



LA Harbor International Film Festival

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To create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world



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LA Harbor International Film Festival™ Leaps Into New Year!

Sets Sail On 17th Voyage March 12-15

Warner Grand Theatre – historic downtown San Pedro – Port of Los Angeles

San Pedro Honorary Mayor Pam Costa Unveils Official Poster & Banner

Education Outreach Program “Read the Book, See the Movie” *The Secret Garden*

CINEMA PARADISO Opening Night Celebrates “Little Italy”

New Filmmakers LA (NFMLA) - *On Location: The Los Angeles Video Project* Returns for 8th Year

Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute *GREASE* 🎵 Sing Along 🎵

DocSunday™ POLA Premieres With Environmental Cultural Themes

& Tribute To Gospel Music *SAY AMEN, SOMEBODY*

Veterans & Currently Serving In Military Free Admission

February 13, 2019 - San Pedro (SP), California. - Port of Los Angeles (POLA) - Programming and sponsors were announced, and official festival poster unveiled, for the 17th annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF), at the Seafarin’ Reception and Press Launch, held at and co-hosted by Janny’s Space (aka The People’s Place) in historic downtown SP. Members of the media, festival sponsors, civic and business leaders were among special guests attending the invitation only event. The four day LAHIFF, a non-competitive, non-juried film festival with movies selected by research or referral and invited to be programmed, takes place March 12-15 at the vintage art deco Warner Grand Theatre (WGT), 478 W. 6th Street, historic downtown SP - POLA. The WGT is a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).

LAHIFF founder Stephanie Mardesich welcomed all, introduced elected officials or their representatives, and distinguished guests, then announced final programming (subject to change without notice). “The LA Harbor International Film Festival is grateful and proud to have a long and loyal list of sponsors and supporters, especially Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn (District 4), Contributing Sponsor, who as Council member of District 15 advocated for the film festival since it was founded and has continued as staunch supporter from her tenure in the harbor area to U.S. Congress as she continues working vigorously for District 4 and all constituents of the County of Los Angeles,” stated Mardesich.

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“Being a sponsor of the LAHIFF demonstrates a sense of community awareness and appreciation of our mission,” continued Mardesich. “The commitment to support culture and education is vital as partnerships between business and individuals is fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens; and its significance can never be underestimated.”

After the program announcement San Pedro Honorary Mayor Pam Costa addressed the crowd prior to unveiling the official poster and street banner “*The Secret Cinematic Garden Bridge.*” Key art for the iconic image, by eminent photographer and LAHIFF board member Peter Read Miller (Sports Illustrated, NFL, Associated Press, Canon spokesman), was introduced in 2009. The first five years of the LAHIFF paintings were commissioned by prominent local artists Tom Phillips, Violet Parkhurst, Muriel Olguin and Tony Podue to create their own version of the “*Cinematic Bridge*”, originated by Phillips, that has become the LAHIFF brand re-imagined each year. This year’s theme is inspired by the free education outreach program “Read the Book, See the Movie” (RBSM) selection *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Art direction by Alison Robertson of Wellington Signs, poster printing sponsor Alchemy, with local MJM Graphics festival printer. Framing by Distinctive Edge Framing & Gallery.

LAHIFF kicks off Thursday, March 12 with the RBSM Culmination Program. RBSM promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film and the most successful and motivating aspect of the LAHIFF. Nearly 16,000 books have been distributed to students and community members since 2004. This year books again provided by Penguin Random House Young Readers Publishing, the “publishing angel” Sponsor since 2005.

Students read and discuss the book over several weeks then attend the Culmination Program enthused and excited as they arrive at the WGT welcomed by an authentic bagpiper (Chrissy Orcholski). They enjoy fun healthy snacks, watch the movie version of the book followed by a lively discussion. LAHIFF chose to show the 1949 original film adaptation of the English story projecting the 35mm print version. Continuing a new “tradition”, begun in 2019 when *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell was the book selection, the Los County Sheriff Mounted Enforcement unit with officers on horseback (subject to availability) will add to the delight as students arrive and get to meet the officers and pet the horses, then receive “honorary Sheriff” badges. Also returning will be SP Children’s Librarian Ednita Kelly cycling on her Los Angeles Public Library “Book Bike”, that she rides all over the district, giving away free books to all in attendance.

