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***The Etruscan Smile* Starring Brian Cox Wins Grand Prize at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stony Brook Film Festival  
Presented by Island Federal Credit Union**

July 28, 2018, Stony Brook, NY— *The Etruscan Smile*, featuring acclaimed actor Brian Cox in the lead role, won the Grand Prize at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stony Brook Film Festival presented by Island Federal Credit Union. The sold-out U.S. Premiere screened at Stony Brook on Saturday, July 21 with Brian Cox, Thora Birch and Sandra Santiago attending and hosting a Q&A.

Brian Cox, an Emmy Award winning actor and a Golden Globe Nominee, is presently seen on HBO's *Succession*. He is one of Scotland's most celebrated actors in films and Shakespearean theatre. Some of his credits include *Braveheart*, *Troy*, *Bourne*, *Match Point* and *Manhunter*.

Alan Inkles, founder and director of the Stony Brook Film Festival announced additional awards at a reception at Staller Center for the Arts, Stony Brook University on Saturday, July 28. "We received so many enthusiastic responses from our astute audience members over the ten days of the Festival. *The Etruscan Smile* was hailed as a favorite. I was fortunate to have Brian Cox reach out to us just as we were finishing our schedule. He had been to the Stony Brook Film Festival for his film *The Carer* and was keen on having the U.S. Premiere of *The Etruscan Smile* at Stony Brook."

The Stony Brook Film Festival has awarded eight Grand Prizes in its 23-year history. *The Etruscan Smile* is the ninth to receive a Grand Prize.

**2018 STONY BROOK FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS**

**2018 Grand Prize**

***The Etruscan Smile***

U.S. Premiere - United States - 107 min

Directed by Oded Binnun and Mihal Brezis. Written by Michael McGowan, Michal Lali Kagan and Sarah Bellwood. With Brian Cox (*Braveheart*, *The Carer*), Thora Birch (*Ghost World*), JJ Feild (*Austenland*), and Rosanna Arquette (*Pulp Fiction*).

Acclaimed actor Brian Cox returned to the Stony Brook Film Festival for a second time to represent *The Etruscan Smile*, a gem of a movie. In it, a rugged old Scotsman reluctantly leaves his beloved isolated Hebridean island and travels to the U.S. to seek medical treatment. Moving in with his estranged son and workaholic daughter-in-law, he finds his life being transformed by a new-found bond with his baby grandson.

Produced by Academy Award® winner Arthur Cohn and directed by Academy Award® nominees Oded Binnun and Mihal Brezis, *The Etruscan Smile* is the Stony Brook Film Festival Grand Prize winner, awarded when the Audience and the Jury agree on the top prize. The visually stunning feature takes place in Scotland and the city of San Francisco.

It stars Brian Cox, Rosanna Arquette, Thora Birch, JJ Field, Peter Coyote, Treat Williams and twins Aero and Boom Epps. *The Etruscan Smile* is based on the bestselling book *La Sorrisa Etrusca* by Jose Louis Sampedro, with the story being transposed to Scotland and the United States. The title refers to famous terra cotta statues and sarcophagi that bear mysterious smiles.

In English and Scottish Gaelic with subtitles. Produced by Arthur Cohn. Edited by Roberto Silvi. Director of Photography: Javier Aguirresarobe. From Po Valley Productions.

#### **2018 Jury Award - Best Feature (tie)**

##### ***Octav***

U.S. Premiere - Romania - 100 min

Directed by Serge Ioan Celebidachi. Written by Serge Ioan Celebidachi and James Olivier. With Marcel Iures, Victor Rebengiuc, Eric Aradits and Alessia Tofan. The magical feature *Octav* centers on an elderly man returning to his family home after decades of absence. The apparition of his childhood sweetheart triggers a rewind to the life-changing events from his youth. As long-forgotten memories resurface, he begins to find answers to the questions that have cast a shadow over his life and gains clarity on decisions before him. *Octav* is a life-affirming story that celebrates the purity of childhood, love, and friendship.

