

2010 Dedication

As Shakespeare so eloquently put it, the past is prologue. This year, the Rhode Island International Film Festival stands at a metaphorical dividing point between a proud past and a promising future. As we leave our long-time home at the Columbus Theater on Broadway and begin a new and exciting era at the VMA in downtown Providence, RIIFFF is focusing on its future – but also remembering its past. As such, RIIFFF dedicates this year's festival to its roots; to the people, the places and the organizations that have made this festival what it is over its proud 14-year history.

To mark this special emphasis, we open the 2010 Festival with a special program of shorts, all of which focus in one way or another on roots and connections to the past. This program leads into the World Premiere of David Bettencourt and G. Wayne Miller's new documentary, *Behind the Hedgerow: Eileen Slocum and the Meaning of Newport Society*. Not only does this film offer an intimate glimpse into one of the most storied eras of Rhode Island's past, but it implicitly references the festival's past, as well. RIIFFF's parent organization, the Flickers Arts Collaborative, began life in 1982 as The Newport Film Society and held the state's first International Film Festival in Newport in 1983. For the first time since 1987, Flickers officially returns to Newport on August 14th, with a second screening of *Behind the Hedgerow* at Salve Regina University as well as a special program of films to be screened at the Newport Opera House Theater in downtown Newport. As such, these special events commemorate Rhode Island's history while paying tribute to the Festival's roots, as well.

RIIFFF also honors its past heritage with a special tribute to the Jubilé Franco-Américain project. The Jubilé Franco-Américain began under the banner of the Flickers Arts Collaborative as a grant-funded project through the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts in 1994. Centered in Woonsocket, R.I., the heart of the French-speaking Blackstone Valley, this annual festival celebrated the cultural heritage of the French-Canadian community through a rich variety of programs centering on the visual and performing arts. The film-component of the Jubilé eventually gave birth to the Rhode Island International Film Festival, which premiered in 1997. To celebrate this heritage, RIIFFF is proud to offer a selection of excellent independent French-Canadian films as part of this year's line-up, including Menard Robert's feature, *Le Bonheur de Pierre (A Happy Man)*, Cimon Charest's documentary, *De L'eau Glacée Dans Les Veines (Ice Water in the Veins)*, and Patricia Chica's short, *Day Before Yesterday*, which screens as part of our Opening Night Shorts Program.

This program of French Canadian films also honors our continued collaboration with the Montreal Festival Nouveau Cinema, as well as the Quebec Delegation in Boston. By honoring RIIFFF's past and present connections to the French-Canadian community – both in Rhode Island and beyond – we pay tribute to the festival's core mission to serve as a bridge between local audiences and the world of international film.

Just as we honor our past, this year's festival also welcomes our future. As new tenants at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium Arts and Cultural Center, RIIFFF will now be sharing a home with three of Rhode Island's most distinguished musical institutions: The Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, Festival Ballet Providence, and the Providence Singers. To celebrate these new affiliations, and to express RIIFFF's long-standing commitment to the

Arts Community in Rhode Island, we are pleased to offer a special afternoon program of music-themed documentaries as part of our Closing Day festivities on Sunday, August 15th.

The 14th annual Rhode Island International Film Festival invites you to join us as we spend the week toasting our collective past and celebrating our promising future. We are proud to continue a long tradition of connecting local audiences and homegrown filmmakers with the world of international, independent film.

~ J. SCOTT OBERACKER