



LA Harbor International Film Festival

P.O. Box 5202 - San Pedro, CA 90733

Telephone: (310) 519-0756 ~ www.laharborfilmfest.com

To create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world



For Immediate Release

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It's A Wrap!

**LA Harbor International Film Festival Concludes 18th “Virtual” Voyage
Dedicated to Memory of Honorable Tom LaBonge
Commemorated 90th Anniversary of Warner Grand Theatre**

**First Ever Webinar for “Read the Book, See The Movie” POLLYANNA
New Filmmakers L.A. Special Presentation Garner Web Audience
Rave Reviews For Opening Night *IL POSTINO* and Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute *Phantom Of The Opera*
DocSunday POLA Premiere “John Van Hamersveld’s Crazy World Ain’t It” Big Hit!
19th LAHIFF On Course For March 10 -13, 2022**

March 15, 2021, San Pedro (SP), CA - the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) The 18th annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) first ever “virtual” online presentation held March 11-14 concluded with “rave” notices from the invisible international online audience: “Congrats on a successful Virtual Film Festival!” among other kudos “posted” and sent via email.

Dedicated to the memory of popular Los Angeles City Councilman the late Honorable Tom LaBonge and commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Warner Grand Theatre (WGT - a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs) the LAHIFF opened March 11 with the free education outreach “Read the Book, See the Movie” (RBSM) Culmination Program, that promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film. Over 600 copies of the classic American tome Pollyanna by Eleanor H. Porter were distributed and RBSM was presented as first time ever Webinar for students to participate in from their home classrooms. For past 17 years the eager and excited students would arrive at the WGT, currently closed due to City and County of L.A. virus edicts) greeted by a traditional bagpiper, then enjoyed healthy and fun refreshments and after viewing the film version of the book lively conversation ensued. Thanks to Sandy Martin-Alvarenga, teacher/coordinator of San Pedro High School John & Muriel Olguin magnet (SPHS) campus the Webinar included was presented to an enthusiastic group of students. (See thank you notes link end of release).

RBSM is a program of enrichment expanding erudition and instilling the joy of reading. Thanks to generous publishing sponsorship of “publishing Angel” Random House-Penguin Young Readers the LAHIFF has distributed over 17,000 free books since the inception of RBSM in 2004 to readers who are truly enjoying classic literature and will be reading far into the future. The LAHIFF is supported by fiscal and in-kind sponsors including Contributing Sponsor Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, District 4 and many more (see list at end of press release). RBSM refreshments were distributed with the books provided by another

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generous sponsor The Popcorn Man. Additional RBSM sponsors include Mary Star of the Sea High School, 7-Eleven (Pacific Ave., SP store) and Rancho LPG Holdings. San Pedro participants included: Mary Star of the Sea and SPHS magnet high schools, Holy Trinity Middle School, Crestwood Ave. and Leland Street Elementary Schools; and Wilmington’s Gulf Avenue Elementary School.

LAHIFF film programs had slated time with links to view films via Internet Movie Database (IMDB) or other sources including DVD, stated in all collateral items, program schedule, and LAHIFF website. For those who missed the movies the links are provided at end of release. Costs varied depending on link connection with three of the six programs free to view.

“Mangia Italiano 4” opening night feature film *Il Postino*, romantic and timeless love story, was homage to the “Little Italy” district in SP and the immense regional Italian population, with special promotion for the Italian themed Epicurean Sponsors encouraging dining al fresco before or after the movie, or ordering to go to enjoy “safe at home.” A plethora of emails expressed delight over seeing the film again or for the first time.

Saturday matinee showcased, for the ninth year, New Filmmakers L.A. (NFMLA) with a “Special Presentation” created for LAHIFF with nine short films (total of 95 min.) made in or around Los Angeles. An enthusiastic response from audience member revealed: “I watched most of the shorts and really enjoyed them, and brought my husband to see *The Shabbos Goy* so he could also could enjoy a laugh. I’d forgotten how satisfying the compactness of short films can be.” After the screening there was “zoom -conversation and Q&A” moderated by Andrew Acedo, NFMLA events outreach coordinator with five of the nine filmmakers in dialogue and varied virtual attendance for the “Q&A.”

