

LI International Film Expo



The Long Island International Film Expo (LIIFE) will hold its 14th annual installment at the historic Bellmore Movies, from July 7-14. Showing more than 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.

Of particular note, the Irish/Bosnian film, "As If I Am Not There," will be the official opening night feature, on 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. "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 mid-life 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 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 4, his day job is teaching autistic children music composition and theory. Chris 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. Chris is a man with a goal, passion, and a love for music and plans to perform for both the opening and closing night parties.

Besides the many Long Island, New York and USA 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" (pictured) 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 will be on hand for a Q&A.

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 tech award ceremony on Friday night. 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.

For a complete film schedule and for ticket information, visit the Web site at www.longislandfilm.com; or call 516 571-3168 or 516 783-3199.

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call: 631-698-8400

Town Crier - June 16, 2011

Merrick Bellone