

For Release – 18 April 2011 – NEWS –
For further info: 713-965-9955 or info@worldfest.org

WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival Wraps Up 44th Season with 21 World Premieres!

WorldFest-Houston, the third longest-running International Film Festival in North America, celebrated the conclusion of its 10-day run of film, fun and fanfare in its 44th annual independent film showcase with a 14% increase in overall audience attendance! Kicking off WorldFest's Opening Night festivities on Friday, April 8, was the Texas premiere of Chad Waterhouse and Ankush Kholi's poignant road film *EXODUS FALL* (Jesse James, Rosanna Arquette) with producer, Michael Baumgarten and both directors on hand to present their film. WorldFest also this year celebrated its Sixth annual Panorama Italia in collaboration with Albert di Mauro, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles, CA. (IIC), featuring Laura Luchetti's *FEBBRE DA FIENO* and three other independently produced Italian films. Closing weekend festivities April 16 & April 17 included a Grand Awards Gala on Saturday night that culminated with a Sunday morning VIP NASA & Space Center Houston whirlwind tour and WorldFest Consular Regatta and Barbeque hosted by Port of Houston Authority and The Houston Yacht Club. The "Kiwi Cowboys" from Hempstead, Texas accompanied by two Longhorn steers welcomed the hundreds of visiting international filmmakers at The Houston Yacht Club.

To wrap up, WorldFest offered a tiered closing bill of Panorama Entertainment's *ANOTHER HARVEST MOON* directed by Greg Swartz, an encore screening of Shawn Welling's *PROJECT AETHER* a three time winner at the Awards Gala & an encore screening of Egemen Erturk's *THE RINGING BALL* just in from Istanbul. All WorldFest events are open to the public.

WorldFest, founded as an International Film Society in August 1961, became the third competitive international film festival in North America, following San Francisco and New York. WorldFest evolved into a competitive International Film Festival in April 1968 and has a long list of "discovered" film greats such as Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, David Lynch, Ridley Scott, Oliver Stone, Atom Egoyan, Randall Kleiser, Ang Lee, Robert Rodriguez, the Coen Brothers, John Lee Hancock and many others from their beginning efforts for film submissions early in their careers. Multi award-winning producer/director, Hunter Todd, founded this film festival to honor all categories of film and video production continuing his long dedication of "Discovery," spotlighting emerging Independent filmmakers as "the Spielbergs & Ang Lees of tomorrow."

WorldFest's mission is to recognize and honor outstanding creative excellence in film & video, validate brilliant abilities and promote future filmmaking in Texas as well as enhance cultural tourism for Houston and environs. The 10-day festival ran to a smashing finish with several sold-out full houses, one of which was the Shawn Welling's third film *PROJECT AETHER*, a Sci-fi which was shot in Houston, 21 World Premieres, 56 Indie feature productions, 111 award winning shorts. Over 550 USA and International filmmakers attended this year, despite the economic downturn impacting various countries and the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

All film premieres screened at the Flagship AMC Studio 30 Theatres, a seventh year WorldFest-Houston Cinema partner. Other major VIP Partner/Sponsors include Boxer Property, The Houston Arts Alliance (HAA), Wagner Media, Eastman Kodak, Microsoft, The Marriott Hotels, The City of Houston, The State of Texas, The NEA, Budget Rent a Car, NASA/Space Center Houston, The Wellness Center, The Houston Yacht Club, The Port of Houston Authority (Regatta VIP Sponsors) & the Becker Vineyards, a renowned Texas vineyard.

WorldFest's Remi Awards Gala on Saturday, April 16th was held in The HQ Westchase Marriott Hotel, VIP partner & official host hotel for the 44th WorldFest. Festivities began with a cocktail reception hosted by The Houston Film Commission. James McMurray, member of the 5-time World Champion Bagpipe Band of Houston's St. Thomas Episcopal School opened the Awards Gala by piping in festival founder, Hunter Todd followed by the enthusiastic filmmakers amidst a bevy of Pastorini Bosby Talent award presenters. Dance entertainment was presented by Nelly Fraga's Ambassador Mexican Folkloric Dancers, a Scottish Highland dance set by St. Thomas award winning Scottish dancers & a grand finale by Shawn Welling's Planet Funk Academy's lead dancers who performed a high-energy dance mix created specially for the gala.

