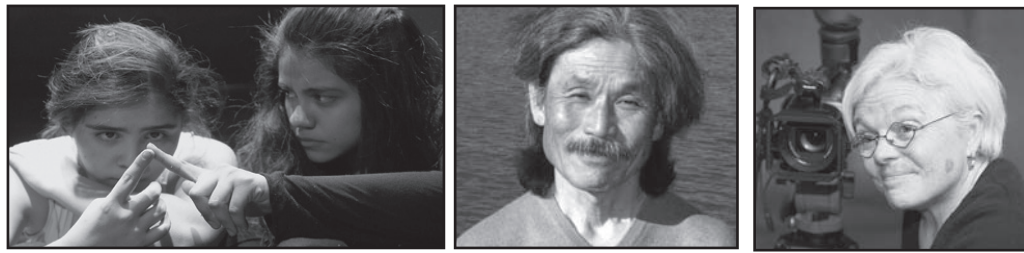


Transformation through art



Chicago's Albany Park Theater Project. Kenji Yamamoto, producer, and Nancy Kelly, director/producer, of "Trust: Second Acts in Young Lives."

Nancy Kelly is not a stranger to the CIFF. Her two previous films, "Downside UP" and "Smitten" played at the festival in 2002 and 2006, respectively. "Trust: Second Acts in Young Lives" is the third film in a trilogy she and Kenji Yamamoto have created about the "meaning of art in the lives of communities and individuals." "Trust: Second Acts in Young Lives" focuses on Chicago's Albany Park Theater Project (AFTP) – whose mission is to create original performance art about the lives of urban teens, immigrants and working class Americans. Kelly was very impressed by the performances and the storytelling.

The film shows the story of Marlin, an

eighteen year-old rape survivor whose story is by an AFTP performance. Through the process of telling her story, Marlin has a healing experience.

"Trust: Second Acts in Young Lives" is about storytelling, about a teenager who reclaims the narrative of her life story through theater," says Kelly. "Those who come see the film will get to know Marlin and the other, very engaging AFTP theater company members, and they will become part of the story." —Bridget Kriner

SHOWING TODAY **TRUST: SECOND ACTS IN YOUNG LIVES** is playing today at 6:50 p.m. followed by a FilmForum

Confessions of a first-time CIFFer

I have a deep, dark secret. I—Oh, God, how can I say this? I am ... a reader. My family has to drag me kicking and screaming to see a film, but I can spend hours haunting the dark recesses of a public library. It's a sickness, I know. There are other people there, too, eyes glazed, fingers feverishly grasping at the spines of pretty, shiny books with brilliant white pages and ... Stop. Just stop. *Take a deep breath,* I think. *You can do this.*

Then my sister decided to perform an intervention.

She encouraged me to come to the CIFF for the first time this year, and even suggested that I volunteer. All I can say is, thank heavens she was there for me. I resisted at first, but she started me off slowly, by having me distribute program guides to friends and co-workers. Then, along with other fresh victims, I met one of the ringleaders—Beth was her name. She was kind, and she made me feel special.

They were so sneaky! The next thing I knew, I was watching a film called "Hamill," which is about a wrestler. I was sure I'd hate it. I hate all sports. Instead, I was fascinated by this story of a profoundly hearing-impaired boy, who finds acceptance on the school wrestling team, and later goes on to fame.

Then, I learned about people fighting leukemia in the film "More to Live For," and how by registering to be a bone marrow donor, I could help people like them. I got to meet some of them, too.

Or what if you decided to take a little vacation to Colombia and ended up being kidnapped by guerillas? What is it like to spend months in the jungle as captives, death always at your side? Watch Mark Henderson in "My Kidnapper," and you are there.

I signed up to work at the festival, and in doing so met many other committed, engaged people passionate about film. One would have to be a stone, not to appreciate the breadth and depth of the human condition that the Cleveland International Film Festival celebrates. For two hours I am the awkward teen-age boy on the cusp of manhood, the Jew trying to hide from Hitler, the student dying on the streets of Iran. I am part of The Story.

So will I come back to CIFF next year? Probably, definitely. Will my family have to drag me kicking and screaming? Probably, most definitely, not. —Lesley Watilo



Photo by Laura Watilo Blake

Lesley Watilo

FRIDAY April 1st, 2011 Day 9

THE DAILY

HERO LOVER REBEL BE PART OF THE STORY 35th Cleveland International Film Festival

What Are You Dying to Do?

