



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
2008 RHODE ISLAND
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
MEDIA RELEASE

For Details, Photographs or Videos about RIIFF News Releases,
Contact: Adam M.K. Short, Producing Director
adams@film-festival.org • 401.861-4445
Written By: Abra Moore

12th ANNUAL RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL:
289 FILMS. 53 COUNTRIES. 6 RUNNING DAYS. 1 OPENING NIGHT.
RIIFF 2008 Presents an Extraordinary Night of International
Short Films and Festivities

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (July 22, 2008)— A brilliant and unforgettable selection of short films from around the world await an anticipating audience at the August 5th Opening Ceremony of the **12th Annual Rhode Island International Film Festival**. The night's exhilarating line-up will showcase some of the finest examples of independent and international short films. Chosen from over 3,000 submissions, the stimulating selection will be shown in the elegant Providence Performing Arts Center (PPAC), 220 Weybosset Street.

The Master of Ceremonies for the evening is actor **John Ratzenberger** who is most remembered as Cliff Clavin from "Cheers!" As the legendary trademark voice for Disney/Pixar Studios, John has been heard in "Toy Story," "A Bug's Life," "Cars," "Toy Story 2," "Monsters, Inc.," "The Incredibles," "Finding Nemo," "Ratatouille," "WALL-E," and the upcoming "Toy Story 3." His latest feature film, "The Village Barbershop," will have its world premiere with the **Rhode Island International Film Festival** at the Columbus Theatre Arts Center on Wednesday night, August 6th at 7:00 p.m.

RIIFF's Opening Night Program will honor the "Art of the Short Film," a signature theme for the Festival. Some of the best short films that the 2008 festival has to offer will be showcased between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. on the grand 50-foot screen in PPAC, with major support from Sony Corporation. The films screened will represent an array of genres saluting RIIFF's unique status as the lone film festival in New England that is a qualifying event for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences "Oscar". There are more than 7,000 total film festivals worldwide; only 61 have been granted this prestigious distinction.

Since last September, we have been inundated with film entries," said RIIFF Executive Director, George T. Marshall. "Now we are able to share with audiences the amazing film work that has come to us from all over the world. These are powerful, unique and exceptional films. One of the most striking things about film festivals is that they have such a diverse range of themes and work - audiences can expect a bit more than just popcorn entertainment."

"Our calling card has always been our stellar reputation. We are highly recognized by both audiences and filmmakers for screening thoughtful cinematic pieces," added Adam Short, RIIFF's Producing Director. "This is work that inspires, touches the heart, and - in some cases - encourages our audience to take action."

This year's opening ceremony will screen ten short films. Included in these, are one World premiere and three US/North American premieres. These films were created from a vast number of locations across the globe, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, India, Canada, and even here in the United States

SOME HIGHLIGHTS:

Making its **World premiere** is the British short **"Gone Fishing"** directed by Chris Jones. Unique, with an unexpected twist, the film is the touching story of a boy and old man coming to terms with loss through their shared love of fishing, and the legend of Goliath, the biggest pike ever caught! The film features Bill Paterson, Devon Murray ("Seamus Finnigan" in the Harry Potter films), James Wilson, Lin Blakley, and Ruth Gemmell.

Making its **United States premiere** is the visually striking animation, **"Varmints"** written by Helen Ward and directed by award-winning filmmaker, Marc Craste. From the United Kingdom this beautifully realized film began life as a popular illustrated children's story. It is a cautionary fable where the most overlooked threat in the world is the loss of peace and quiet. Can someone find the time and space to stop, think and plant the seeds of change? In this amazing work that spares words and creates epic images to make the imagination and the heart soar.

From Ireland comes Steph Green's charming **"New Boy."** Based on a short story by Roddy Doyle this poignant and comedic short film deftly captures the experience of being the new boy in school through the eyes of Joseph, a nine-year-old African boy.

From American director, Bill Block, comes the uplifting and powerful story **"The Drummer."** In this 'love letter to music,' a down-and-out musician gets one last opportunity to realize his dream, but must embark on a journey that takes him far beyond his comfort zone.

The Gala Opening Film Screenings will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Providence Performing Arts Center's main theatre. Admission to this event is \$20 per person. The opening night will also serve as a partial fund-raiser for the Patricia Neal Scholarship Fund.