On April 14, 15, and 16th, WorldFest conducted Six Film Industry Master Class Seminars concluding with the Indie Forum of WorldFest feature film Directors. Laura Pennino, CEO of Pennino and Partners kicked-off with the ever popular *Publicity for Indie* seminar followed by *The Write Stuff* with Nick Nicholson, President of the Houston Film Critics Society. Alan Mendelsohn flew in from Canada for his ever popular Docs on a Dime followed by Panorama Entertainment's Stuart Strutin who presented Distribution for Indies a must attend for every Indie filmmaker. The highlight of this year's WorldFest Seminars was a Master Class presented by Randal Kleiser director of the ever popular musical, GREASE, which he presented later that day in its sing-along version. The Indie Directors Forum rounded out the 2011 WorldFest seminar line-up.

WorldFest 2011 Grand REMI Awards are:

- BEST THEATRICAL FEATURE ~ *PINPRICK* (Switzerland) Director Daniel Young also winning the Best Foreign film and Best editing to Agi Mogor & Jann Ludin.
- BEST FILM & VIDEO ~ *BLAU JEANS*, Meaghan Kimball, MVK FILMS, New York, NY
- BEST TV & CABLE PRODUCTION ~ *CHILDREN OF BLANKENESE*, Ulrike Dotzer, NORDDDEUTSCHER RUNDFUNK, Arte Dept. Hamburg, GERMANY
- BEST NEW MEDIA ~ *ZOMETA Mechanism of Action*, Kathryn Givan, SHAW SCIENCE PARTNERS, Atlanta, Georgia, USA
- BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM & VIDEO ~ *CANOE*, Shelagh Carter, DARKLING PICTURES Winnipeg, CANADA
- BEST TELEVISION COMMERCIAL ~ *LEGENDARY BIRU*, DENTSU CANADA INC. Toronto, ONTARIO, CANADA
- BEST SHORT SUBJECT ~ *LASTRAIN*, Melanie Romat, LOLITA PELICULITAS, Madrid, SPAIN
- BEST STUDENT FILM ~ *BREAD & KISSES* Katherine Fitzgerald, CALLIOPE PICTURES, Toronto, CANADA
- BEST MUSIC VIDEO ~ *KIMBRA - 'SETTLE DOWN'* Edward Goldner, MAMMAL FILMS, Vic. AUSTRALIA
- BEST SCRIPT ~ *SHADOWS ON THE NILE* written by Etienne Verhaegen, CINEMA DIRECT Theoule-Sur-Mer, FRANCE

The Houston Film Critics Society with the coordination of its president, Nick Nicholson presented two Critics Choice Awards selected from the World premieres submitted into competition *LIBERIA 77* directed by Canadian Jeff Topham for the Best Documentary and *PROJECT AETHER* directed by Shawn Welling for Best Feature. Two new Critic's Choice Awards this year were Best Actors, Joy Willard from *PROJECT AETHER* and to Tyler Hoechlin from *OPEN GATE*.

The Russian-American Publication sponsored the Best Foreign film award which went to PINPRICK. The Best Houston Production Remi Award went to *PLAYING HOUSE* directed by Tom Vaughan. The Best Texas Production Award went to *THE WALL: A WORLD DIVIDED*, KUHT, HOUSTON PBS. The recipient of the WorldFest Career Achievement Award was *Randal Kleiser*, director of many wonderful films such as GREASE, FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR, THE BLUE LAGOON, BOY IN A BUBBLE, HONEY I SHRUNK THE KIDS among many others. Randal won his very first award at WorldFest back in 1973, for his short film PEEGE! All other award results from this year's WorldFest competition and photos from the Awards Gala are now posted on our website at www.worldfest.org – There were more than 4,200 category entries in all film and video competitions, and only between 12-15% of submitted entries placed for WorldFest Remi awards. During the 10-day festival, over 450 filmmakers from more than 33 nations around the world were in attendance to personally accept their various awards from this year's WorldFest's competition of thousands of submitted category entries. Dates for WorldFest-Houston #44th April 13-22nd, 2012. Please check our website at - www.worldfest.org - for the full winners' list or call 713-965-9955 for more information. "Call for Entries" for next year's event will be mailed out in late August. Entries officially open August 1st, 2011. Main deadline is December 15, 2011. Download official entry forms from our website starting Aug. 1st, 2011.

WorldFest-Houston, PO Box 56566, Houston, Texas 77256-6566
713-965-9955 www.worldfest.org info@worldfest.org