Comedian Steve Mazan had a dream. He always wanted to appear on the David Letterman Show. When he was diagnosed with cancer, his plans changed.

Not in the way you might think, though. He still wanted to get on Letterman. But now he had the desire to document his journey. His friends Joke Fincioen and Biagio Messina were filmmakers and agreed to make a documentary, with one caveat.

"If we were going to do it right," says Messina. "We'd have to be there for the good and the bad. We had to be there as film-makers, not friends. We wouldn't be able to put down the camera and give him a hug when things got tough."

And because of that, the filmmaking couple thinks "the movie plays on a deeper level," continues Messina. "Otherwise, the whole thing might have just felt like a puff piece." Don't think "Dying to Do Letterman" is going to be a dark, depressing movie about cancer. "This is a movie about chasing big dreams, no matter what," says Messina. After all, Mazan's a stand-up comedian. "He's a funny guy ... you'll laugh far more than you'll cry," explains Messina.

The film premiered in early March at the Cinequest Film Festival in San Jose, California, and sold out all three screenings. Mazan was there to witness his story come to life, "and feel the love from the audience," says Messina.

And speaking of love ... Messina, who is originally from Parma, Ohio, and Fincioen met at UCLA on the third day of school.



Joke Fincioen and Biagio Messina were married in Cleveland and celebrated their 10th anniversary on March 24, the Opening Night of this year's CIFF. In fact, they're staying at the Wyndham Hotel, where their creative partnership began.



Photo by Laura Watilo Blake

Messina instantly fell in love with her when she said, "I'm convinced the only way to make it in this business is to produce your own projects." They've been together ever since.

Their first film together at UCLA was shot in Parma. They moved on to documentaries and then reality TV. Their big break, says Messina, was "Beauty and the Geek," a reality show that pairs attractive women with brainy, but nerdy, men

to compete for a cash prize. That program led them to creating the VH1 series "Scream Queens," a reality TV show where unknown actresses compete for a role in a horror film. Fincioen, whose parents, grandparents and two sets of aunts and uncles worked together in their own business, knows nothing else. "I couldn't imagine my life not working with my spouse, not sharing everything, not working towards the same goal."

"Joke is my best friend, my business partner and my wife," he says. Over the years, the two have learned not to take professional criticisms personally, because they know they are stronger as a team.

SHOWING TODAY **DYING TO DO LETTERMAN** is playing today at 2:20 p.m.

The BUZZ

The Buzz is your source for the latest festival highlights and best bets for films each day. You can also catch "The Buzz" video program with Meaghan Earley at www.clevelandfilm.org/blog and www.youtube.com/clevelandfilmfest.

HERE'S WHAT'S BUZZING FOR Friday, April 1, 2011; CIFF Day 9:

Start your day off with "Matching Jack," at 9:15 a.m., a story about a young boy who is diagnosed with leukemia and a mother stopping at nothing to try and find her son a bone marrow match.

At 11:35 a.m., take a ride "Beyond This Place." In the documentary film, an estranged father and son take a 500-mile bike trek together to 'rediscover' each other and themselves.

Catch "Eleanore & The Timekeeper" at 2:15 p.m., an experimental documentary that focuses on the hardships of a woman in her 90s who must cope with the reality of sending her 64-year-old disabled son to a group home.

At 4:30 p.m. catch, "Self Made," a documentary about "Method Acting," which follows several people acting out their worst nightmares, fears and events from the past.

At 6:50 p.m., "Trust: Second Acts in Young Lives" follows an 18-year-old rape survivor who turns to theater for therapy, and in turn, begins to help others.

"Robert Mitchum Is Dead" at 10:10 p.m. Franky, an unemployed actor, is carried away by his manager in a stolen car for what seems to be an appointment with Franky's idolized director above the Arctic Circle.

What's in your "True Nature?" Find out at 11:20 p.m., when you see this thriller about a haunted young woman suffering from amnesia after a mysterious, year-long disappearance.

Find out the latest information about these films and other festival events by picking up *The Daily*, reading the festival blog and, of course, seeing as many films as you can.

CIFF T-SHIRT DAY

Saturday - 4.2.2011

Festival goers wearing a t-shirt from any of the past 35 CIFF's can enter a drawing to win an all-access pass to next year's Festival!



If you like keeping up with celebrities behaving badly, you'll love Bob King's "818."

