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**Boston Film Festival attracts big-name stars, diverse stories  
to 26<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of film, Sept. 17-23**

***Aaron and Jim Eckhart's film, "To Be Friends," kicks off Opening Night***

BOSTON (Aug. 26, 2010) -- The 26<sup>th</sup> Boston Film Festival presents six world premieres and 24 films September 17-23 at the new Stuart Street Playhouse.

Tickets for the festival's screenings will be available for purchase at the theater's box office or online via TicketLeap on the Boston Film Festival web site beginning September 2. The principal sponsors are: NBC Universal, The AMR (AdvanceMovieReviews.com); Disney ABC, Bravo, Boston Magazine, Subaru of New England, and the Stuart Street Playhouse.

Actors confirmed to attend the festival at press time include: Aaron Eckhart, Todd Stashwick, Joelle Carter, Sara Roemer, Eliza Dushku, Leslie Bibb, Ed Burns, Kyle Gallner, Wade Williams, Stephanie Lemelin, Sam Rockwell, and Ryan Merriman.

Additional announcements about celebrities in attendance will be made upon completion of their travel arrangements. Boston Film Festival Executive Director Robin Dawson said: "The 2010 program includes an inspiring, diverse lineup of films, documentaries and shorts by an outstanding group of filmmakers. The festival provides Boston audiences with a rare opportunity to participate in question and answer sessions with actors and directors who discuss their creative choices."

An array of Boston's signature restaurants will host a week of parties and filmmaker receptions. "Boston's hospitality is unparalleled," added Dawson. "The generosity of restaurants and hoteliers gives the festival's filmmakers and celebrities a chance to enjoy a true taste of Boston."

Two world premieres will be presented on Opening Night. The Opening Night film will be "To Be Friends," starring Todd Stashwick and Joelle Carter. The writer/director is Jim Eckhart, and his brother, Aaron Eckhart, is the executive producer. Jim Eckhart, Aaron Eckhart, Todd Stashwick, and Joelle Carter will walk the red carpet kicking off the 26<sup>th</sup> Boston Film Festival. The story is about how requited love orchestrates one last chance for two lifelong friends to explore the boundaries and connections of their relationships finally finding love just as it is lost forever.

The locally-shot psychological thriller "Locked In," starring Ben Barnes, Sara Roemer, Eliza Dushku, Johnny Whitworth, and directed by Suri Krishnamma will be the second world premiere film on Opening Night. The streets of Boston provides the backdrop as the film chronicles the lives of two fragile yet determined people and maps a private geography of love, loss, and ultimate redemption.

The Closing Night film is a special sneak preview of "Iron Cross," a thriller starring the late Roy Scheider as Joseph, a retired New York police officer and Holocaust survivor, who travels to Nuremberg following the death of his wife to reconcile with his son Ronnie (Scott Cohen). The reunion is quickly overshadowed by Joseph's insistence that living in the apartment above, under a false name, is the now aging SS Commander (Helmut Berger) who murdered Joseph's entire family during World War II.

Certain of the neighbor's true identity, Joseph draws his reluctant son into a plan to exact justice and vengeance. With flashbacks to the past, revealing Young Joseph's (Alexander Newton) narrow escape from the massacre and his teenage love for a heroic Polish girl, Kashka (Sarah Bolger), the story reaches a gripping and unforgettable climax.

An award for career achievement will be presented to Scheider's wife, Brenda, at the screening, which will also be attended by castmember Alexander Newton, Joshua Newton, who produced, directed, and wrote the film, along with producer Kevin Farr.

The East Coast premiere of the independent film "Miss Nobody," starring Leslie Bibb, Adam Goldberg, Vivica Fox, Kathy Baker, and Barry Bostwick in a comedy about a mild mannered secretary that discovers she has a talent for murder as she ascends the corporate ladder. The director is Tim Cox.

In its US premiere, “Conviction” is the inspirational true story of a sister’s unwavering devotion to her brother. When Betty Anne Waters’ (played by two-time Academy® Award winner Hilary Swank) older brother Kenny (Sam Rockwell) is arrested for murder and sentenced to life in 1983, Betty Anne, a Massachusetts wife and mother of two, dedicates her life to overturning the murder conviction.