Prior to the film screenings, the night will begin in the Marquee Room of the Providence Performing Arts Center with the **OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL RECEPTION** from 5-6:45 p.m. Joined by an undoubtedly "Cheery" MC for the evening, John Ratzenberger, the night promises to exude energy and media artistry. A musical accompaniment by jazz pianist Louis Vaughan will be heard and delicious catering by Ellen Loconto will be provided. Presidential tickets are available to the public for \$100 dollars per person on a limited basis and will provide access to all opening night events and parties.

According to Demetria Carr, RIFF's Associate Producing Director, who has created the evening's events, "This Official Pre-Opening Reception is the 'must attend' event of the festival because it is reserved specifically for filmmakers, sponsors, press, visiting celebrities, and special guests. The opening's exclusive gala party allows guests to meet and greet this year's visiting filmmakers and special guests.

Immediately following the film screenings, the evening is crowned with "CELEBRATION: RIFF '08: Opening Night Party." This post-premiere party will be held in the lobby area of PPAC. This event is \$40 per person and will start immediately following the screening and will continue until 11 PM. Combination tickets for both the film screening and party are available for \$50.

Guests will enjoy a night of food and festivities, all with a clever twist of international flavor, in tribute to visiting international filmmakers. A taste of Providence's fabulous restaurants will be featured and enjoyed throughout the evening. Harpoon Brewery will provide members of the opening night party with their famous, celestial UFO beer.

A wide range of films will be screened during the week of the **12th Annual Rhode Island International Film Festival**. Besides the Courthouse Center for the Arts in West Kingston, venues will be scattered throughout the state's prestigious capital city. They include: The Cable Car Cinema, the Providence Public Library, the Bell Street Chapel, Columbus Theatre Arts Center, Brown/RISD Hillel, URI Feinstein Providence, Providence Black Repertory Theatre, and the RISD Museum.

Recognized as the largest film festival in New England, RIIFF prides itself in celebrating the art of independent filmmaking. The 2008 Festival will screen 289 films that reflect a variety of styles, perspectives and genres: documentaries, features, animation, and shorts. Many of the filmmakers are expected to attend the Festival making for a lively audience experience and an opportunity to interact, ask questions and discuss.

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, WJAR TV10, The Providence Phoenix, Clear Channel Communications, Sony, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, Amtrak, Rule Broadcast/Boston Camera, the Biltmore Hotel, Amtrak, the URI's College of Arts and Sciences, URI's Feinstein College of Continuing Education, the URI Film Media Program, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Art New England Magazine* and contributions from members and community supporters.

The Flickers Arts Collaborative, an organization with 25 years of experience presenting major artistic events as well as independent and foreign films to the public, produces the Rhode Island International Film Festival.

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 with advance booking. To purchase tickets or obtain more information about any aspect of RIIFF, call 401-861-4445; or write RIIFF, 268 Broadway, Providence, RI 02903; email info@film-festival.org. or log onto www.RIFilmFest.org.

SELECTIONS FOR THIS YEAR'S OPENING NIGHT SCREENING:

GONE FISHING

Chris Jones, director

United Kingdom, 13 min. 2008

World Premiere

"Gone Fishing" is the touching story of a boy and old man coming to terms with bereavement through their shared love of fishing, and the legend of Goliath, the biggest pike ever caught!

The story is in part autobiographical -- while growing up, director Chris Jones and his friends would often attempt to catch the legendary 'Oscar the pike', a fish that according to local myth terrorized the lake at the end of his road, the aptly named Blue Lagoon. This was the inspiration behind the legend of 'Goliath', the big fish in this even bigger tale.

NEW BOY

Steph Green, director
Ireland, 11 min. 2008

Based on a short story by Roddy Doyle this poignant and comedic short film deftly captures the experience of being the new boy in school through the eyes of Joseph, a nine-year-old African boy.

STRUCK

Taron Lexton, director
United States, 7 min. 2008

Struck by an arrow that won't come out, Joel resolves to live with his unusual affliction, despite the torments from life.

THE DRUMMER

Bill Block, director
United States, 19 min. 2008

Defeated and alone, Dave wanders the streets in the early hours of his 40th birthday. His great love is music, from a long forgotten era, and he has dedicated himself to it. But no one's listening. This is the end of Dave's dream... and things go from bad to worse until he is offered a job: a wedding in Connecticut. One last chance to play, but with a band he has never met.

