

RI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL RETURNS TO NEWPORT

*Festival to present premieres of documentaries, shorts and
feature films, August 9th – 10th*

PROVIDENCE, RI (July 22, 2006): In 1983, a fledging arts organization was born in Newport with a focus on the films arts. Initially calling itself The Newport Film Society, it wasn't long before it became know simply as "Flickers." In early 1984, with about 85 initial members, Flickers opened its doors with a screening of Federico Fellini's "Amarcord," at the van Alen Casino Theatre on Bellevue Avenue. A large crowd of over 200 attended that first screening and attendance continued to blossom with each subsequent screening. Aside from screening notable foreign films, what set these events apart were the guest speakers who appeared; thus enhancing the experience for the audience.

Flickers evolved to meet member and community needs. By 1987, with over 475 members, the organization was producing its own video and film work along with television programming. An arts series for cable networks called "Between Takes," was created that ran until 1999 with over 300 half-hour episodes produced. In 1994, Flickers created the award-winning Jubilé Franco Américain in the Blackstone Valley; an event that saluted Rhode Island's rich French Canadian heritage. From that sprang what would become known as the Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF) that bowed on the scene in 1997.

Ten year later, RIIFF has grown substantially. It is the only New England based film festival that is a qualifier for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (the Oscars); and the only United States film festival that is affiliated with the Grammy Awards.

While the bulk of RIIFF's programming takes place in Providence and now at locations throughout the state; Flickers has kept its presence in Newport. Along with programming it's KidsEye™ Summer Filmmaking Camp in Newport (now in its

ninth year); Flickers has created events for Christmas in Newport such as the popular "Chansons de Noel" and the "Christmas Canticles;" and more recently "Movie Magic." Flickers presents the annual "Japanese Film Festival" at the Black Ships Festival that was introduced 23 years ago. And in April of this year, Flickers, through RIIF, introduced the "Roving Eye Documentary Film Festival" to local audiences with free screenings at the Newport Public Library.

This August, Flickers will return to the Jane Pickens Theatre for two days to screen programming from this year's Rhode Island International Film Festival.

From documentaries to feature films, August 9-10th will be filled with major new works by independent filmmakers. Many of the filmmakers are expected to attend and will be available for Q&A sessions at the end of each screening.

"We could not be more pleased to return to our home in Newport during this year's 10th Anniversary RIIF," said George T. Marshall, the Festival's Executive Director and community resident.

"The film line up we have scheduled is very strong and reflects a broad range of styles and interests. Our goal has been to expand community exposure to the RIIF as we head into the 25th Anniversary of Flickers next year. We already have several ideas on the table for that year-long celebration and Newport figures prominently in our plans."

New England's largest film festival will feature 270 films from across the United States and over 40 countries in a truly statewide celebration of the visual medium of film. In Newport, a total of 14 films will be presented.

"While 'Lassie' did screen at the recent Newport Film Festival in June," added Marshall, "It's such a beautifully crafted work that we felt it should be brought back for kids and families this August who may have missed it."

RIIF is the largest Film Festival in New England. Celebrating the art of film has always been a critical part of the Rhode Island International Film Festival a factor that has solidified **RIIF's** reputation as a filmmaker-friendly event.

Special guests scheduled to attend this year's festival include actresses Cicely Tyson, Tiffany Thiessen, Tori Spelling, Mena Suvari, Alicia Witt actor David Strathairn, Heather Henson, daughter of Jim Henson, Jason Priestely, Randy Spelling, Cady Huffman, actress/singer Lisa Zane, composer Andrew Chuckerman, actor Adrian Grenier, John Popper, actress Carmen Electra, and young actor Preston Nyman, the star of the "Foster" who is flying in from the United Kingdom to attend the US Premiere of his film.

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival** (RIIF) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for artistic interaction and exchange among independent filmmakers, directors, producers, distributors, backer, and the film-going community. Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri, Providence Mayor David M.

Cicilline, and US Senator Jack Reed serve as honorary chairs to this year's event. During the 2006 event, over 270 films will be presented.

