's Celine Dion).

Another U.S. Premiere is *Entry Level*, a film by Douglas Horn screening on Saturday, July 21. *Entry Level* had its World Premiere at the International Emerging Talent Film Festival (IETFF) in Monte-Carlo. Doug Horn is returning to the Stony Brook Film Festival for the third time as well. His short, *Full Disclosure*, in last year's festival, was winner of Best Short, Audience Choice. D.B. Sweeney (*Memphis Belle*, *Garden of Stone*) stars in the film and plays a former chef starting over in Corporate America. Sweeney, originally from Long Island, was a star athlete who graduated from Shoreham-Wading River High School.

### **Esteemed Guests and Quality Line-up**

Invited guest Christopher Plummer is expected to attend *Man in the Chair* for his first public screening on Monday, July 23. Tony-nominated Mr. Plummer has been appearing on Broadway in "Inherit the Wind," so he was unable attend the film's west coast premiere. Stony Brook is honored to have him along with director Michael Schroeder at the New York Premiere of *Man in the Chair* at Stony Brook. Mr. Plummer plays a bitterly retired gaffer who resides in the real-life Motion Picture & Television Fund retirement home. The old-timer teams up with a rebellious teenager and fanatical film buff played by Michael Agarano.

On Sunday, July 22, Academy-Award nominated actor David Strathairn (*Good Night and Good Luck*) appears in two films. Both are New York Premieres: *Steel Toes*, in

which Mr. Strathairn plays a lawyer defending a Neo-Nazi Skinhead, and *The Sensation of Sight*, a mid-life crisis drama in which he stars and co-produced. Last year, Mr. Strathairn attended the Stony Brook Festival in support of *Heavens Fall*, the Opening Night film by Terry Green. On a recent trip to L.A. to attend Method Fest, Alan Inkles, the Director of the Stony Brook Film Festival, met Mr. Strathairn, who remarked how special the Stony Brook Film Festival was for *Heavens Fall*. Inkles invited him to return to Stony Brook and he is planning to attend if his busy shooting schedule allows.

On Friday, July 20, Lukas Haas appears back-to-back in two features: *Swedish Auto*, written and directed by Derek Sieg, and the New York Premiere of *Who Loves the Sun*, written and directed by Matt Bissonnette. Bissonnette is expected to attend with his wife Molly Parker, who stars in the film with Haas and Adam Scott. Bissonnette returns to the Festival as well—he co-directed *Looking for Leonard* with Stephen Clark, which screened at the Stony Brook Film Festival in 2002.

Foreign films and documentaries are also well-represented this year. Among them are two East Coast Premieres from Germany, *Offset*, a dark comedy set in a print shop in Bucharest, and *The Cloud (Die Wolke)*, about a nuclear power plant accident and its impact on two sixteen-year-olds. Films from Israel include *Three Mothers (Shalosh Ima'ot)*, a drama about the life of triplet sisters inspired by a true story and directed by Dina Zvi-Riklis, and the New York Premiere of *Sweet Mud (Adama Meshuga'at)*, written and directed by Dror Shau, which won a World Cinema Jury Prize at Sundance Film Festival and is set on a kibbutz. Three documentaries are included in the Festival this year. The New York Premiere of *About Face: The Story of the Jewish Refugee Soldiers*

*of World War II*, scheduled for Sunday, July 22, is a sensitive compilation of interviews and archival film footage, directed by Steven Karras and Rose Lizarraga. The New York Premiere of *The Wrath of Gods* is by Jon Gustafsson about the making of the feature *Beowulf & Grendel* under brutal conditions in Iceland. *War/Dance*, a Thinkfilm release written and directed by Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine, is set in Northern Uganda and documents the story of three displaced children.

Closing Night, Saturday, July 28, will feature the New York Premiere of *Rocket Science*, a new comedy from Picturehouse, the Indie-arm of HBO and New Line Entertainment. HBO has been a long-time sponsor of the Stony Brook Film Festival, with two Stony Brook alums at the company's helm. HBO's CFO Robert Roth and President of Marketing Eric Kessler are both Stony Brook University alumni who are expected to attend the Closing Night's screening and the Awards Reception.

### **A Different Kind of Festival**

Staller Center for the Arts presents professional performances from around the world from September to May, and unlike many other arts centers that "go dark" in the summer, the entire staff works on presenting the film festival every summer. Showing movies became a desirable option after the International Theatre Festival produced by Staller Center from 1989-1997 finished a successful eight-year summer run.

