

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

For Release Immediate Release

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LA Harbor International Film Festival™ Sets Sail On 13th Voyage March 16-19
Warner Grand Theatre – historic downtown San Pedro – the Port of Los Angeles
Supervisor Janice Hahn Unveiled Official Poster & Banner

Education Outreach Program “Read the Book, See the Movie” *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling
Opening Night Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day The Italian Way with *IL DIO VUOLE*
New Filmmakers LA (NFMLA) - *On Location: The Los Angeles Video Project* Returns for 5th Year
Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute *THE MUSIC MAN*
DocSunday™ POLA Premieres *Humpback Whales & Crows of the Desert*
Free Admission to all programs for U.S. Veterans & Those Currently Serving In Military

February 15, 2017 - San Pedro (SP), California. - the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) - Programming and sponsors were announced for the 14th annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) at the Seafarin’ Reception and Press Launch, held at and hosted by festival Elite Sponsor Ports O’ Call Restaurant. Members of the media, festival sponsors, civic and business leaders were among guests at 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 16-19 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 guests, then introduced the many elected officials or their representatives who were present, special guests and festival sponsors.

Mardesich announced final programming (subject to change without notice) and sponsors commenting, “The LA Harbor International is proud and appreciative to have a long and loyal list of sponsors since the festival was founded, and new sponsors this year making the commitment to culture and education. Being a sponsor of the LAHIFF demonstrates a sense of community awareness and support of the LAHIFF mission. Partnerships between business and individuals in supporting cultural events is fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens, and its significance can never be underestimated.”

After the announcement Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn (District 4) addressed the crowd prior to unveiling the official poster and street banner *76 Trombones On The Cinematic Bridge*. “Every year, since it began in 2004, the LA Harbor International Film Festival is a fabulous event and opportunity to celebrate filmmaking,” stated Hahn. “The variety of films chosen, and the education outreach program ‘Read the Book, See the Movie’ adds a dimension that encourages an appreciation of art, culture, geography, history and literature in our community. Thank you to all the sponsors for their continued support and commitment to making this unique festival possible, and warmest congratulations to the leadership of the LAHIFF for organizing yet another great event for the region and our local community to enjoy.”

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Key photograph for the iconic poster image, by eminent photographer Peter Read Miller (Sports Illustrated, NFL, Associated Press), was introduced in 2009. The first five years of the festival 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*” that has become the LAHIFF brand and re-imagined each year. This year’s theme is inspired by the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) film Meredith Willson’s *The Music Man* (art direction by Seann Curry, and banner production, Wellington Signs). Rancho LPG Holdings is Banner Sponsor.

LAHIFF begins March 16 with the free education outreach program “Read the book, See the Movie” (RBSM) Culmination Program. Thousands of books have been distributed to students and community members since 2004. This year’s selection is The Jungle Books by revered English author Rudyard Kipling. After reading the book the students gather at the WGT to watch the film version of the book. This year’s movie is the Walt Disney Productions 1967 animated version of the story, *The Jungle Book*, nominated for Academy Award® for Best Song (*The Bare Necessities*) with stellar cast of actors in voice over. Publishing Sponsors Penguin Classics and Puffin Classics provided 600 copies of the paperback books that were so popular more had to be purchased with over 800 books distributed. Students arrive at the WGT to the glorious sounds of an authentic bagpiper (Chrissy Orcholski) heralding the call to readers, enjoy healthy refreshments, watch the film in a traditional theatre setting, then participate in lively conversation and discussion.

Among participating schools are: Mary Star of the Sea, San Pedro John & Muriel Olguin Magnate, Port of Los Angeles Charter and Peninsula High Schools; Rolling Hills Prep and Renaissance Schools; Richard Henry Dana, Jr. Middle School; and Gulf Avenue and Leland Street Elementary Schools.

Additional RBSM sponsors include Education Culture Sponsor Supervisor Hahn, a supporter of the LAHIFF since its inception, Employees Community Fund of Boeing California and Rancho LPG Holdings. Refreshments are sponsored by The Popcorn Man, 7-Eleven, and Mary Star of the Sea High School.

Opening Night Friday evening March 17 features *Se Dio Vuole (God Willing)* a contemporary Italian film (with subtitles) Mardesich discovered when she attended CineFesta Italia in Santa Fe, New Mexico. “We invite all to ‘Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day the Italian Way’ and experience this captivating movie full of humor, pathos, intrigue and much to contemplate,” stated Mardesich. CineFesta Italia is presenting the film; “Sustaining Sponsors” for the program is Councilman Joe Buscaino, District 15.