In Romanian with subtitles. Produced by Adela Vrînceanu Celebidachi. Edited by Mircea Olteanu. Director of Photography: Blasco Giurato. A Celi Films and Oblique Media Film production. From The Little Film Company.

#### **2018 Jury Award - Best Feature (tie)**

##### ***Symphony for Ana***

East Coast Premiere - Argentina - 119 min

Directed by Ernesto Ardito, Virna Molina. Written by Ernesto Ardito, Virna Molina and Gaby Meik. With Isadora Ardito, Rocio Palacin, Rafael Federman, Ricky Arraga, Vera Fogwill and Rodrigo Noya.

Based on a true story, *Symphony for Ana* is about the bloodiest coup d'état in Argentina, when the military dictatorship 'disappeared' 108 students from The National High School of Buenos Aires, known for being elite and prestigious. Ana is a student there, a teenager who just wants to fall in love, have lots of friends, and fight for a better world. Instead, she must choose her friends carefully as she navigates the power struggles and ever-changing allegiances in her 15-year-old world. This intense and superbly acted film features current students from The National High School of Buenos Aires. The hard-hitting story drawn from Gaby Meik's book is history that should not be forgotten. In Spanish with subtitles. Produced by Ernesto Ardito, Virna Molina. Edited by Ernesto Ardito, Virna Molina. Director of Photography: Fernando Molina. An Ernesto Ardito and Virna Molina Film.

#### **2018 Audience Choice - Best Feature**

##### ***The Guilty***

Denmark - 85 min

Directed by Gustav Möller. Written by Emil Nygaard Albertsen and Gustav Möller. With Jakob Cedergren, Jessica Dinnage and Omar Shargawi.

In this brilliantly suspenseful thriller, an alarm dispatcher and former policeman answers an emergency call from a kidnapped woman, when the call is suddenly disconnected. With the phone as his only tool, the dispatcher enters a race against time to save the endangered woman and find her kidnapper, but he

soon realizes that he is dealing with a much more complicated crime than he first thought. A tense and restrained knockout performance by Jakob Cedergren keeps the audience riveted throughout the film. In Danish and English with subtitles. Produced by Lina Flint. Edited by Carla Luffe Heintzelmann. Director of Photography: Jasper Spanning. A Nordisk Film/SPRING production. From Magnolia Pictures.

### **2018 Spirit of Independent Filmmaking**

#### ***Thrasher Road***

East Coast Premiere - United States - 86 min. Written and Directed by Samantha Davidson Green. With Allison Brown and Christian Kohn.

Samantha Davidson Green, the writer and director of *Thrasher Road*, attended the Stony Brook Film Festival with actress Allison Brown and Christian Kohn to represent the film. Ms. Green teaches film directing at Dartmouth College and *Thrasher Road* was her first feature film after making award-winning short films that have been featured at festivals worldwide. In this original, fresh road trip story, pregnant Chloe and her elderly dog, Thrasher, get an unwelcome rescue from Chloe's father when her car breaks down in a trip across country. Stuck together in a car with thousands of miles ahead of them and thirteen years' estrangement behind them, father and daughter start to reconnect. Shot on location from California to Mississippi to Vermont, this very indie road trip features a cast from across the country, and a heart as big as a huge, rusted-out, pickup truck. Produced by Maria Rosenblum, Jonathan Wysock. Edited by Karen Smalley. Director of Photography: Eric Leach. A BetwixtNbetween Films production.

### **2018 Jury Award – Best Short**

#### ***Unnatural***

East Coast Premiere - United States - 26 min. A film by Amy Wang.

In every attempt for normality, 18-year-old James is perpetually confronted by his demon. "The core of this film is about hating who you are," notes Amy Wang. In *Unnatural*, she introduces a reclusive teenager with a secret.

### **2018 Audience Choice Award – Best Short**

#### ***Internet Gangsters***

New York Premiere - United States - 6 min. A film by Sam Friedlander.

SBFF alumnus and Deer Park native Eddie Alfano (*Cops and Robbers*) returns to star in a hilarious short as two New York hitmen in L.A. discover technology is the real enemy. As one of the many gems among the shorts that the SBFF audience rated highly, it was a standout.

