



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
2009 RHODE ISLAND
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
MEDIA RELEASE

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RIIFF'S ANNUAL GLBT FILM FESTIVAL SIDEBAR PROMISES TO PROVOKE AND CHALLENGE

***Programming to Feature Focus on Marriage Equality, Civil Rights and
Issues Ripped off the Front Page of the Newspapers***

PROVIDENCE, RI (July 21, 2009) — One of the most popular cinematic sidebars of the **annual Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF)** returns for its 13th year: the **Providence GLBT Film Festival**, August 4-9th. Films made by, for and about the GLBT community have played an integral role in RIIFF, one of New England's premiere film festivals. This year the GLBT festival is screening 22 films from across the globe on an array of topics that touch everything from the Gay Olympics, gender identification to gay marriage equality. A key theme that will surface throughout the Festival is the role of the individual in society and where does one's conscience begin and social responsibility end. This theme is pointedly addressed by many of this year's GLBT films that will be screened. The full schedule can be accessed online at <http://riff.bside.com/2009/schedule/week>

"Over the years, we have worked hard at seamlessly integrating these exceptional films with non-GLBT films in order to introduce general audiences to work they might not otherwise see," said **Sinan Akyuz**, RIIFF's GLBT programming coordinator. "The 22 films selected to represent this popular sidebar have been spread throughout the festival and not locked into one time zone.

"We are very pleased to be again working with the Bell Street Chapel in Providence where a major portion of this work will be screened," added **Demetria Carr**, RIIFF's Managing Director "As part of our partnership and community outreach, RIIFF will donate 50% of the gate to the Bell Street Chapel to help underwrite their year-round GLBT efforts."

FOCUS ON GAY MARRIAGE EQUALITY:

According to **George T. Marshall**, RIIFF's Executive Director, "Rhode Island is the lone hold out in New England recognizing the intrinsic civil rights of a group of tax-paying Americans who have been treated with disdain and as second-class citizens. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Vermont and Iowa already allow gay marriage and the logic supporting these unions boil down to providing the same rights, responsibilities - and respect--under the law any American citizens should expect and demand.

"Our intent is to provide a platform that educates and challenges audiences with this year's GLBT side-bar Festival, and hopefully reframe the debate in terms of legal and civil rights. With 60% of Rhode Islanders in favor of gay marriage according to recent polls, there is obviously a disconnect with the political leadership.

"To quote from the Iowa Supreme Court, 'denying gays the right to marry is discriminatory,'" added Marshall. "In a state that hails Roger Williams as its founder, Rhode Island needs to do better and live up to its long held principles. The train has left the station on this issue and Rhode Island is on the wrong side of history."

Added **Richard Corso**, the RIFF's Hospitality manager who has established the links to the Bell Street Chapel, "As a Unitarian Universalist congregation (at the Bell Street Chapel) we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals. Therefore we have long been supporters of equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals. As the first religious organization in Rhode Island to take a public stand in favor of equal marriage rights for same-sex couples we are especially excited with this year's focus on marriage equality."

PANELS DISCUSSIONS PLANNED:

Wednesday, August 5th

MARRIAGE EQUALITY DISCUSSION PANEL

After screening a film that addresses issues related to equal marriage rights for same-sex couples, there will be a panel discussion. Participants will include filmmakers, Kathy Kushnir, Executive Director of Marriage Equality Rhode Island, Rev. Jose Ballester, consulting minister of Bell Street Chapel, and members of the Rhode Island General Assembly who support marriage equality legislation.

Thursday, August 6th

COMING OUT DISCUSSION PANEL –

After a series of short films the Bell Street Chapel will host a discussion on coming out issues. Our panel will include filmmakers, James Robinson, Executive Director of Youth Pride, Inc. (YPI), and youth from YPI. YPI provides support, advocacy, and education for youth and young adults throughout Rhode Island who are impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Friday, August 7th

FILMS, MUSIC AND DRAG

A special event: New York drag persona *Carmella Cann* will host an evening of films, filmmaker question and answer sessions, and music. Films will include the short film "*It's Me, Matthew*," written and produced by Carmella's alter ego *Michael Ferreira*.