The band is late and Dave must endure the wrath of the Party Planner. Only the Singer has shown up and the music is supposed to start. Since this is his last shot, Dave decides to play. It is a disaster. The Guests are horrified and the Bride is in tears but Dave keeps playing. The Groom is ready to kill but is stopped by his own parents who have come onto the dance floor to request a song. Dave obliges and as he plays, they dance beautifully together which inspires the Singer to join in. Suddenly, the scene takes on a palpable magic and the room is spellbound.

Later... The band finally shows only to discover the party going wild while Dave and the Singer perform an up-tempo crowd pleaser from the Big Band era. As Dave channels his musical heroes, he is reborn.

ECLIPSE

Mark Lapwood, director
Australia/India/New Zealand, 10 min. 2008

"Eclipse" is a non-verbal film consisting solely of music & images. This cinematic piece provides an impressionistic window into a slice of life on the streets of present day Mumbai. The film explores the vast contrast between the beauty of nature, the elements, and the earthy reality of those less fortunate living on the streets of India's economic capital.

PATIENCE

Robert Hackett, director
United Kingdom, 7 min. 2008

"Patience" is a moving story set on a hospital ward and focuses on the relationship between two old women. In beds next to each other but separated by a screen, Constance has a view of a park and Vera listens to descriptions of what is happening outside. Although entertained Vera is also envious of this view of the outside world and eventually the desire for her own window becomes overwhelming.

VARMIINTS

Marc Craste, director
United Kingdom, 24 min. 2008

US Premiere

Friendly-looking rodent-like creatures blissfully and quietly garden in a tranquil countryside. But their world of nature is swept away by an industrial revolution, so noisy that no one can hear themselves think. So they stop thinking, everything goes black. But one small rodent still nurtures plants in his little apartment. One day, he feels a strange sense of hope, and that it is time to move on. He carries his beloved plants to an air vent through which light is streaming, and leaves them. The plants are taken in by mysterious other beings, and varmints find an unexpected place where they can be truly at home, with grass and birdsong.

THE WALL

Michael Lloyd Green, director

United States, 8 min, 2008

After years of struggling against unbearable guilt, Bernard wants nothing more than to put an end to his pain – even at the cost of his own life. A lonely New York City cellist, he spends his days drowning his memories, desperately seeking release from their smothering grasp. At night, he pours himself into his cello in hopes of escaping, if only for a song.

On the other side of Bernard's tenement wall, a new resident is moving in – a woman whose passion for classical music is matched only by Bernard's. And like him, she is no stranger to tragedy. After surviving the Holocaust, Miriam has found life to be little more than a series of heartbreaking events, leaving her a broken shell of the woman she longs to be.

But on the first night of her move in, as she unpacks her records, Miriam finds herself drawn to the wall of her apartment by the low drone of Bernard's cello. Dragging a stool toward the wall, she sits and listens, enlivened for the first time in years. But, unknown to her, this may be Bernard's final performance.

THE NEXT FLOOR

Denis Villeneuve, director

Canada/France, 12 min. 2008

US Premiere

During an opulent and luxurious banquet, complete with contingents of servers and valets, eleven pampered guests participate in what appears to be a ritualistic culinary carnage. In this phantasmagoric, otherworldly universe an unexpected sequence of events destabilises the endless symphony of abundance.

FRANKIE

Darren Thornton, director

Ireland, 12 min. 2008

North American Premiere

Frankie is 15 and preparing for fatherhood. He is determined that he is going to be the best dad ever, but as his day goes on, he starts to realise how impossible this will be for him.

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ABOUT THE RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL:

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF)** discovers and empowers filmmakers. Held in Providence, and locations throughout the state of Rhode Island, RIIFF is one of only a handful of festivals worldwide that is a qualifying event for the Academy Awards (i.e. "Oscars"). RIIFF incorporates gala celebrations, premiere screenings, VIP guests, industry seminars, educational programs, and award ceremonies into a week long extravaganza. Cited as one of the "Best International and Short Film Festivals in the United States," RIIFF is New England's largest film festival, screening a record 289 films. Its innovative

programming, cultivated industry ties, and loyal audiences have made the Festival a strategic and desirable platform for film premieres, drawing hundreds of independent filmmakers from around the globe. This year's Festival takes place August 5-10, 2008.

For more information, write RIFF, P.O. Box 162, Newport, RI 02840. Telephone: 401-861-4445. E-mail: info@film-festival.org, website: www.RIFilmFest.org