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival** is supported in part by the *City of Providence, the Providence Tourism Council, the Providence Department of Arts, Culture & Tourism, Clear Channel Communications, Sony, Rule Broadcast Systems, WJAR TV 10, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, Amtrak, Providence Monthly, Radio Disney, Feinstein IMAX Providence Place, UPN28, Delta Airlines, WBRU Radio, Showcase Cinemas Providence Place* and contributions from members and community supporters.

General Admission for RIIFF films in Newport is \$10/\$8 for RIIFF members. Advance ticket sales for screenings and special events are available through the RIIFF website (www.RIFilmFest.org). Student, group, and senior discounts are also available but only in advance. To purchase tickets or obtain more information about any aspect of RIIFF, call 401-861-4445; or write RIIFF, PO Box 162, Newport, RI 02840; email info@film-festival.org. or log onto www.RIFilmFest.org.

PLEASE NOTE: Tickets for the Newport screenings can be purchased at the door of the Jane Pickens Theatre and will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

NEWPORT PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

RIIFF Screening Location in Newport:

THE JANE PICKENS THEATRE

49 Touro Street

Newport, RI

401/846-5252

Admission is \$10 general/\$8 RIIFF members;

Tickets will be sold at the door.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2006

1:00 PM

KAREN BLIXEN - OUT OF THIS WORLD

Marcus Mandal, director

58 min. Denmark 2005

Official US Premiere at RIIFF

This is the story of the incredible life of Danish author Karen Blixen (Isak Dinesen) - a story just as dramatic as her own fantastic tales.

During the documentary the viewers are taken on a journey through the life of Karen Blixen, told by people close to her. Blixen herself contributes through old footage. Among those taking part are also Meryl Streep.

The directors have been given unique access to photos and letters from private archives, many of which have never been made public before. To complement the rich imagery of this film, additional footage and historical reenactments have been shot on location in Denmark and Kenya.

The music consists exclusively of the original lacquer discs Karen Blixen collected throughout her life.

LEMONADE STORIES

Mary Mazzio, Director

47 min. USA 2005

"Lemonade Stories," a film about extraordinary entrepreneurs and their mums, chronicles the impact mothers have had on igniting the entrepreneurial spirit and innovative thinking. Virgin founder, Richard Branson and his sense of risk-taking, for example, emerged from the life and example of his mother, Eve, a pilot and WWII veteran. Billy Starr began the Pan-Mass Challenge, motivated by his mother's untimely death from cancer. He has since raised more than \$100 million for cancer research. Arthur Blank's vision for The Home Depot was inspired by his mother, a widow with no business experience, who took over and ran a

family business with enormous success. The film features Richard Branson (Virgin); Arthur Blank (Home Depot); Russell Simmons (Def Jam); Kay Koplovitz (USA Network); Tom Scott (Nantucket Nectars) among others. This film was the subject of a USA Today cover story (complete with photos and a trailer on USA Today's home page); a cover story on Forbes.com, ABC News.com, Christian Science Monitor, The Boston Globe, NPR, Bloomberg Radio, Fast Company, CNNMoney.com, and also featured on CNN Headline News, among others.

LEMONADE STORIES also was awarded the first place Judge's Commendation for Best Documentary at the Rhode Island International Film Festival, one of the few festivals which qualify films for Academy Award Consideration.

3:00 PM

LASSIE

Roadside Attractions/Samuel Goldwyn Films

Charles Sturridge, Director-screenwriter

100 min. United Kingdom 2005

Cast: Peter O'Toole, Samantha Morton, John Lynch, Steve Pemberton, Jonathan Mason, and Peter Dinklage

"Lassie" is a heartwarming and moving adventure that does excellent justice to the classic character. Sensitively written and directed by veteran British filmmaker Charles Sturridge. "Lassie" was recently showcased in the Family Festival section of the Tribeca Film Festival.