We got the 818

Director Robert Lee King loves actress Barbara Stanwyck. His "favorite movie ever" is her "The Lady Eve," a 1941 classic. "She always seemed to play these brazen, cold hearted tough gals," he says. "[who] ... weren't afraid to do what had to be done."

Just like Alyssa Rampart-Pillage, the leading lady, in his film "818," come to think of it, he says.

Alyssa, played by Beth Broderick, is an "actressy actress" that has her career "reinvigorated" when she becomes a suspect in her husband's murder, King explains.

Sounds like timely subject matter in the age of O.J. Simpson, Robert Blake, Charlie Sheen and other celebrities behaving badly and that the public thrives on following. "The world is rife with celebrity justice," says King. "And not only do they seem to be getting away with it - they get even more famous because of it."

King, whose film "Psycho Beach Party," became a cult classic and helped launch the career of Academy-Award nominee actress Amy Adams, among others, looks forward to seeing how audiences react to his latest film.

"I can't wait to see how an anti-hero like Alyssa plays in Cleveland," he says.

When asked if the audience should like Alyssa, despise her or feel sorry for her, King answers: "Yes!"

Earlier this month, the film screened at the Miami Film Festival and had a great audience response. "You could tell they were just so into it," says King. He hopes to play the film in "as many places in as many ways as possible." He explains - In addition to the film, he is releasing the film's soundtrack - which features Freddie Wiedmann's score and Morgan Kibby, of M83 and White Sea, whose voice you may recognize from "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire." —Anne M. DiTeodoro

SHOWING TODAY (818) is playing today at 11:30 a.m.

Challenging the status quo

Long time friends Alex Kotlowitz and Steve James had been looking for a film project to do together. After Kotlowitz wrote a story on CeaseFire, they both agreed to a documentary about the organization, which is dedicated to conflict resolution and violence prevention.

So, Kotlowitz and James began work on the documentary. They found three subjects - Ameena Matthews, Cobe Williams and Eddie Bocanegra who they would focus on in the film. As they worked with these subjects, "small, but incredibly compelling stories began to unfold."

One of the aims of "The Interrupters" is to challenge audiences to look at these communities differently. This is important to the three subjects, who wanted the film to be about their work and their neighborhoods.

"There's such paralysis around the stubborn, persistent violence in our cities," says Kotlowitz. "Our hope is that the film offers some promise, offers a sense that things need not be this way."

While the film is set in Chicago, it is really about the "persistence of violence in all American cities." Though the film focuses on the work of the CeaseFire interrupters - whose goal it is to stop the next shooting in their communities, there is recognition that in order to really stop the violence, something needs to be done "beyond interrupting the next violent act."

"If we're serious about stemming the violence, we need to recommit to providing opportunity - through education and through meaningful work," says Kotlowitz. "And we need to find ways to fortify community."

During the process of sorting through over 300 hours of footage, Kotlowitz and James



TOP: Violence interrupter Ameena Matthews with Producer/Director Steve James, Producer Alex Kotlowitz, and Co-Producer/Sound Recordist Zak Piper. MIDDLE: Eddie Bocanegra, violence interrupter. BOTTOM: Cobe Williams, violence interrupter

maintained their "absolute commitment to narrative." They believed that good storytelling was the lynchpin of their film.

As Kotlowitz says, "The Interrupters" is all about story, and it invites - through example - others to get involved." —Bridget Kriner

SHOWING TODAY THE INTERRUPTERS is playing today at 3:50 p.m.



Around the Festival

ABOVE: Scott Cox, actor in "The Stranger in Us," Bill Guentzler, Artistic Director of CIFF, Scott Bozwell, director of, and Raphael Barker, actor in "The Stranger in Us." TOP LEFT: Ashley Ziganti & Tim Kovach. This cute couple came to the CIFF's Tweet-Up on Tuesday, 3/29, and walked away winners of a pair of passes to next year's festival. BOTTOM LEFT: "Facing Forward" FilmForum panel: John Zitzner, Founder of E Prep., Katrina Joyner, former Dean of Students at E Prep., Tyree Stewart, film subject, and Laura Paglin, Director of "Facing Forward."

IN SHORT (Spotlight on Short Films): CIFF staffer brings own film to the big screen

As a seasonal staff member for the Cleveland International Film Festival, College and University Outreach Manager Kailyne R. Waters works tirelessly to bring the world of film to students across the region. And now she has her own film to promote.