Now, because of the festival culture that has established showing one film at a time, the indie films chosen for the Stony Brook Film Festival vie for desirable slots. Filmmakers enjoy screening their films to large audiences and seeing their film on a large 40-foot-

wide screen. Stony Brook receives accolades from filmmakers for giving an exclusive showing in one venue. Unlike other Festivals, filmgoers do not have to choose a film out of a group of them in the same time slot. The programming by the Festival Director, Alan Inkles, results from hours of screening entries and choosing only the best-all-around quality for the audience.

Approximately 15,000 tickets are sold over the ten days of the Stony Brook Film Festival. Passes are an affordable \$55 and individual tickets are reasonably priced at \$7 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens. Passes good for entry to all films are currently on sale and individual tickets go on sale beginning July 9.

A core group of cinephiles returns every summer and the Festival staff has been told that summer vacations for many of these Festival goers are planned around the Festival dates. This year twenty features will be screened with seventeen of them in competition. The three studio premieres out of competition include two from Thinkfilm: *War/Dance* and the East Coast Premiere of Scott Caan's comedy, *The Dog Problem*, as well as Jeffrey Blitz's *Rocket Science*, courtesy of Picturehouse, which opens theatrically August 10 nationwide. Fourteen shorts have been chosen to precede the screenings—notably, Howie Mandel starring in the New York Premiere of *Room Service*, an adult comedy written and directed by Kevin Castro on Friday, July 20, and *The Landscaper's Daughter*, another New York Premiere written and directed by Reeves Lehmann (USMC Vietnam Veteran '68) in a short dedicated to all combat veterans, showing on Wednesday, July 25.

## The Small World of Film Festivals

Filmmakers themselves spread the word about the Festival, since they cross paths on the festival circuit and share stories. One of the perquisites that filmmakers enjoy about Stony Brook is their stay at the Three Village Inn in the village of Stony Brook. “I had no idea Long Island was so beautiful,” noted a filmmaker from the Midwest at a past Festival. The setting of the Inn provides the actors, directors and crew attending the Festival with a mini-vacation, as they discover Avalon Park for a walk behind the Stony Brook Duck Pond and enjoy the shops across the street from the Inn. In the Staller Center itself, the Founders’ Room, a conference room, becomes a comfortable Filmmakers’ Lounge for the course of the Festival. Filmmakers also compliment the Festival staff on the professionalism of the projectionists and support staff. A Filmmaker last year joked that she was taking the projection equipment with her to the next festival since her film had “never looked so good.”

“Truly an exceptional festival. Kudos for Stony Brook for making the screening quality the priority it should be,” wrote Valerie Weiss, director of *Transgressions*, last year’s winner of the Jury Prize for Best Short. Others also appreciate the care taken with their films and the excitement that comes with screening to a packed house of more than 900 people. “Of all the film festivals I’ve attended, there is no better experience for filmmakers than Stony Brook. The festival director and staff are on top of their game and the audiences are film savvy. If you want an honest reaction to your film, this is where you’ll get it,” noted Terry Green, of *Heavens Fall*. John Putch, whose film *Mojave Phone Booth* won Jury Prize for Best Feature in 2006, wrote: “The best fest I’ve ever attended. That includes Sundance!” For another testimonial, see Bo Mehrad’s blog

from last year regarding the screening of his short, *Thirsty*:

<http://blogs.indiewire.com/uglybetty/archives/010866.html#more>

The Stony Brook West Campus itself, known for construction and ongoing improvements in the summer months, has a new entrance fully completed. All renovations are finished and grounds surrounding the Festival venue are beautifully landscaped. Parking in the University Visitors' Parking Garage is free, and nearby lots are also available for parking.

Jasmine, an Asian eatery in the Charles B. Wang Center, is open for Festival goers, and the University Café in the Stony Brook Union offers espresso, cappuccino, and bar drinks. These venues provide a festival atmosphere for late night parties and receptions, including "Jasmine Supper Under the Stars" sponsored by The Village Voice and the Closing Night Reception Onstage, sponsored by HBO. At past Festivals, and again for 2007, film critic John Anderson will present awards at the Closing Night Reception.

### **Presenting Sponsors**

The presenting sponsors for the Stony Brook Film Festival for 2007 are HBO, Jet Blue Airways, Long Island Pulse magazine, Suffolk County, Teachers Federal Credit Union, The Village Voice and WALK 97.5 Radio. For more information on the festival and a complete schedule of film and events, visit [www.stonybrookfilmfestival.com](http://www.stonybrookfilmfestival.com).

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