The filmmaker has assembled a sterling cast for this remake, set -- as was the original novel -- on the eve of World War II in a Yorkshire mining town. The opening scene, depicting a group of upper-crust hunters pursuing a fox only to be foiled by Lassie, well establishes the class conflicts that form the subtext of the story.

Lassie is a part of the hard-pressed Carracloough family, including coal miner Sam (John Lynch); his loving wife, Sarah (Samantha Morton); and their 9-year-old son, Joe (Jonathan Mason). When hard times hit, the family is forced to sell their beloved dog to the high-toned Duke of Rudling (Peter O'Toole), who wants her for his granddaughter (Hester Odgers).

The adventures of the indefatigable collie are alternately amusing, thrilling and heartbreaking and are beautifully realized by the filmmaker's classical approach. The actors essay their roles with the utmost conviction, with particularly sterling work by the slyly funny O'Toole and child actor Mason. A gallery of estimable performers makes cameo appearances, including Edward Fox, Kelly MacDonald and, most effectively, Peter Dinklage as a kindly puppeteer who takes Lassie under his wing.

Best of all, of course, is the canine, or number of canines, in the title role. A worthy successor to the dog's cinematic and television forebears, this Lassie is bound to induce a run on pet stores and dog breeders everywhere.

5:00 PM

SCARED NEW WORLD

Chris Brown, director

81 min. USA 2005

Cast • Fanny Ara-Herms, Harriet Schiffer-Scott, Josh Millican, Lena Zee & Zachary Schramm

East Coast Premiere

A tough, strong and unforgettable film.

Alma, a pot-dealing single mother, coasts through each day with little care and motivation until she meets a cancer patient in need of medical marijuana. Vargas, her roommate and friend for over a decade, works intensely in his room on a literary project that no one has seen and that in his words will 'change literature as we know it.' Moving into their Oakland apartment is Penny, a 19-year-old French foreign exchange student, in love with California and on her own for the first time. Embracing newfound freedoms, she explores her sexuality through two separate relationships -- one with a man, the other with a woman. 'Scared New World' is the story of three lives, separate but intertwined, trying to find balance in unstable times.

7:00 PM

THREE WOMEN AND A CHATEAU

Catherine Ryan, Gary Weimberg, directors

80 min. USA 2006

The Heiress. The Countess. The Doctor. Although they never met, these 3 women shared a place and a passion: Chateau Carolands, a 100 room architectural masterpiece in Hillsborough, California; the 2nd largest private home in the United States; and a three dimensional window into the last 100 years of American history.

The story of Chateau Carolands is like a Greek tragedy with a twist, with the chateau in the role of an enchanted magic mirror, so grand that it encourages a dangerous hubris in those who fall under its spell. We watch this drama unfold through three generations of owners of Carolands as they fall into failure and near-ruin, until the recent restoration brings about an artistic triumph for the house and current owner.

This is a story of fabulous wealth but also financial disaster, of great loves and bitter betrayals; including wars, earthquakes, a murder, a porno film, and of course great works of art and architecture. The documentary provides an insider's look at the struggles and desires of the ultra-rich in America, where even limitless money cannot guarantee that dreams come true.

9:15 PM

LIBERTY STREET: ALIVE AT GROUND ZERO

Peter Josyph, director

118 mins. USA 2006

New England Premiere

The focus of the film is 114 Liberty Street, which stands a few yards from the World Trade Center on one of the oldest streets in the nation. This small residential building escaped demolition when the Twin Towers were put up, and narrowly escaped it when they were knocked down. In this evacuated building, with its astonishing views of the site and the surrounding neighborhood, the viewer is eyewitness to the recovery and the removal at Ground Zero and to the lives of the people who were proud -- and cursed -- to call it home.