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival** will take place August 4th through 9th, 2009. Ranked as a one of the Top 12 Film Festivals in the United States, this world-class festival will be held at venues around the capital of Providence. RIFF features screenings, filmmaking workshops, meet-and-greet industry events and two industry symposia. Aiming to promote Rhode Island as a filmmaking location and to celebrate the independent filmmaking spirit, RIFF also hosts a number of high-profile premières and provides a showcase for international features, documentaries, and shorts. This year, the Festival will have **38 World** and **22 US/North American Premieres**.

A complete list of films screening at this year's GLBT Festival follows with show times and venues. Along with these 22 films made for, by, and about the GLBT community, the **Rhode Island International Film Festival** will be screening 235 films the week of the festival on an array of brilliant topics that will be sure to captivate its audiences. As the largest film festival in New England, RIFF prides itself in screening the best of independent film there is, at venues throughout the state of Rhode Island.

A wide range of films will be screened during the week of the 13th 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, Gallery Z, the Bell Street Chapel, Columbus Theatre Arts Center, Brown/RISD Hillel, URI Feinstein Providence, Providence, Local 121, and the RISD Museum, Chace Auditorium.*

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival** is generously supported by *WJAR TV 10, The City of Providence, the Providence Tourism Council, WBRU, The Providence Biltmore Hotel,, Columbus Theatre Arts Center, Sony, Amtrak, HB Communications, The Providence Phoenix, the University of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts* and individual contributions. The 13th annual Rhode Island International Film Festival will take place August 4-9, 2009 in the state's beautiful capital city, Providence and throughout Rhode Island.

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 weeklong 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 200 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 4-9, 2009.

For more information, write **RIIFF**, PO Box 162, Newport, RI 02840. Telephone: 401-861-4445, e-mail: info@film-festival.org, website: www.RIFilmFest.org.

THE 2009 GLBT SCHEDULE:

ANNIE LEBOVITZ "SO, THERE YOU GO"

Directed by Douglas Sloan
(2009, 9 min. U S A.)

Commissioned by the International Center of Photography Museum this film was created to honor Annie Leibovitz and her Lifetime Achievement Infinity Award. The film looks back at 40 years of Leibovitz' work beginning with her reportage work for Rolling Stone through her current work for Vanity Fair and Vogue.

Screening: Thurs Aug 6, 2009, 2:00 pm | RISD Museum, Chace Auditorium

ASSUME NOTHING

Directed by Kirsty MacDonald
(2009, 82 min. New Zealand)

Many of us assume that there are only two genders and that being female or male follows from the sex of our biological bodies. Focusing on the art, photography and performances of four 'alternative' gender artists of Maori, Samoan-Japanese, and Pakeha descent, Assume Nothing poses the questions: 'What if 'male' and 'female' are not the only options? How do other genders express themselves through art?' Candid, playful and provocative, Assume Nothing travels from Wellington's Red Rocks to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to explore the potent creative world that flourishes between and beyond genders.

Screening: Sun Aug 9, 2009, 7:00 pm | Columbus Theatre Arts Center

ASTORIA, QUEENS

Directed by Kyle Coker
(2009, 21 min. U S A)

Inspired by The Wizard of Oz, four Kansas City misfits navigate their new lives in the scary, but exciting Emerald City of New York.

Screening: Fri Aug 7, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

Claiming the Title: Gay Olympics On Trial

Directed by Jonathan Joiner and Robert Martin
(2009, 29 min. U S A)

In 1982, an athletic group tries to hold a "Gay Olympics," instigating what will ultimately become a battle at the U.S. Supreme Court and a challenge over the place of gays and lesbians in American society.

Screening: Sat Aug 8, 2009, 7:15 pm | Bell Street Chapel

DANDELION DHARMA

Directed by Veronica DiPippo
(2008, 26 min. U S A)

Trudy (Amanda Tepe), a distraught 20-something, stands brokenhearted and sobbing in the community garden plot she once shared with her fiancé.

Suddenly, she is interrupted by three mysterious women: 80-year old Brit - Emma Chaise (Mimi Cozzens) – feisty former WWII fighter pilot; Liah Montez (Myriam Tubert) - 70-something Hispanic beauty - former owner of a whorehouse in Guadalajara, and "Mad" Sonja (Damara Reilly) - a hip reefer-smoking ex-dancer. As the women become intimate sharing their personal stories of failed romance... along with laced brownies and shots of vodka.... Trudy begins to fall under their spell.

