

For Immediate Release
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Northwest Film Forum presents the 6th annual Children's Film Festival Seattle

Programs include the Northwest premiere of Garri Bardin's "The Ugly Duckling," a round-up of contemporary Chinese animation and a host of award-winning short films

January 28-February 6, 2011

Seattle – Northwest Film Forum is pleased to announce the 6th annual Children's Film Festival Seattle, to be held January 28-February 6 at the Film Forum's cinemas in Seattle. The largest children's film festival in the Pacific Northwest, Children's Film Festival Seattle celebrates the best and brightest in international children's cinema with a 10-day extravaganza of 125 films from 29 countries.

This year's festival will begin with a rockin' pajama party for ages 3 and older featuring Casper Babypants, a band starring Seattle rock legend Chris Ballew, and end with a red-carpet award ceremony featuring the announcement of the festival's coveted Children's Jury prizes.

But in between, Northwest Film Forum's projectors will roll nonstop for 10 days with a lineup of stellar new films that will take audiences on a magic carpet ride around the world.

"I'm thrilled with our selections this year," said Elizabeth Shepherd, festival director since 2006. "We believe our festival is now truly on the map in terms of being one of the best events of its kind in North America."

A roundup of current animation from China has been curated by acclaimed teacher, animator and artist Joe Chang, who studied at Lu-Xun Academy of Fine Arts in China and Tama Art University in Japan. He emigrated from China to Canada in 1990. The animated short "Chinese Violin" was his first film with the National Film Board of Canada. His most recent film is "A Long Distance Call." He is currently working at The School of Art, Zhejiang University of Technology as Dean and professor of Animation. **Chang will be in Seattle on January 29 to introduce his film program and teach a master class for adult animators at Northwest Film Forum. He is available for interviews.**

In addition to Chang's roundup of animation from China, there are eight additional short film programs. Of special note is "Tally Ho! Films That Fly High," an animation program, and "Family

Matters,” a selection of international live-action shorts from four countries that explore the different things that make families tick in four different countries.

One of the biggest “gets” of this year’s festival is the Northwest premiere of "The Ugly Duckling," a new feature film by acclaimed Russian animator Garri Bardin.

Bardin’s career is legendary. Since he began making films in 1975 for the famed Soviet-era Soyuzmultfilm Studios, his films have won three “Nica” awards, the “Golden Olive-Branch” of the Cannes Festival and many other prestigious prizes from around the world. In 1991, Bardin founded his own studio, Stayer, where he has made films ever since.

Six years ago, at the age of 63, Bardin began work on “The Ugly Duckling” — his first feature film. Now, the film is wowing festival audiences worldwide with its hilarious and touching retelling of Hans Christian Anderson’s tale, rendered in glorious stop-motion animation to the soaring strains of music from Tchaikovsky’s ballets. The film most recently was awarded best film of Expotoons 2010 in Buenos Aires and has won ecstatic raves from critics and audiences at Vancouver International Film Festival.

Other feature films in the festival include the US premiere of “The Crocodiles Strike Back,” a new German feature film by Christian Ditter. The film recently picked up the Kaleva Award, given by the Children’s Jury at the 29th Oulu International Children’s Film Festival in Finland. The film is the sequel to “The Crocodiles,” which took home the coveted children’s jury prize for Best Feature Film at last year’s Children’s Film Festival Seattle.

Another film in this year’s festival, “The Indian,” from The Netherlands, has also won a slew of prizes at other children’s film festivals worldwide. The film, directed by Ineke Houtman, tells the poignant story of a 7-year-old Peruvian boy who is adopted into a Dutch family.

Yet another feature, "7 Days in Slow Motion," directed by Umakanth Thumrugoti, will take viewers to a trip to modern day Hyderabad, India, for a whirlwind story about some schoolboys who decide to make a film instead of studying for their all-important exams. The film’s director made a name for himself working as an animator with Disney studios; His live-action “7 Days” is both a departure from that genre as well as a high-energy return to his native Hyderabad. Roger Ebert recently called “a bright and cheerful comedy.”

The festival will also boast the Seattle premiere of “The Azemichi Road,” a film by Japan’s Fumie Nishikawa that tells the moving story of what happens when a deaf girl joins a hip hop dance team.

The festival will also offer screenings of important historical films. There will be world-premiere performances of a new score composed by harpist Leslie McMichael for the Mary Pickford silent film, “A Little Princess,” as well an archival showing of a new 35mm print of Jacques Tati’s 1958 comic masterpiece, “My Uncle.” That film is the rarely seen English language version of Tati’s "Mon Oncle.”

Elizabeth Shepherd, Festival Director, said this year’s festival will provide families with a chance to go on a whirlwind trip around the world, without ever leaving the two cozy cinemas of Northwest Film Forum.

“We’ve taken a leap forward this year at Children’s Film Festival Seattle, with a significant increase in the number of films in our festival. This year’s fest is bursting at the seams with films that are colorful and fun, and programs that present new cultures and ideas to children.”

Admission to most festival programs is only \$6.50 for kids, \$9.00 for adults and \$6 for Northwest Film Forum members, with the exception of special programs such as opening night, the Pancake Breakfast and the presentation of "A Little Princess." Tickets to all events may be purchased in advance at Northwest Film Forum's website or call (800) 838-3006. Many screenings sell out—parents and caregivers are encouraged to avoid disappointment, tears and tantrums, and get their get their tickets in advance.

Teachers who are interested in bringing school groups to the festival should contact Liz Shepherd, at 206.829.7862 or write liz@nwfilmforum.org for more information. Specially designed screenings for schools, home schools and child care providers are scheduled each weekday morning through February 25.

Extensive press information and publicity photos are available at <http://www.nwfilmforum.org/press>. Members of the press interested in talking to the festival director, Joe Chang, Leslie McMichael or Chris Ballew should contact ryan@nwfilmforum.org or call (206) 329-2629.

About Northwest Film Forum

Northwest Film Forum is Seattle's premiere film arts organization, screening over 200 independently made and classic films annually, offering a year-round schedule of filmmaking classes (including summer camps for youth), and supporting filmmakers at all stages of their careers. More information is available at www.nwfilmforum.org.

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