### **Representation by actors and filmmakers from abroad**

This year the films at the 2018 Stony Brook Film Festival spanned 19 different countries. The Stony Brook Festival welcomed over 40 filmmakers to represent their films at screenings. With support from presenting sponsor Island Federal Credit Union and others, Stony Brook was able to welcome guests from Israel, including Eran Riklis (*Lemon Tree, Zaytoun*) writer and director of the sold-out Opening Night feature, *Shelter*, as well as actor Udi Razzin (*Foreign Letters*) to represent the feature, *Outdoors (Bayit Bagalil)*. Serge Celebidachi and James Oliver of *Octav* arrived from Romania to attend the Festival. Ryan Bennet from New Zealand represented the film *Take Me to the Waves*. Filmmakers from Argentina, Ernesto Ardito and Virna Molina attended with young actors from the film, *Symphony for Ana*. For the feature *Growing Up*, Clara Lazaro and Bela Alameda arrived from Spain. The filmmakers of the short film, *Rammat Gammat*, Ajitpal and Mauli Singh, travelled to the festival from India. Johnny Langenheim of Belgium represented the short film, *Seven*. Helen Crosse represented her short *Love & Spirit*, coming to Stony Brook from London, England with actors Michael Totton and Graham Dron.

The Closing Night film, *Aurora Borealis: Eszaki feny*, was represented by filmmakers from Hungary, Eva Pataki and Franciska Torocsik, who experienced a sold-out house of 1000 filmgoers.

Los Angeles actors Matthew Glave and Jana Winternitz along with director Michael Gallagher were welcomed to the New York premiere of *Funny Story*. Also attending from L.A. were Eddie Alfano and Kristin Campbell-Taylor for *Internet Gangsters*, Amy Wang for *Unnatural*, Daniel Drummond for *A Foreman*, Meg Steedle and Zach Bandler for the short *The Lightkeeper* and Rocky Ramsey for the short film, *Miscreant*. The film, *Abducted in Plain Sight*, had filmmaker Stephanie Tobey from L.A. on hand.

Filmmakers living on the East Coast and locally all represented their films at the Festival. Samantha Davidson Green, Allison Brown and Christian Kohn for *Thrasher Road*, Smithtown, Long Island's Calogero Carucci and his team of actors and friends for *Dean Darling*, Jennifer Fox and Simone Pero for a screening of HBO's *The Tale*, Manuel Velasquez for the short film *Deserted* and Josh Victor Rothstein and his team for the short, *Every Other Weekend*. The documentary, *Trauma*, brought David Gaddie, Ryan Cunningham, Mike Walker and Mitchell Wiese to Stony Brook. Ryan Davenport represented his short, *In the Field*.

The Closing Night Awards reception held in Staller Center's Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery was sponsored by HBO. Catering for the reception was provided by The Meadow Club.

Additional sponsors of the Stony Brook Film Festival presented by Island Federal Credit Union include Campolo, Middleton & McCormick, LLP; HBO; Altice Media Solutions, Suffolk County; and WLIW21.

Staller Center Media Sponsors include WSHU Public Radio, Times Beacon Record Newspapers, WALK 97.5, LI News Radio and Oldies 98.1.

The Stony Brook Film Festival will announce the start date for 2019 entries later in the year at [www.stonybrookfilmfestival.com](http://www.stonybrookfilmfestival.com).

Staller Center for the Arts on the campus of Stony Brook University presents world-class live performances from October to May, a film series each semester, screenings of the Metropolitan Opera in HD, and hosts Department of Music concerts, including performances by Stony Brook University's Quartet in Residence, The Emerson String Quartet. The Stony Brook Film Festival presented by Island Federal Credit Union is produced by Staller Center for the Arts.

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**Caption: (left to right) Emmy Award winning actor Brian Cox and Alan Inkles, founder and director of the Stony Brook Film Festival, at the U.S. Premiere of *The Etruscan Smile*, July 21, 2018. The Etruscan Smile won the Grand Prize at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stony Brook Film Festival Presented by Island Federal Credit Union. Credit: Nick A. Koridis**