Largely ignored by the media, loyal Downtowners who ran for their lives from the collapse of the Twin Towers returned with a resolve to restore their world to order, determined not to be cowed by the specter of terrorism. The film was shot personally by director Josyph at a time when photography, and access to the Ground Zero neighborhood, were severely restricted. Prying into the crevices and corners of chaos, the camera searches for clues with which to envision that morning and interpret its impact. LIBERTY STREET is based on 225 hours of digital video, shot over the course of a year and a half in Lower Manhattan and edited over three and a half years.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 2006

1:00 PM

COLE NOBODY KNOWS

Clay Walker, director

21 min. USA 2006

New England Premiere

The Cole Nobody Knows" is a documentary on Chicago-native Freddy Cole, the lesser known, yet equally talented younger brother of Nat "King" Cole.

At age 74, with his current recording receiving international acclaim, Freddy Cole is finally being widely recognized for his amazing musical talent.

Photographed in Atlanta, New York City, New Jersey, Los Angeles, Switzerland & France, "The Cole Nobody Knows" features extraordinary, never-before-seen live performance material with Freddy Cole and his quartet.

The film examines the perplexing riddle of being in the shadow of a famous sibling and includes interviews with music legends Monty Alexander, Nancy Wilson, David "Fathead" Newman, John di Martino, H Johnson, Carl Anthony and many others.

SHIPWRECKED

Devon Bolton, director

10 min, CANADA 2006

World Premiere

A lonely 10-year-old boy discovers a miniature shipwreck on an isolated beach and is shocked to find dozens of tiny footprints leading away from the historic sailing vessel. As the boy follows the prints, uncovering tiny artifacts along the

way, his journey is ended when he finds all is not what it seems. Shipwrecked is a tale of imagination, intrigue, and the childhood capacity for embracing the remarkable.

A LIFE AMONG WHALES

Bill Haney, director; Tim Disney, Producer

57 min. USA/NETHERLANDS 2005

Weaving together natural history and biography, 'A Life Among Whales' is a fascinating exploration into the life and work of whale biologist and activist Roger Payne. Payne's controversial discovery in the early 1970s that whales sing "songs" helped ignite the modern day environmental movement. A charismatic and passionate individual, Payne's pioneering spirit has consistently advanced the boundaries of science and activism over the last four decades.

"A Life Among Whales" traces Payne's scientific research beginning with his early work in Patagonia, where for two years, he, his wife and four young children lived in tents on a remote bay so that they could have unhindered access for the study of Southern Right Whales. It explores Payne's tireless and passionate fight to ban whaling - a ban which today, 20 years after an international moratorium was imposed is threatened - and follows him to his present day study of ocean pollution and his work with The Ocean Alliance, a non-profit organization and global leader in whale research and conservation which he founded.

With beautiful and haunting images, 'A Life Among Whales' follows one scientist's dedication to saving the whales and forces us to question our stewardship of the Earth and our co-existence with some of its most intriguing creatures.

Director Bill Haney is from Portsmouth, RI

3:00 PM

FLYING DOWNHILL: BODE MILLER:

Williams Rogers, Director

83 min. USA 2006

Original World Premiere with RIFF

Imagine going fast. Really fast. Maybe... faster than anybody else in the world.

Bode Miller has become a legend in ski racing. The lore is the lure – wild, untamed, growing up without electricity in the hills of New Hampshire. But the true story of Bode's crashes and victories is more complex and richer as we see what makes him go so fast and see if he can bring his great speed to the bottom of the course, through ALL the gates, in one piece.

"Radical form" says Ski Magazine. "I've never seen skiing like that before!" says an Austrian coach. "A class by himself" says fellow champion, Aamodt. Bode Miller is on a quest to be the best ski racer in the world.

Now imagine what it's like to be with Bode on this quest. In a six-year journey we are there with him, through the crashes and recoveries. Can he become the

best in the world? Does he really want to win? Or does he want to go faster than anybody else then crash when fast becomes TOO FAST? What pushes Bode over the edge where others dare not go?