Following tales of love and loss, where "beginnings come from endings, endings from beginnings," Trudy's perception of life changes, as she uncovers new meaning to the words "letting go".

Screening: Wed Aug 5, 2009, 9:15 pm | Columbus Theatre Arts Center

FISH OUT OF WATER

Directed by Ky Dickens
2009, 60 min. U S A)

In "Fish out of Water", a young lesbian's rejection by her Christian peers propels her to consult America's premier theologians in a dissection and debunking of the seven Bible verses used to condemn homosexuality and justify discrimination.

Screening: Sat Aug 8, 2009, 7:15 pm | Bell Street Chapel

Flight To Sinai

Directed by Charlie Vaughn
(2008, 28 min. U S A)

16 year old Jack Strong comes out to his religious parents and gets sent to a summer camp to change his sexuality.

Screening: Thurs Aug 6, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

FRUIT FLY

Directed by H.P. Mendoza
(2009, 95 min. U S A)

Bethesda, a Filipina performance artist, moves into a San Francisco artist commune in the hopes of moving her one woman show to a big city. Along with the numerous friends she makes in the art community, she also finds clues to the whereabouts of her biological mother, lessons in humility, and the startling realization that she just might be a fag-hag. All told through 14 original musical numbers written by H.P. Mendoza (Colma: The Musical).

Screening: Fri Aug 7, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

¿IGUALES?

Directed by JAVIER DE LA TORRE

(2008, 15 min. Spain)

Adela isn't the girl from a romantic comedy. Hassan isn't the gallant hero of an adventure film. Sylvia isn't at all like a femme fatale. And Sofía isn't either what we can call an ideal mother. What they are and what they look for... well, does it matter?

Screening: Wed Aug 5, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

Screening: Sat Aug 8, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

I HAVE IT

Directed by Sam Griffith

(2009, 21 min. U S A)

"I HAVE IT" follows Emily and George (Larisa Oleynik and Devon Gummersall, respectively), a couple meeting for the first time after finding each other on an online dating site for individuals with HIV. George is an upper class mid-late twenties man, who has always embraced his privileged upbringing. He is likeable, good-looking, conservative, and never thought the unthinkable would happen to him. Emily is quirky and predictably liberal, consciously making herself stand out as unique. She is sweet, good-natured, and blatantly honest. While meeting for the first time, their conversation covers a variety of bases, until the white elephant in the room, their disease, is finally addressed. It turns out they both just want someone to talk to, to understand, to listen.

Screening: Fri Aug 8, 2009, 7:15 pm | Bell Street Chapel

IT'S ME, MATTHEW!

Directed by Neil Stephens

(2008, 15 min. U S A)

It's Me, Matthew! is a psychological drama, based on a true story. "Matthew", deals with the notion that in life we may subconsciously follow patterns from our childhood.

Screening: Fri Aug 7, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

JAMES

Directed by Connor Clements

(2008, 17 min. Ireland/ United Kingdom)

When James realises long buried secrets can lead to poor family relations, he feels it's time to confide with his only friend a secret of his own.

Screening: Thurs Aug 6, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

LIFE IS A BANQUET

Directed by Jonathan Gruber

(2009, 59 min. U S A)

Life is a Banquet is a documentary on the life and work of Academy Award and Tony Award-winning actress Rosalind Russell. From her early days in memorable films such as The Women, through career highlights like His Girl Friday and Auntie Mame, to her

philanthropic work on behalf of arthritis research and other causes, Rosalind Russell's story is one that continues to amaze and inspire.

Screening: Fri Aug 7, 2009, 9:30 pm | Columbus Theatre Arts Center, Cinemathèque

Out in the Silence

Directed by Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson

(2009, 56 min. U S A)

The announcement of filmmaker Joe Wilson's wedding to another man ignites a firestorm of controversy and a quest for change in the small Pennsylvania hometown he left long ago. Drawn back by a plea for help from the mother of a gay teen being tormented at school, Wilson takes viewers on an exhilarating journey through love, hate, and understanding in rural America.

