

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14th ANNUAL SONOMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FESTIVAL WINNERS

SONOMA, CA (April 11, 2011) –The **14th Annual Sonoma International Film Festival** announced this year’s award winners at the Festival’s Backlot Tent on Sunday, April 10, 2011. The Festival, held from April 6-10, 2011, screened 90 films including 28 feature length documentaries, 8 short docs, 17 feature films, 2 World Premiere music videos, 11 animated shorts and 24 narrative shorts. Sonoma’s increasingly popular Festival continues to expand its diverse programming of quality independent and foreign films.

Festival Director Kevin McNeely said, “What started out as a Film Festival that hosted great parties has grown into a festival where the films equal our wine country hospitality.” Director of Programming Cevin Cathell added, “We are incredibly proud of the caliber of films we screened this year. The entire event, including our Tribute and Lifetime Achievement Award to Susan Sarandon, has been well received by filmmakers, film-lovers and the community. This year has really raised the bar.”

AUDIENCE AWARDS

This year’s Festival attendees selected ***Darwin*** (USA) a documentary produced by Nick Brandestini, Sandra Ruch and Taylor Segrest, as the **Festival Favorite**. Additional screenings were added to accommodate the film-goers who waited to see this film about an isolated community at the end of a weathered road in Death Valley, CA.

Good Day For It (USA), a first screening by director Nick Stagliano starring Hal Holbrook and Robert Patrick, won **Favorite Feature**. A thriller with the right balance of intensity, tenderness and occasional humor, this film has nuanced performances from a veteran cast.

The **Audience Favorite Documentary** was ***Miss Representation*** (USA) by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. An exploration of women’s under-representation in positions of power, Newsom’s film challenges the limited and often disparaging portrayal of women in the media.

The Bridge (USA), **Audience Favorite Short**, was directed by Philipp Wolter. Finding your way home means knowing what is missing.

BEST NARRATIVE FEATURES

The jury selected ***Absentia*** (USA), the Festival's first Horror Film from acclaimed *Oculus* director, Mike Flanagan, as **Best Narrative Feature**. This film tells the story of a woman and her sister who link a mysterious tunnel to a series of disappearances.

Best Very Independent Feature was ***Falling Overnight*** (USA) directed by Conrad Jackson, starring Parker Croft; a touching film about a young man who falls in love the night before he starts treatment for a brain tumor.

Anita (Argentina) won **Best International Feature**. The Festival's first film from Argentina is about a young woman with Down's Syndrome who gets lost in the streets of Buenos Aires. This touching film shows us that the people we think we have to give to, give much more in return.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURES

Cevin Cathell, Program Director, called 2011 "The Year of the Docs." With so many powerful entries, the Doc competition set the bar high.

Outstanding Investigative Documentary went to ***The Search for Michael Rockefeller*** (USA) directed by Fraser Clarke Heston. An investigative look at the disappearance of Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's 23 year-old son in 1961.

Jazz legend Vince Guaraldi is the subject of the **Best Documentary Feature** by Andrew Thomas and Toby Gleason, ***Anatomy of Vince Guaraldi*** (USA). The film is a musical journey through the brief life and times of the celebrated composer who pioneered the crossover of jazz and pop music.

SPECIAL JURY AWARDS

Special Jury Award: Short Film was given to ***Sexting*** (USA), directed by Neil LaBute and starring Julia Stiles.

Perfect Effort (USA) won the **Special Jury Award: Sports Film**. A long-awaited release about the De La Salle Football teams 12 year winning streak. Directed by Stephen Lilly.

SHORT FILM AWARDS

Best Animated Short: ***The Necessities of Life*** (USA), Gerald Guthrie.

Best Comedic Short: ***Dungeon Master*** (USA), Rider Strong and Shiloh Strong.

Best Music Video: ***No One Knows Where the Bullet Goes*** (USA), Howard Egger-Bovet

Best Foreign Short: ***Vento*** (Brazil), Marcio Salem.

Best Documentary Short: ***Saab Story*** (USA), Max Joseph.

Best Documentary Short Honorable Mention: ***En El Salon De Las Promesas*** (USA), Mike Abela.

Best Dramatic Short: *Touch* (USA), Jen McGowan.

JURORS

"I am pleasantly surprised by the selections of our esteemed jury. They have been incredibly supportive of the festival over the years, bringing industry presence and experience, elevating our festival to the next level." The panel of jurors this year included Arianne Ayers of Magnolia Pictures; Alan Berger, screenwriter; Donn Finn, Mali Finn Casting; David Garber, Producers Rep, Producer, Owner Lantern Lane Entertainment; Kathi Gori, Screenwriter; Ilene Kahn Power, Award-winning Producer, former VP HBO; Catherine Ryan, Award-winning Documentarian; Gary Weimberg, Award-winning Documentarian; Jason White, Screenwriter, Producer; Eames Yates, Award-winning Documentarian.

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 and featuring unreleased films.

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, local travel advice and ticket sales, please contact the SIFF headquarters:

Phone (707) 933-2600

www.sonomafilmfest.org

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

<http://www.twitter.com/sonomafilmfest>

###

Media Contact

Brooke Conner Sevenau

Studio Seven PR

707-934-5631

brooke@studiosevenpr.com

<http://studiosevenpr.com/>