Prior to the film there will be a brief presentation by new in-kind sponsor South Coast Botanic Garden (SCBG). A representative will speak about the unique space located in the PalosVerdes Peninsula. All RBSM participants will be given a voucher for complimentary visit to experience the extraordinary 87 acres of horticultural and wildlife habitat, known as “the jewel of the Peninsula.” Other RBSM sponsors include Supervisor Hahn, The Popcorn Man, 7-Eleven, Mary Star of the Sea High School, and Arlene (Dickey) and Myron Lockrem.

Opening Night Friday evening March 13 at 7 pm is the beloved *Cinema Paradiso*, Academy Award® winner for best foreign film in 1990, an homage to the recent “Little Italy” district in downtown SP. “*Cinema Paradiso* is one of my favorite movies,” reveals Supervisor Janice Hahn, the Presenting Sponsor. “It is a beautiful and timeless film and a fitting tribute to the newly designated Little Italy.” Los Angeles Council District 15 is Benefactor Sponsor of the program.

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Saturday March 14 begins at high noon featuring, for the eighth year, *NewFilmmakers LA "On Location Program" Showcase of Short Films* (26 films, one to five minutes in length) from finalists of the annual community engagement program sponsored by the City of Los Angeles, KTLA, Sunset Las Palmas Studios, and L.A. City Council members Bob Blumenfield and Mitch O'Farrell. Founded in 2007 NFMLA, under the leadership of Executive Director Larry Laboe, has established itself as a strong advocate and gathering place for independent cinema with over 30,000 constituents in the Los Angeles community, annually screening over 950 films from 59 countries. In addition to fostering the advancement of new filmmakers and its members in the City of Los Angeles, NFMLA is a vital organization with on-going screenings and events programmed throughout the year fulfilling their objective to promote the economic, educational, social, and cultural advancement of filmmaking, arts and culture in the community.

LAHIFF has again invited the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Pedro and Wilmington, South Bay Youth Clubs and I♥Wilmington to attend the program as guests to meet the filmmakers and be inspired in their pursuit of film and video interests; and increase their knowledge of the craft. The youth groups are also invited as guests for the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) Saturday evening at 7 pm featuring *GREASE is the word*. The acclaimed adaptation of popular 1972 Broadway show by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, directed by Randall Kleiser, stars Olivia Newton John and John Travolta with memorable cast. Kleiser has been invited and might attend the screening if his schedule permits. H attended LAHIFF in 2014 when Jack London's *White Fang* was the book selection for RBSM and he directed the film version for Disney. The audience is encouraged to sing along and continuing what began in 2016 members of the San Pedro High School and Richard Henry Dana Middle School bands and their families are also invited to attend as guests of the LAHIFF; and any one attending dressed like characters from the movie will also be admitted for free and invited to promenade on the stage before the movie. (Advisory: Film is rated PG13, though some mature content and language).

"We anticipate *Grease* to be a fun 'ageless', date night, family-friendly time for all," commented Mardesich. "When the audience exits the theatre exclaiming 'that was terrific, why they don't make movies like that anymore?' it reaffirms our mission to promote and preserve the best of classic Hollywood filmmaking. It's the greatest compliment and tribute after seeing a film as intended, on the big screen, in the setting of a true 'movie palace' that the WGT represents."

Closing day March 15, known as "DocSunday" - devoted to non-fiction film - programs are POLA premieres. Opening program at 1 pm, sponsored by Rancho LPG, Holdings, speaks to environmental themes beginning with the short documentary (12 min.) *On The Waterfront* that focuses on the renaissance of the Georgetown Waterfront National Harbor, and world renowned architect Arthur Cotton Moore, touching on a variety of environmental approaches to waterfront development in the District of Columbia, applicable domestically and internationally. Next is feature documentary *Artifishal* (USA, Patagonia, 2019, 75 min.), with immense visual and aesthetic appeal that reveals challenges ecologists and conservationists face in the lucrative salmon-hatchery industry, with in-kind sponsorship support from Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA) and Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM). Conversation and Q&A after the program with participants to be confirmed.

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Corresponding to themes of cultural awareness and social justice the closing program at 4 pm is feature documentary *Say Amen, Somebody*. Originally released in 1984 the film is a sentimental and joyful account of gospel music movement. Mardesich and committee viewed the film and unanimously agreed it would be great for LAHIFF. She also attended a screening of the picture at the BFI London Film Festival in October 2019 and the audience response confirmed it would be a joyful addition. Before the movie the Los Angeles Chapter of Gospel Music of America Workshop will be welcoming the audience in song from 3:30 pm and participate in the traditional opening program presenting the flag of the U.S.A. by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Wilmington Post #2967.

