

# SONOMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Sonoma International Film Festival Successfully Completes its \$200,000 Challenge Grant**

SONOMA, CA (November 9, 2011) -- The Sonoma International Film Festival has exceeded its goal, more than matching an anonymous \$100,000 challenge grant launched this past summer. The final \$10,000 in donations were made as festival fans enjoyed 'cowboy poetry' at Gundlach Bundschu's cave dinner, the first in a series, last week. SIFF will utilize the \$200,000 grant to fund the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts program, as well as marketing, programming and staffing April's 15<sup>th</sup> annual Festival.

"Successfully matching the Challenge Grant gives us an excellent start with meeting our annual budget of \$618,400," stated Executive Director Kevin McNeely. "Our budget includes \$150,000 of corporate sponsorship commitment, as well as festival pass and ticket sales. We have launched our corporate sponsorship program; and pass and ticket sales are underway."

Upcoming SIFF screening events will be held at the Sonoma Valley Museum, The Sonoma Community Center, Murphy's Pub, and Sebastiani Theatre; and the monthly cinema series will continue to go *underground* with special screenings in the caves of Benziger and Deerfield Ranch Wineries. Films for each screening will range from "shorts" chosen for April's Festival, to pre-theatrical studio film releases. Celebrate the holidays at Benziger's December cave dinner; then indulge in hand rolled cigars, Cuban food and music, along with a screening of *Heart and Soul of Cuba* by James Suckling at Deerfield Ranch Winery's January cave dinner.

*One Hundred Sones Cubanos*, recently screened at Sonoma Valley Museum, is another of the Latino films being previewed for The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Sonoma International Film Festival's *La Quinceañera* Film Fiesta, an outreach to and celebration of Sonoma's Latino community. The Fiesta will consist of 15 Spanish language films from Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Spain and Mexico. This festival within a festival, programmed by Claudia Mendoza-Carruth of Sonoma, will present selections from this year's best Spanish-speaking films.

Film selections are currently being accepted for April's festival. By January more than 800 films will have been submitted for consideration. Last year 200 filmmakers representing the 97 films arrived in Sonoma from 14 countries. Those interested in becoming a film screener for the upcoming festival can contact the SIFF office at 707.933.2600.

SIFF will finalize the Festival Program over the next few months, announcing films, tributes, and special events as they become confirmed. The 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SIFF promises to be memorable as one the nation's top destination film festivals celebrates the best in film, food and wine.

### **About the Sonoma International Film Festival**

The Sonoma International Film Festival is one of the top destination film festivals in the world and, located in the heart of Wine Country, is uniquely positioned to be a lively celebration of film, food and wine. An annual gathering for film industry insiders, cinema enthusiasts, filmmakers and critics, SIFF is considered among the most scenic and epicurean places to experience the art of film. Founded in 1997,

The Sonoma International Film Festival is a five-day international event that takes pride in showcasing emerging talent, providing a supportive environment for filmmakers and creating a rich cultural asset for the local community.

SIFF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Festival supports the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts Program established over a decade ago by the Sonoma Film Society. For information about the 2012 Festival (April 11-15), please contact SIFF:

Phone (707) 933-2600

[www.sonomafilmfest.org](http://www.sonomafilmfest.org)

<http://www.facebook.com/sonomafilmfestival>

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