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ENTERTAINING 'LIIFE'

LIIFE **LONG ISLAND** **INTERNATIONAL FILM EXPO**

*Celebrating the Independent Spirit
of the Filmmaker!*



Long Island International Film Expo (LIIFE)
Showcases at the Bellmore Movies July 7-14

Presenting over 115 films from around the world, opening night features 'As If I Am Not There' on July 8; documentaries shine

The Long Island International Film Expo (LIIFE) will hold its 14th annual annual acclaimed film festival installment at the historic Bellmore Movies from July 7-14.

Showing over 115 films from around the world, one thing has been noticed by the selection committee: "Eleven documentaries were released theatrically last year, more than any other year to date, and even our programming lends to the fact that this is the year of the documentary," said Nassau County Film Office Director Debra Markowitz.

While critically acclaimed short and feature-length, student and animated films will be shown, the abundance of documentaries and foreign films will take the lead this year.

Abundance of documentaries

Of particular note, the Irish/Bosnian film, "As If I Am Not There," will be the official opening night feature on Friday, July 8, at 7 p.m. Although a feature film and not a documentary, this film realistically portrays the atrocities that occurred during the Bosnian/Serbian war.

"As If I Am Not There" opened at the Toronto Film Festival and has won many awards at major film festivals worldwide. LIIFE is proud to have it as part of its programming.

Documentaries to be screened cover subjects including how a community

comes together to honor their wounded warriors; how Burmese citizens suffer adverse conditions in their native home; how a family has to collect cans to survive after the father becomes unemployed; and how a high school football team from Dearborn, Michigan, prepares for its big crosstown rivalry game during the last ten days of Ramadan.

A psychologist shows how he uses trauma techniques to treat survivors of hurricane Katrina. Another documentary follows two MMA fighters in their training and daily lives, while another documents the commemorating of mass graves in Poland many years after the Holocaust.

"Long Island Uncovered" is a documentary film that takes an in-depth and behind-the-scenes look at the private lives of Long Island's top tribute/cover band musicians. From the midlife-crisis-based King of the Hamptons with cameos by Alec Baldwin, Billy Joel and others, to the history of John Muir, the founder of the New York State parks system, there truly is something for everyone.

Inspirational films abound with "Defining Beauty: Ms. Wheelchair America" and "Composed," a documentary that follows brilliant musician Chris Errera, a working composer about to release his first album.

Trained in classical piano since the age of four, his day job is teaching

autistic children music composition and theory. Mr. Errera was born with diastrophic dwarfism and stands at only 4-feet, 6-inches. Fighting an already uphill battle, he lost the use of his legs and lower body in 2000 to spinal stenosis.

He is a man with a goal, a passion, and a love for music and plans to perform for both the opening and closing night parties at the LIIFE.

Among the short- and feature-length foreign, student, animated and every other film imaginable, LIIFE even presents a horror block for those interested in that genre.

The horror!

Butch Patrick (Eddie from "The Munsters") is planning to make an appearance to support the short horror film in which he plays a role.

Besides the many Long Island, New York and U.S. films, films can be seen from France, Venezuela, South Korea, Singapore, Israel, Italy, Australia, Canada, Palestinian Territories, London, Burma, Thailand, Ireland, Macedonia Syria and Sweden.

"Lily of the Feast" is a short film produced by Nassau County's Michael Ricigliano Jr. and directed by Federico Castelluccio (Furio from "The Sopranos"), starring Paul Sorvino and Tony Lo Bianco. Federico, Tony and Michael plan to be on hand for a Q&A after the film.

"Jesse," a feature film directed by Suffolk's Fred Carpenter, features Armand Assante, William Forsythe and Eric Roberts.

While aiming to entertain, LIIFE also prides itself on educating. Panels on script writing, film distribution and a filmmakers' breakfast panel happen during the weekend. There is also an opening night buffet and technical award ceremony on Friday night.

Closing ceremonies

At the closing party and awards ceremony, actor Ed Burns will accept a Creative Achievement Award from the not-for-profit 501(c)3 group the Long Island Film-TV Foundation.

County Executive Edward Mangano will accept a Benefactor of the Arts Award as well. More celebrities and notables will be on hand to present awards to the winning films and filmmakers, their names to be confirmed as we get closer to opening night.

As always, celebrities appear schedule permitting, and people drop in and out leading up to the actual event. Film festival winners are chosen by a combination of judges' votes and audience ballots.

The schedule for the Long Island International Film Expo is available in this newspaper. Or call 571-3168 or 783-3199.

See you at the movies!

Bellmore Life