Additional LAHIFF supporters include Associate Sponsors Tri-Marine International, Community Fund of Boeing California, and BNSF Railway; Sustaining Sponsors ILWU Foremen's Local #94, Valero Wilmington Refinery, Joseph & Lee (Sher) Mardesich Family Trust, Benefactor Sponsors are Los Angeles City Council District 15, and McNerney's Mortuary.

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The WGT, dedicated in 1931 by Jack Warner who proclaimed "you'll enter the palace of your dreams", is one of the three Warner Brothers Theatres built in the Los Angeles metropolitan area known as "the triplets." Considered a treasure of historic downtown SP, and the greater L.A. region, the WGT seats 1500 offering a variety of stage productions, live performances including annual San Pedro City Ballet production of *"The Nutcracker"*, graduation ceremonies, weddings, and community events throughout the year. WGT is also used as setting for numerous film and commercial productions. On going restoration projects include the GVF "Save Your Seat" campaign.

The LAHIFF offers stimulating and entertaining programming that inspires the audience and respects the integrity of the silver screen. Mardesich, an alumna of the University of Southern California film school, founded the LAHIFF in 2003 (with Jack Baric) contends "the film festival is a way to augment the cultural landscape of the region."

"What the WGT represents historically with regard to film appreciation and preservation is exceptionally important for the art form and San Pedro's identity as a frequent location for film production, as the medium continues to flourish and expand as a valued source of entertainment and erudition appealing to every segment of society; a source of joy or catharsis," proffered Mardesich. The LAHIFF honors the tradition of legendary Hollywood with a view to the current cinema committed to present films in 35mm on the 'big screen' as they were originally intended as often as possible. "With 35mm film projection capability the WGT is one of the only venues in the region to show films in the classic tradition that is becoming a more rare experience, and someday will be extinct."

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Over the past 16 years LAHIFF has continued to grow and gain support. A 501(c) 3 non-profit organization with no paid employees, contributions are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various benefit levels. In 2013 the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council presented Mardesich and the LAHIFF with a Proclamation for ten years of outstanding contribution to culture and education leadership. Service hours can be accrued for school or community service. Other LAHIFF board members include community liaison Andrea (Rukavina) Hegybeli; east coast representative, native of San Pedro, businesswoman Nancy (McCutchan) Nottingham, and Northern California (Bay Area) representative Carla Contestable, R.N.

General admission for festival programs is \$10; \$8 with discount for affiliations (CMA, LAMM, GVF, HH) seniors and students. **Free Admission for U.S.A. veterans and those currently serving in military forces on first come first seated basis.** Film program tickets on sale from February 14 online www.brownpapertickets.com, or (800)838-3006; and at the box office (cash only) during the festival dates one hour before program times.

“Though we always need to boost box office sales so long as there are seats available no one will be turned away because they cannot afford a ticket. We have had a few SRO (standing room only) screenings over the years, however with 1500 seats in the WGT it is likely there will always be a place for a new audience member. We are the ‘Statue of Liberty of film festivals’, and welcome all. We’ll even provide popcorn,” commented Mardesich.

As Supervisor Hahn stated: “Every year, the LA Harbor International Film Festival programming, including adaptations of great literature, ‘Hollywood classics’, and evocative and historic documentaries, attracts movie goers from near and far. This year’s festival promises to live up to the outstanding reputation built over the past 16 years. This film festival is the perfect opportunity to visit the harbor area, enjoy a movie at the historic Warner Grand Theater, and discover all that our waterfront communities have to offer.”

For media relations, more information, and “Sponsorship Opportunities Guidelines”

Contact: Stephanie Mardesich, Festival Director at stephaniemardesich@yahoo.com or telephone (310) 519-0756. See www.laharborfilmfest.com for updates on programming; Twitter twitter.com/laharborfilm

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More about.....

Warner Grand Theatre: www.warnergrand.org
ClearSteps: www.clearsteps.com
Peter Read Miller, photographer: www.peterreadmiller.com
New Filmmakers L.A.: www.NFMLA.org
Little Italy: www.lilaa.org
Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM): www.lamaritimemuseum.org
Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA) www.carbillomarineaquarium.org
South Coast Botanic Garden: www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org
Visit San Pedro: www.visitsp.com
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