Screening: Wed Aug 5, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

Sandhill Boys

Directed by Laura Klein

(2009, 20 min. U S A)

"SANDHILL BOYS" is a film about two men, A.D. and The Man (Donald), who spend their days quietly discussing the nature of love and life amongst the tobacco barns and sandy fields of North Carolina's Sandhill region. As the mentally trapped Donald relives the only meaningful moment of his past, A.D. seizes his destiny and sets out to tell the woman of his dreams that he loves her. After falling victim to his own fears and unable to get the words out, A.D. returns to the same spot he and Donald inhabit, and both men continue living their debilitated existences without hope of ever finding meaning or love.

Screening: Fri Aug 7, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

Storm

Directed by Joan Beveridge

(2008, 13 min. United Kingdom)

A daughter's unexpected visit to her estranged mother triggers an emotional storm leading to sudden and explosive violence.

Screening: Wed Aug 5, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

STUBBLEJUMPER

Directed by David Geiss

(2009, 48 min. Canada)

A unique docu-drama about the life of Saskatchewan-born gay activist Doug Wilson, who was suspended from the University of Saskatchewan in 1975. This biographical film is one hour and utilizes both documentary elements as well as dramatic scenes to tell the story of this captivating and influential man.

Screening: Sat Aug 8, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

SWIMMING WITH LESBIANS

Directed by David Marshall

(2009, 69 min. U S A)

It has been said, "Gays have a past but no history." Gays and Lesbians don't grow up immersed in gay history, it is something they must search for. For those coming of age in the 1950's, much of significant American gay history is their personal history -- the Mattachine Society, Stonewall, the gay rights movement, psychiatric redefinition of homosexuality, Don't Ask Don't Tell, Romer v. Evens, AIDS, civil unions, marriage -- it's all in the last 50 years. Swimming with Lesbians is a film that explores an upstate New York

community's efforts to create an LGBT historic archive – led by the extraordinary Madeline Davis.

Screening: Wed Aug 5, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

The Queen

Directed by Christina Choe

(2009, 7 min. U S A)

Bobby, a Korean-American teenage outcast, is working at his parents dry cleaners on prom weekend. When the prom queen and her boyfriend, stop by with their dress and tuxedo, Bobby has his own prom to remember.

Screening: Thurs Aug 6, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

Screening: Fri Aug 7, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

The Satyr of Springbok Heights

Directed by Robert Silke

(2009, 54 min. South Africa)

Meet the inmates of an architecture that captivates. The location: Cape Town, South Africa. Springbok Heights is a tightly-wound knot of studio apartments... an art-deco masterpiece that weaves its residents into its mortar.

Wouter Malan: Co-op Chairman, musical tendencies, greasy facial hair. Wouter retired early from his career in physical education.

Hilda Steyn: Six-foot-three, impressively large hands. Hilda's had a crush on Wouter for forty years, but since undergoing elective surgery in the 1970s, Hilda lacks the one thing Wouter seeks most in a companion.

An affluent simpleton, two poor lesbians and a not-unattractive specimen of vermin swell the socially-claustrophobic ranks of this tiny universe, which Springbok Heights strains to contain.

Expert interviews reveal the terrifyingly-beautiful qualities of a building that holds its inmates in its thrall.

Screening: Thurs Aug 6, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

The Single Mother

Directed by Ryan Logan

(2009, 6 min. U S A)

Meet The Single Mother - a big-hearted transvestite reincarnation of June Cleaver, who embarks on a perilous journey to obtain the nuclear family featured in his tattered Home & Garden magazines. With the unfortunate predicament of being unable to conceive himself (but not for lack of trying), he pursues increasingly desperate means to procure a child of his own. He attempts adoption. He strives to become a nanny. He even makes a run at luring hyperactive children out of a park using candy. When anatomy gets in the way of destiny... the oven mitts are off.

Screening: Fri Aug 7, 2009, 7:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

Weak Species

Directed by Dan Faltz

(2008, 34 min. U S A)

Classmates Steve and George are part of a frightening food-chain. Seducing his classmates gives Steve a sense of purpose and fuels his art and poetry. When Steve sets

his sights on the school star athlete, he starts a cat and mouse chase which could ruin him and his idol. At odds with each other, George and Steve have more in common than they realize. As their paths spiral downward, they could save each other, or continue on their way to self-destruction.

Screening: Thurs Aug 6, 2009, 9:30 pm | Bell Street Chapel

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