Saturday March 18 begins at high noon with, for the fifth year, *NewFilmmakers LA “On Location Program” Showcase of Short Films* (26 films one to five minutes in length) made by finalists of the community engagement program sponsored by the City of Los Angeles, KTLA, Hollywood Center Studios, and L.A. City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield. Founded in 2007 NFMLA has established itself as a significant advocate for independent cinema with over 20,000 constituents in the Los Angeles community, screening over 750 films from over 48 countries in a given year. In addition to fostering the advancement of new filmmakers and its members, NFMLA’s objective is to promote the economic, educational, social, and cultural advancement of filmmaking, arts and culture in the community.

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That afternoon at 2 p.m. *The Belle of Amherst* (filmed presentation of one woman performance by late Julie Harris) compliments this year's The Big Read L.A. selection The Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson (Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003) with poetry reading and conversation about the poet after the screening. The program is free admission.

At 7 p.m. the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) features film adaptation of Meredith Willson's acclaimed Broadway musical *The Music Man* (Warner Brothers, 1962, 151 min;). Garnering six Academy Award® nods including "Best Picture", and winner for and winner for "Best Music, Scoring of Music."; Golden Globe winner and DGA nomination for director Morton DaCosta, among many other accolades, the movie stars Robert Preston and Shirley Jones leading a stellar cast. "We are excited to screen the 35mm print, that's a rare experience. The picture is an homage to America and the innocent era before WW I. We expect the audience to leave the theatre singing '76 Trombones' or one of the other familiar tunes. We've invited local school band members as our guests to appreciate and enjoy the music and story that they might not have ever been exposed to," commented Mardesich.

Prior to the screening the "76 Trombones Red Carpet Gala" reception takes place from 5-6:30 p.m. in the mezzanine lobby of the WGT. Along with Libation Sponsor SVEDKA citron vodka "Lemon-tinis" featured cocktail bar service will include wine, Port Town Beer from San Pedro Brewing Company (SPBC) and non-alcoholic beverage. Guests will enjoy tray passed appetizers and Americana buffet catered by Ports O'Call Restaurant and Epicurean Sponsors Wienerschnitzel, San Pedro Fish Market, Niko's Pizzeria, the Sandwich Saloon and SPBC. Choura Events provides party rentals. Entertainment by vocalist Rosie Brand. The HNT sponsors also include Plume Books (a division of Penguin Random House), Los Angeles Maritime Museum and The Popcorn Man.

Tickets for the HNT Gala are \$65 before February 22; \$75 after that date or at the door space permitting. Included in the price are film screening, souvenir program and party bag. Guests are encouraged to wear vintage or cocktail attire. General admission for film program only is \$10; no discounts.

"When we hear the audience commenting as they exit 'that was terrific, why they don't make movies like that anymore?' it confirms part of our mission to promote and preserve the best of classic Hollywood filmmaking. It's the greatest compliment and tribute after seeing a movie as intended, on the big screen, in the setting of a true 'movie palace' the WGT," added Mardesich.

Closing day March 19, known as "**DocSunday**" is presented by Associate Sponsor the Tesoro Foundation. Devoted to the documentary genre the films are POLA premieres. The opening program at 1 p.m. is *Humpback Whales*, (IMAX®, 2016 produced by MacGillivray Freeman Productions, presented in blue-ray). As noted by the Hollywood Reporter "A whale of a nature doc... *Humpback Whale* is a prime example of the power of large-format documentaries to educate, delight and inspire." The program is family oriented and educational entertainment. Program Sponsors include AltaSea, Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA) who will have experts in cetacean and aquatic studies speaking after the film in "Conversation and Q&A"; L.A. Waterfront Cruises (connected with Harbor Breeze Cruises) and Spirit Cruises, providing pairs of whale watch tickets that will be raffled; Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM); and Epicurean Sponsor the Whale & Ale (British pub & restaurant) who will feature "A Whale of A Special" on the menu over the festival dates. Alta Sea and CMA will also have literature and representative in the lobby to inform the public about their important marine missions.

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Closing program at 4 p.m. *Crows of the Desert – A Hero’s Journey Through The Armenian Genocide* tells the story of the first historically recognized of 1915 and account of tenacious Levon Yotnakhparian tracking his evolution from a humble tailor to a soldier fighting to save his fellow Armenians and other ethnic population compromised by the heinous actions of their adversaries. Directed by Rancho Palos Verdes resident Emmy Award winner Marta Houske the film is an odyssey into the past via the extraordinary archival footage and photos. Conversation and Q&A after the screening with the filmmaker and colleagues. (*Caution: Some of the archival visual imagery might be concern for youth and some adults*).

