



13th Annual Garden State Film Festival Features 180 Films

Premieres and Award-winning Work Presented March 19-22, 2015 in Atlantic City

Atlantic City, NJ – March 5, 2015 – International, domestic and local filmmakers will showcase 180 films from 19 countries including a number of premieres and award-winners. “The festival program really runs the gamut this year and the quality is outstanding,” says festival executive director and founder, Diane Raver. “We are also excited by the well-known personalities from both sides of the camera who will be available to the festival attendees to discuss their work.”

Notables include festival honorees Ed Asner (MVP), Armand Assante (Lifetime Achievement), Siobhan Fallon Hogan (Spirit of New Jersey), Eric Roberts (Wave of Excellence), and James Wilder (Independent Spirit). They will be joined by a host of other featured actors from the presented films along with directors, cinematographers, composers and producers. Atlantic City VIPs attending the festival include the festivals 2014 and 2015 Honorary Chairmen Mayor Don Guardian and Resorts Casino Hotel Mark Giannantonio; and Deborah Frank, EVP of Frank Theatres and this year’s Impact Award recipient for Arts and Business Alliance. They will gather at the Opening Night Kick-Off Cocktail Party in Resorts Ballroom on Friday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25.00 and include the first screening.

Following the party at 8:20 p.m. in the Superstar Theater, the opening screenings begin with the short, *The Girl and the Gondola*. Directed by award winning writer/director Abbe Robinson, it’s a coming of age story shot in Venice about a young girl who wishes to follow in the footsteps of her gondolier father. The premiere feature is Jacob LaGuardia’s *As the Crow Flies*, an exciting adventure about a brother-sister duo of modern-day bootleggers as they transport cash from a bank robbery over mountain trails outwitting FBI agents and hijackers along the way. Up and comers Alec Shaw (*Meridian*), and Morgan Wolk (*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*) play the siblings, Boe and Bird.

In addition to this feature, suspense and mystery are the themes of several films headlined by well-known talent. *Charlie, Trevor and a Girl Savannah* is a psychological thriller making its worldwide premiere at the festival on Saturday, March 21 at 8:15 p.m. in Resorts Ballroom. Eric Roberts leads a young and talented cast as a psychiatrist trying to help a disturbed young man named Trevor, played by Toby Hemingway, with Ty Hodges and Emily Meade as Charlie and Savannah, respectively. Art and madness are explored in *The Painting* directed by Robert Rothbard, also making its worldwide premiere at the festival. With the help of his faithful butler, the talentless son of a famous dead artist will stop at nothing short of murder to be famous himself in this chilling drama playing

Saturday at 8:30 p.m. in the Claridge Showroom -3rd floor.

Starring James Wilder is the award-winning black comedy, *Three Holes, Two Brads and a Smoking Gun* (theatrical release title: *3 Holes and a Smoking Gun*). Wilder is garnering awards and critical acclaim as an ex-Hollywood screenwriter turned teacher in a battle of wits with a devious student. Scott Fivelson won for best screenplay and Wilder for best actor at the 2014 Downtown Film Festival in Los Angeles. Screening is Saturday at 5:45 p.m. in Resorts Screening Room. *The Antwerp Dolls*, an independent film from the U.K. makes its U.S. premiere at the festival. Directed by Jake L. Reid, this British crime thriller stars Jason Wing (*Rise of the Footsoldier, Hamlet*) as a ruthless gangster, who struggles to maintain his crumbling 'business' empire. It screens 8:15 p.m. on Saturday in the Screening Room 13th Floor at Resorts.

Dramatic and comedic full-length features with popular performers include Porter Farrell's *Windsor*, starring noted character actor Barry Corbin (*Lonesome Dove, No Country for Old Men*), Nick Krause (*The Descendants, Boyhood*) and Quinn Shephard (*Unaccompanied Minors*). Shephard is the festival's 2015 Rising Star, an annual honor bestowed on an up-and-coming actor/actress with New Jersey roots. She plays best friend to the daughter of a Texas farmer who collides with big agribusiness resulting in long-term and devastating effects on his family in the drama screening on Sunday, March 22 at 2:45 p.m. in Resort's Superstar Theater Dining Level. Director Phil Falcone's *Joe's War* screens at Resorts Superstar Theater – Dining Level on Saturday at 8 p.m. Co-starring Michael Markiewicz as Joe, Armand Assante and Ed Asner, the film deals with the challenges faced by a local hero on his return home from the war on terror.

