



ARTS & LIVING

ARPA International Film Festival to Be Held October 23-25

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. – The 12th annual Arpa International Film Festival will present more than 50 films, post-screening receptions and a star-studded closing night awards ceremony over three days, Friday, October 23 to Sunday, October 25, at the Egyptian Theatre.

On Friday, October 23, the festival presents the North American premiere of Haik Gazarian's "Venezzia," starring two Latin American stars, Alfonso Herrera and Ruddy Rodriguez. Gazarian makes his directorial debut in this epic love story set on the Venezuelan coast of the Caribbean during World War II. Joining Gazarian at the red carpet premiere, which kicks off at 6:30 p.m., will



The opening-night poster for "Venezzia," with Ruddy Rodriguez and Alfonso Herrera

be co-stars Herrera, one of Mexico's most popular actors and former member of the Grammy-nominated pop group RBD, and Rodriguez, a former Miss World Venezuela, whose more than two decades in television and film have garnered her a legion of devoted fans in the Spanish-speaking world and beyond. Opening-night proceedings will be emceed by ReelzChannel's Jill Simonian. "Venezzia" screens at 8 p.m. with a reception to follow. Tickets to the red carpet premiere screening of "Venezzia" and the post-screening reception are available at www.affma.org.

More than 50 feature films, shorts, documentaries, music videos and animations will screen during the festival. "There's an incredible buzz

around the films we've been able to get this year. Our programming department tracked the global film festival scene for the last year and singled out the exemplary films relating to Armenians or made by Armenian filmmakers," says Arpa Festival director Alex Kalognomos. "[The year] 2009 happens to be a standout year for cinema featuring films by Armenian filmmakers – and we're so fortunate to be screening all of them at Arpa."

In the documentary lineup, this year's official selection includes "Anjar: Flowers, Goats and Heroes," a film about the history of the people of Musa Dagh by Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Noura Kevorkian; "Autumn of the Magician," an homage to legendary Italian screenwriter Tonino Guerra and Armenia's official selection in the Best Foreign Language Film category for the 2010 Academy Awards; "Komitas Hairig," which tells the story of the beloved Komitas Vardapet; "Husher," a film which documents the testimony of Armenian Genocide survivors who settled in Italy and "Whispering Memories," the story of a community of Armenians in Turkey who stayed behind during the genocide and silently converted to Islam.

This year's competitive short film category includes "Hove," starring Olympia Dukakis. "Hove" is a film about the powerful, unresolved legacy of the Armenian Genocide, directed by Alex Webb. Actor-writer-director Shant Hamassian's "Spaceman on Earth," which debuted at this year's Cannes Film Festival, will be featured in a program of shorts by Los Angeles filmmakers.

Screening in the feature film category is acclaimed Turkish filmmaker Ozcan Alper's



"Husher" is a Genocide documentary.



"Hove," starring Olympia Dukakis

acclaimed "Sonbahar" ("Autumn"), the first feature-length film ever to be shot in Homshetsma, a dialect of Armenian that has been preserved in the Artvin province of northeastern Turkey for

starring Art Aroustamian and veteran actress Ann Magnuson.

Other films feature the work of such acclaimed figures as Sting ("Battle of the Xingu"), such



"Spaceman On Earth"

hundreds of years; and one of the festival's most anticipated films. "Chasing Tchaikovsky," a laugh-out-loud comedy about marriage and moviemaking directed by Greg Lalazarian and

actors as Academy Award-winner Jeremy Irons ("Power of the Powerless") and "24" star Kiefer Sutherland ("Return to Mexico City"), which also includes interviews with President Barack Obama and Tom Brokaw. It tells the story of Olympic medalists Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who return to Mexico City 40 years after stirring controversy by raising their fists in the air during their medal ceremony and, in the process, raising awareness of the struggle for civil rights in America and basic human rights throughout the world.

This year's recipient of Arpa's Armin T. Wegner Award, which each year is awarded to a motion picture that contributes to the fight for social conscience and human rights, is "Voices from Inside: Israelis Speak." "This feature-length documentary film is based on the stories of 16 Jewish Israeli voices of conscience, each representing a different facet of the peace movement inside Israel," says Zaven Khachaturian, Arpa Film Festival curator, who invited the film to the festival.

Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) will receive this year's Arpa Foundation Award. Over its 60 year history, AEF has been committed to Armenian youth and the pursuit of higher learning. To that end, the organization has built and supported the establishment of hundreds of Armenian day schools around the world. A Sevag Vrej-directed, Christina Shakarian-produced short film documenting AEF's educational endeavors in Armenia will be screened during the closing night awards ceremony.

This year's official selection includes films from over 20 countries including Armenia, Turkey, Brazil, France, Peru, Canada, Malawi, Spain, China, India, Iran and many more. To reserve all-access passes in advance, visit www.AFFMA.org.



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