Additional LAHIFF sponsors include “Associate Sponsor” Tri-Marine Fisheries; ILWU Foremen’s Local #94; and J & L Mardesich Family Trust; “Benefactors” include the DCA, McNerney’s Mortuary and The Sher Foundation (Edward & Mona Soderstrom Sher). “Promotion” and “In-Kind” sponsors also include New Filmmakers L.A., Battleship Iowa, Golden State Pops Orchestra, Visit San Pedro (VSP), Grand Vision Foundation (GVF), The Arcade Building, Hollywood Heritage (HH), Inc., San Pedro Chamber of Commerce, Polish Film Festival L.A. and Highpark (an iStar Community).

More “Epicurean Sponsors” include Sacred Grounds, Think Prime, J. Trani’s Ristorante, Think Café, and Sonny’s Bistro. “Accommodations Sponsor” is the DoubleTree by Hilton, San Pedro - Cabrillo Marina. Print and art sponsors are National Promotions & Advertising (NPA), MJM Graphics, and Distinctive Edge Framing & Gallery. Official t-shirts are produced by Boca Activewear. Website sponsor is Smarsh/Advisors Square (Alysa Marks). Media Sponsors are San Pedro Today and Torrance Today.

The WGT, dedicated in 1931 by Jack Warner who declared “you’ll enter the palace of your dreams”, celebrates its 86th birthday this year. The theatre is one of the three Warner Brothers Theatres built in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, known as “the triplets.” Considered a treasure of the historic downtown SP, and the greater Los Angeles region, the WGT seats 1500 and the setting for a variety of stage productions and live performances including the Golden State Pops Orchestra concerts, annual San Pedro City Ballet production of “*The Nutcracker*”, graduation ceremonies, film productions, weddings, and community events. With 35mm film projection capability the WGT one of the exceptional venues in the entire country to view films in the classic tradition. Recently a new video projector has been added. On-going restoration of the theatre includes the “Save Your Seat” campaign lead by the GVF.

The LAHIFF offers stimulating and entertaining programming that inspires the audience and respects the integrity of the silver screen. “What the Warner Grand Theatre represents historically with regard to film appreciation and preservation is exceptionally important for the art form, and San Pedro as movies continue to be a valued source of entertainment and erudition appealing to every segment of society; a source of joy or catharsis,” stated Mardesich. “The LAHIFF honors tradition of ol Hollywood with an eye to the current cinema. The advent of changing technology makes it an even more precious experience and as long as we can locate 35mm prints we’ll continue to show films on the ‘big screen’ as they were originally intended.”

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Since its inception in 2003 LAHIFF has continued to sustain and gain support. In 2013 the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council presented Mardesich and the LAHIFF with a Proclamation for ten years of outstanding contribution to culture, education, and leadership.

The LAHIFF is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Contributions tax-deductible to the extent the law allows. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various benefit levels. The organization is volunteer driven with no paid employees. 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 educator James Cross, M.A.

General admission for festival programs is \$10; some programs are \$8 with discount for affiliations (LAMM, GVF, HH) seniors and students. Opening night film program only tickets are \$10; no discounts for the HNT. **Free Admission for U.S. Veterans and those currently serving in military forces on first come first seated basis.** Film program tickets on sale from February 15 online www.brownpapertickets.com, or (800)838-3006; and at the box office (cash only) during the festival dates one hour before program times. "There is a tacit understanding that so long as there are seats available no one will be turned away because they cannot afford a ticket. Though we have had a few SRO screenings over the years with 1500 seats in the WGT it's likely there will always be a place for a new audience member. We'll even provide popcorn." commented Mardesich.

As Supervisor Hahn concluded: "With its evocative programming the LAHIFF is a valued cultural event for all ages, celebrating the cinematic arts. We encourage residents, visitors, and tourists in and around the Los Angeles County and beyond to enjoy the variety of programs and also discover and appreciate everything San Pedro and the area has 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

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More about.....

Warner Grand Theatre: www.warnergrand.org

The Big Read L. A.: www.culturela.org

Peter Read Miller, photographer: www.peterreadmiller.com

Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM): www.lamaritimemuseum.org

New Filmmakers L.A.: www.NFMLA.org

Battleship Iowa: www.pacificbattleship.com

AltaSea: www.altasea.org

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium: www.cabrillomarineaquarium.org

San Pedro Chamber of Commerce: www.sanpedrochamber.com

Grand Vision Foundation (GVF): www.grandvision.org

Visit San Pedro: www.visitsp.com

Hollywood Heritage (HH): www.hollywoodheritage.org

Wellington Signs: www.wellingtonsigns.com

Bagpiper: surfcitypiper@hotmail.com

Films:

Crows of the Desert: www.crowsofthedesert.com

Se Dio Vuole: www.CinefestaItalia.com

The Music Man: www.imdb.com/title

Humpback Whales: macgillivrayfreeman.com/films