Convinced that her brother is innocent, Betty Anne puts herself through high school, college and, finally, law school in an 18-year quest to free Kenny. With the help of her best friend, Abra Rice (Academy Award nominee Minnie Driver), Betty Anne pores through suspicious evidence mounted by small town cop, Nancy Taylor (Academy Award nominee Melissa Leo), meticulously retracing the steps that led to Kenny’s arrest. Belief in her brother – and her quest for the truth – pushes Betty Anne and her team to uncover the facts and utilize DNA evidence with the hope of exonerating Kenny.

In its East Coast premiere, “Welcome to the Rileys” is a powerful drama about finding hope in the most unusual of places. Once a happily married and loving couple, Doug and Lois Riley (James Gandolfini and Melissa Leo) have grown apart since losing their teenage daughter eight years prior. Leaving his agoraphobic wife behind to go on a business trip to New Orleans, Doug meets a 17-year-old runaway (Kristen Stewart) and the two form a platonic bond. For Lois and Doug, what initially appears to be the final straw that will derail their relationship, turns out to be the inspiration they need to renew their marriage.

Writer/director Ed Burns stars in the quirky comedy “Nice Guy Johnny,” starring Max Baker, Kerry Bishe, Matt Bush, and Brian Delate. Johnny Rizzo is about to change his dream job in talk radio for some snooze-ville gig that will pay enough to please his fiancé until his uncle Terry (Burns) turns a weekend in the Hamptons to an eye-opening fling for his nephew.

“It’s Kind of A Funny Story,” adapted from Ned Vizzini’s 2006 novel of the same name, is the new comedy-drama from acclaimed writer/directors Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden (“Half Nelson,” “Sugar”). It’s 5:00 A.M. on a Sunday in Brooklyn. Craig Gilner (played by Keir Gilchrist of “United States of Tara”) is bicycling up to the entrance of a mental health clinic; this bright 16-year-old is stressed out from the demands of being a

teenager. Before his parents (Lauren Graham of “Parenthood”) and Jim Gaffigan (of “Away We Go”) and younger sister are even awake, Craig checks himself into Argenon Hospital and is admitted by a psychiatrist. But the youth ward is temporarily closed - so he finds himself stuck in the adult ward.

One of the patients, Bobby (Zach Galifianakis of “The Hangover”), soon becomes both Craig's mentor and protégé. Craig is also quickly drawn to another 16-year-old displaced to the adult ward, the sensitive Noelle (Emma Roberts of the upcoming “Scream 4”), who just might make him forget his longtime unrequited crush Nia (Zoë Kravitz of the upcoming “Mad Max”). With a minimum five days' stay imposed on him by the adult ward's staff psychiatrist Dr. Eden Minerva (Academy Award nominee Viola Davis), Craig is sustained by friendships on both the inside and the outside as he learns more about life, love, and the pressures of growing up.

Once again, the festival will dedicate a night to films shot in the New England region as part of a special “Boston Night” celebration of film. The world premiere of “The Last Harbor,” which was filmed in Rockport, Mass., stars Wade Williams, Stephanie Lemelin, and was directed by Paul Epstein. In sleepy Salem Harbor, seasoned former Boston PD Cop Ian Martin must overcome his old drinking habits to solve a crime which brings him closer to home than he would like; whilst rebuilding a fractured and nearly lost relationship with his estranged daughter.

The world premiere of the documentary, “Please Remove Your Shoes,” by local filmmaker Rob DelGaudio, is about the U.S. government's broken promise to keep our airlines secure and the personal stories of a few people who know the truth including congressmen, air marshalls, and aviation security employees.

“Cherry” stars Kyle Gallner, Brittany Robertson, Laura Allen, Matt Walsh and Esai Morales with director Jeffrey Fine. This will be the film's East Coast premiere. “Cherry” is a film about Aaron, an academically advanced but socially sheltered college freshman. Linda is the older woman he meets, and Beth is her underage daughter. Aaron gets an education he never expected – and one his mom never imagined paying for.

“5<sup>th</sup> Quarter,” starring Aidan Quinn, Andie MacDowell, Ryan Merriman and directed by Rick Bieber, tells the real life drama of Jon Abbate. Motivated by the tragic

car crash that took the life of his 15-year-old brother, Luke Abbate, Jon Abbate, wearing his brother's #5 jersey, helps lead the Wake Forest Demon Deacons football team to the most successful, unpredicted season in the college's history.