"f my c," Waters' directorial debut, will screen tonight at 9:20 p.m., as part of the CIFF's 10% Shorts Program #2.

The 30-minute non-linear narrative film is about a relationship between two women (one of whom had been sexually abused as a child), who are working on sexual intimacy.

"It is difficult to work through the issues of intimacy when someone you trust the most, violates that trust," says Waters. "But I wanted to give as much credence to the partners as I did the survivors because the couple is battling those ghosts together. You might not know the people who committed the abuse, but they are right there with you when you're struggling to be intimate."

Waters, a survivor of sexual abuse herself, says the story is not autobiographical, but rather an amalgamation of experiences by other survivors she met after starting an agency in the early 2000s that used creative arts to aide in the healing process.

Making this film was therapeutic for Waters, who never imagined she would one day call herself a film director.



Kailyne R. Waters Photo by Laura Watilo Blake

"When someone would ask what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said, 'alive,'" she explains. "I never really had a picture of a profession in my mind because for me it was day-to-day living and I didn't think I was going to live that long to see it. So, when I got to a place in life where I had time and resources to do it, my full-time job was recovery and finding ways to heal."

The healing process is the cornerstone of "f my c."

"I really like to focus my work on things that have reclamation for somebody who has gone through something difficult," she says. "There is hope. It might start out a little rocky, but it's definitely worth the climb." —Laura Watilo Blake

SHOWING TODAY F MY C is playing today at 9:20 p.m. in the 10% Shorts Program #2

Local Heroes Wright State, Right Place

Two Wright State University (WSU) alums are showing their film, "True Nature," and showing off their city.

Producer Ann Rotolante and Director Patrick Steele are Ohio transplants; they graduated from the university's Motion Picture Production program, stuck around and "adopted Dayton." Prior to shooting this "thinking person's thriller," Steele was wondering what they could "do with what we have - in a place that we love and care about."

They decided to shoot the film entirely in Dayton, with a homegrown crew. It also has heavy ties to the university - professors consulted on the project and current and former students worked on it. "We imported almost no one," says Steele. The Dayton community was also very supportive of the film.

Don't think the film is going to be all "hack and slash." "It's creepy, but not frightening," he says. He further explains that the movie isn't exactly a horror film, or a drama, or a thriller,



"True Nature's" Ann Rotolante, producer, and Patrick Steele, director, found their Hollywood in Dayton, Ohio.

but has all three elements, along with "some substance," too. It will leave the audience thinking and Steele hopes that after watching it, audience members will want to "go get a cup of coffee and have a discussion" about the film.

Wright State is no stranger to the Cleveland International Film Festival - this year marks the fifth in a row where a WSU film is screening at the CIFF.

Steele is ecstatic that the film is screening here, "in our backyard," he says. "[The] Cleveland [Festival] is kind of the Holy Grail" for filmmakers." —Anne M. DiTeodoro

SHOWING TODAY TRUE NATURE is playing today at 11:20 p.m.

Challenge Match

We are \$31,000 closer to reaching our goal of \$35,000

The Challenge Match is the CIFF's annual fundraising campaign, and the only time of the year that we ask for your support (we do not send out solicitation letters at any time). The challenge to you - our audience - is to raise \$35,000, which will be matched by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

A \$10 DONATION QUALIFIES YOU FOR ONE OF THESE FABULOUS PRIZES!!

THE ROCKER: Enjoy a weekend downtown with an overnight stay at the Cleveland Renaissance Hotel, plus a Family Membership to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum!

SIDEWAYS, LOT 1: This 3-liter bottle of 1999 Desert Wind Vineyards Merlot from Columbia Valley, WA is the perfect way to jump start your collection!

SIDEWAYS, LOT 2: Whether you're a serious collector or a casual oenophile, you'll love this collection of 12 wines from vineyards in Spanish-speaking countries.

THEATRE: Celebrate the live theatre offerings we have in our backyard with tickets to The Cleveland Orchestra, Dobama Theatre, Porthouse Theatre, PlayhouseSquare and two subscriptions for the 2011-12 season at The Cleveland Play House!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Kristina Morales, the rebel from the CIFF trailer.

Ride the RTA!

It will bring you right to Tower City on many of its bus lines and all of its Rapid Transit trains. On game days, they often have extra buses and trains in service to accommodate the fans pouring into downtown. Visit www.rideRTA.com or call the RTAanswerline at 216-621-9500 for more information.