Hollywood royalty - Shirley Jones, Lee Meriwether and Sally Struthers - add to the hilarity in director Jenn Page's *Waiting in the Wings: The Musical* in which a savvy male stripper takes a naïve farm boy under his wing as they pursue their dreams on Broadway via on-line contests. Starring Jeffrey A. Johns and Adam Huss as the mismatched pair, the film screens Saturday at 5:45 p.m. in the Claridge Hotel Showroom. 3rd Floor. Joseph Pernice's film *Chasing Yesterday* was shot on location in Monmouth County with an all-star cast of both seasoned and up-and-coming actors including Steve Schirripa (*The Sopranos, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*), Eric Nelsen (*A Walk Among the Tombstones, Epic*), Courtney Baxter, (*Night Has Settled, Hallows' Eve*) and Blanche Baker (*Sixteen Candles, The Girl Next Door*). This story of a washed up twenty something and former hometown hero, convinced by a local sweetheart to run a marathon and get his life back on track, screens at 2:45 p.m. on Saturday in Resorts Superstar Theater.

Full-length documentaries include *The Millionaires Unit* directed and produced by Ron King and based on the book by Marc Wortman. Known as the First Yale Unit, and dubbed 'the millionaires' unit' by the New York press, a privileged group of college students became the founding squadron of the U.S. Naval Air Reserve and were the first to fly and sacrifice for the U.S. in World War I. Descendants of these heroic men will attend the screening on Saturday in Resorts Screening Room at 12:15 p.m. Jeffrey Bonna's film *Oro Macht Frei (Gold Will Set You Free)* is the heartbreaking revelation of

the plight of Rome's Jewish population in World War II. After Italy's Armistice with the Allied Armies in 1943, much of Italy fell under the control of the Germans. In their nine-month occupation of Rome, the Nazis stripped Jews - whose families has prospered for generations in the most Catholic of cities - of their rights, assets and, in a false promise of salvation, demanded all their gold. It screens Sunday at noon in Resorts Ballroom. – Dining Level

Flory's Flame, directed by Curt Fissel, also concerns Jewish populations in Europe preceding and following the two World Wars. Flory Jagoda was born in Sarajevo to a musical family whose roots stretched back to Spain for centuries prior to the Jewish expulsion in 1492. These Sephardic Jews were among the last few speakers of their ancient and native tongue, Ladino. Songs were passed down through generations, ultimately reaching Flory, the only member of her extended family to survive the Holocaust. Now 90, she is a living archivist and preservationist of Ladino and has spent her career composing, recording and performing this music for worldwide audiences. The film is a compelling life history and a celebration of musical lore, and screens Sunday at 3:00 p.m. at Resorts Horizon Room-Dining Level.

Women athletes are the subject of two contrasting documentaries. The subject of Stella Walsh was one of the most celebrated female athletes of all time. After winning a gold medal in the 1932 Olympics 100 meters, she was a popular national figure until she was killed in a robbery and it was discovered that she had ambiguous gender. Directed by Rob Lucas, the film explores how this revelation generated controversy and bigotry; and features interviews with friends, trainers, members of the media and a geneticist. It screens at 2:45 on Saturday at Dante Hall. In Accidental Icon: The Real Gidget Story, director Brian Gillogly introduces us to Kathy Kohner Zuckerman and how her account of surfing Malibu in the mid-50's became the basis for a best-selling novel by her father Frederick Kohner. The documentary screens on Sunday at 3:00 PM Resorts Ballroom-Dining level.

In addition to film screenings and the cocktail party, panel discussions, book signings, Q & A sessions, educational programs, an open casting call, and a black-tie awards ceremony are offered to festival attendees. Weekend passes are \$45 and provide access to all screenings and sessions. Individual screening ticket are \$12 and the Awards Dinner is \$125. All can be purchased at www.gsff.org where information on films and the festival is also provided.

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About the Garden State Film Festival:

The Garden State Film Festival was envisioned by 25-year film industry veteran Diane Raver and the late Hollywood actor Robert Pastorelli in 2002 and launched the following year. Since 2003, thousands of films have made their public premiers, hundreds of thousands of people from around the world have attended; and the total infusion of cash to local businesses since inception exceeds \$5 million. Until 2013, it was held in Asbury Park, in and around the Convention Center complex. In 2014, it will move to Atlantic City as a major component of DO AC, the marketing campaign to promote arts and

culture the city spearheaded by the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority. The GSFF is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization.

About the Sponsors of the 13th Annual Garden State Film Festival:

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