Director William Rogers will be in attendance. Q&A

5:00 PM

EARS, OPEN. EYEBALLS, CLICK

Canaan Brumley, Director

95 min. USA/ Canada 2005

They have to learn everything all over again: from shoe-cleaning to ten-second showers. Only then, marching and fighting techniques are addressed. For twelve weeks, the recruits of Platoon 1141 of the U.S. Marines are subjected to the orders of screaming drill instructors. In nearly two hours of pure *cinéma vérité*, the spectator experiences them, too. No voiceover, no interviews, just the camera that stays close to the soldiers, or keeps its distance for a more abstract impression of life on the base. Rapidly edited images reflect the frenzy and the soldiers' anxiety. During a nocturnal cleaning marathon, the fatigue is palpable. The soundtrack is largely filled with yelled orders and the soldiers' "Yes sir, aye-aye sir." Only a subtle musical score offers some relief. The film is divided into twelve chapters with short titles that betray a subtle sense of humour.

This film is the first half of Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* brought to reality. Told in a handful of titled chapters, this portrait of soldiers in training isn't your average documentary; with no interviews or narration, Brumley presents our characters with visual emotion and intensity. Rather than getting to know each of the recruits personally as they fight through boot camp, we travel the road with them and witness the experiences up close and personal.

Debuting director Brumley was once a marine himself, on the base where he shot his film. He chose not to focus on individual people: the soldiers are interchangeable and the drill instructors all look similar. Only briefly does he highlight the rise and fall of one ambitious soldier from the platoon; the real protagonist is and remains the army base.

7:00 PM

BRATS: OUR JOURNEY HOME

Donna Musil, Director

98 min. USA 2005

Original World Premiere with RIFF

Air Force brat Kris Kristofferson leads us on a heartfelt journey into the strange but interesting life of an American military "brat". Based on poignant and provocative interviews with adult brats of all ethnicities, including General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and author Mary Edwards Wertsch. This is the first non-fiction film to explore the peculiar subculture of brats from the child's point-of-view.

The Director will be in attendance. Q&A

9:15 PM

KATRINA'S WAKE

Kathilynn Phillips, director

20 min. USA 2006

Cast • Jocelyn Amos, LaVita Brooks, De'Ja Imani Evans, & Jonathan H. Jackson

World Premiere

In advance of the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, a mandatory evacuation was ordered for the city of New Orleans on Sunday, August 28th 2005. However, no provision was made for the over 100,000 people who were incapable of evacuating themselves...the poor, the disabled and the elderly. The next day, August 29th, at 6:01 AM CDT, Katrina made landfall near Buras, Louisiana, seventy miles southeast of New Orleans.

By 9:00 AM CDT, the storm surge had breached the levies surrounding the city and 6-8 feet of water filled the Ninth Ward of New Orleans and elsewhere ...trapping all those left behind. Thousands escaped to the Superdome, many made it safely to the Coliseum. Still others, unable to leave their homes, hospitals or elder care facilities, fled to higher floors, attics or roofs to await rescue. For many, help came quickly. For others, it took days. But for some ...help never came.

"Katrina's Wake" is the fictional story of family who sought refuge in their attic from the rising flood waters. No food. No water. No escape. And, unfortunately, no one knew they were there.

VAJRA SKY OVER TIBET

John Bush, director

97 min. USA/Tibet, 2005

New England Premiere

VAJRA SKY OVER TIBET is a documentary feature and a cinematic pilgrimage to some of the most revered venues and festivals still surviving in Tibet.

VAJRA is a Sanskrit word - the thunderbolt of illumination, flashing from the vastness of an open sky. This poignant journey bears witness to the indomitable faith of its endangered Buddhist community and the imminent threat to its very survival.

The vastness of the Tibetan sky, reflecting snowy mountains, rushing rivers, and turquoise lakes, leads the journey west.

Responding to the denial of the human right to practice one's religion without interference, Tibetans visit these legendary sites with a defiant ardor and overt displays of devotion.

As interviews were not appropriate because of likely retribution, VAJRA SKY employs the evocative voice of Tenzin Choegyal, a Tibetan in exile. Many of Tibet's most legendary musicians and singers are featured in the compelling soundtrack. The film has received the blessing of The Dalai Lama.

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