The East Coast premiere of "Down for Life," starring Danny Glover, Kate del Castillo, Jessica Romero, and Snoop Dog, and directed by Alan Jacobs, is based on a *New York Times* article. The film depicts a single dramatic day in the life of a Latina gang leader in South Central LA. Director Alan Jacobs will attend the screening with Jessica Romero, the film's young star.

"Arcadia Lost," stars Haley Bennett, Carter Jenkins, Nick Nolte and Lachlan Buchanan and is directed by Phedon Papamichael, will make its East Coast premiere at the festival. Stranded after a car accident in the rural countryside of Greece, step siblings Charlotte and Sye slowly realize they are actually struggling between life and death in the still submerging car. During their surreal journey, they meet Benerji (Nolte) the vagabond philosopher who guides them and helps them imagine what it means to be family, to be an adult and be alive.

East Coast premiere of "World Peace and Other Fourth Grade Achievements" by director Chris Farina is a portrait of John Hunter, a public school teacher who has dedicated his life to teaching children how to work for a more peaceful world.

A few poignant documentaries will also screen at the 2010 festival.

"The Two Escobars" is directed by brothers Jeff and Michael Zimablist. While drug cartels warred in the streets of Columbia and the murder rate climbed to the highest in the world, the Columbian national soccer team set out to blaze a new image for their country. Central to achieving this success are two unrelated men named Escobar, drug lord Pablo and soccer sensation Andres.

"I Want So Much to Live" is directed by Elizabeth Holder (East Coast premiere). The film explores the pioneering efforts of the ambitious yet largely unproven bio tech company, Genentech, and the many devoted individuals whose independent and collective efforts resulted in the world's first targeted therapy for breast cancer.

"10 Mountains, 10 Years" is directed by Jennifer Yee and narrated by Anne Hathaway and Leeza Gibbons. The films chronicles the epic journey of an international

team of mountain climbers climbing to 10 of the greatest peaks in the world over a 10-year span from Mont Blanc to Mount Everest to raise funding and awareness of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease while it imparts some shocking research about the diseases.

Making its world premiere, "Norman Mailer: The American" is directed by Joseph Mantegna and chronicles a provocateur, a rebel, a performer and a true American. Norman Mailer never stopped giving people something to talk about. This documentary goes beyond the Mailer of the book shelves to Mailer, the social critic, family man, filmmaker and husband of six wives, one of whom he stabbed.

"Absent," (East Coast premiere) is directed by Justin Hunt, and stars James Hetfield (Metallica), Johnny Tapia, and John Eldredge. From the award-winning director of "American Meth," comes Justin Hunt's newest documentary that will undoubtedly lift the veil on why a father's absence can be so devastating - not only a child but a family community and eventually society itself.

The short documentary "Lurking in the Trees," is directed by Martin Hamburger and was shot locally. The chance discovery of a bug that landed in someone's lap on a summer afternoon in the yard, led to a terrible realization that insect invaders from Asia were killing trees in New England, and the only way to stop the pests was to cut down and grind up nearly 30,000 trees.

There will be a 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary screening on Opening Weekend of Steven Spielberg's legendary film "Jaws," starring Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfus, Robert Shaw, Lorraine Gary, Murray Hamilton and Jeffrey Kramer. The movie was shot on Martha's Vineyard and changed the beach-goers' experience forever. Details will be announced soon.

Awards will be presented at the end of the festival for Best Film, Best Documentary, Best Short, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Young Actor, Best Young Actress, Best Cinematography, the Mass Impact Award and the EcoFilm Award. The Closing Night film and special events will feature the recording Group Ernie and The Automatics with a special performance by James Montgomery.

A complete schedule of films and events will be posted at [bostonfilmfestival.org](http://bostonfilmfestival.org) beginning September 2. All tickets will be priced at \$10 each.

Many accomplished filmmakers and actors have been honored at the BFF such as: actors Dane Cook and Greg Kinnear; producer Jerry Weintraub (“Oceans Thirteen,”); Lifetime Achievement Award presented by George Clooney; Film Excellence Award recipients; Val Kilmer, Annette Bening, Kevin Spacey, and Sir Ridley Scott. Last year’s honoree was Uma Thurman.

For more information on the 26th Boston Film Festival, call 617-523-8388.

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