Saturday evening’s Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) pays tribute to great films of yore, this year featuring *Phantom Of The Opera* (Universal, 1943). As one audience member commented: “My Mom and Dad took me to see this movie when I was seven years old and I loved it. I was into classical music and operas, ballet not so much. What a great choice that brought back wonderful memories!” Since 2004 the HNT has had many true “movie stars” grace the HNT “Red Carpet” receptions preceding the film screenings including Betty Garret (*Neptune’s Daughter*), Mitzi Gaynor, John Kerr, France Nuyen (*South Pacific*) George Chakiris and Russ Tamblyn (*West Side Story*), Nancy Kwan (*Flower Drum Song*), Stella Stevens and Carol Linley (*The Poseidon Adventure*) Pat Boone (*April Love*) to name a few. In addition “golden age” of Hollywood star Marsha Hunt and James MacArthur (RBSM *Swiss Family Robison* and *Kidnapped*) participated with honors. A virtual viewer from London, England wrote: “With us being in ‘lockdown’ it’s been liberating to ‘travel’ to Italy and Paris via the movies *Il Postino* and *Phantom Of The Opera* and my passport is ready for more great films inspired by LAHIFF.”

LAHIFF last day known as DocSunday - devoted to non-fiction films - opened with the short documentary *John Van Hamersveld’s Crazy World Ain’t It* about the esteemed artist who created the poster art for the closing film *The Endless Summer*. Van Hamersveld grew up in Palos Verdes Peninsula’s Lunada Bay and resides in Rancho Palos Verdes. He is known for the iconic poster, countless popular music album covers and evocative exterior murals locally and internationally. *The Endless Summer*, ultimate surfing documentary, speaks to the culture of surfing internationally. The movie poster inspired the design for this year’s LAHIFF official poster and banners representing the constancy and infinity of the sea, sun and moon a sign of hope.

A 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 2003 with no paid employees, LAHIFF is made possible through fiscal and in-kind sponsorship. A non-juried non-competitive entity that aims to entertain, enlighten and educate the audience by showcasing

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film and video that reflects the harbor and all it embraces: Shipping and commerce, fishing, sailing, water sports, sea life and the area’s rich ethnic and cultural influences - and to promote literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film through the education outreach program RBSM - *to create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world*. Additionally the LAHIFF promotes the intrinsic value of the WGT and makes its own effort toward continuing restoration. LAHIFF board members are Carla Contestable, Andrea (Rukavina) Hegybeli, Nancy (McCutchan) Nottingham, and Peter Read Miller; festival advisor is Betsy A. McLane, Ph.D.

“Being a sponsor of LAHIFF demonstrates community awareness and support of the mission that extends beyond the four day film festival with a presence in the community throughout the year. Partnerships between business and individuals in supporting cultural events are essential to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens. Its significance can never be underestimated, and we are immensely grateful,” commented festival director/founder Stephanie Mardesich. “This year was an ‘experiment’ and we are evaluating the presentation, what to maintain, what to improve, how we can engage the audience and encourage appropriate support events for viewing,” continued Mardesich. “We are hopeful the WGT will open again for some interim programs before the renovation. It’s one of the last movie houses in the country, and locally, that has capability to project 35mm film. Its historical significance, and as a major venue for so many cultural and community events, is hugely important to San Pedro and the region. With the ‘virtual’ programs it’s still possible to enjoy the films at the audience’s leisure and we encourage all to see the wonderful movies.” (Links to view last page of release).

As another (Northern California) viewer commented via email: “I want to say thank you for sending the links for the LAHIFF. I was not able to participate as much as I would have liked, but did see *Pollyanna* as well as *The Endless Summer* documentary, which were both nostalgic. I loved the movie *Pollyanna* as a child since I was about the same age as the character. Now I look forward to reading the book. The surfing brought back wonderful memories as well. When I saw the guys wearing big striped T-shirts I remember mine was white with lime green stripes. I wore Hang Ten clothing brand clothes. So much fun reminiscing.”

“The LA Harbor International Film Festival is a valued cultural event for all ages; educational, informing, entertaining, and celebrating the cinematic arts, states Supervisor Hahn. “ For its 18th year with the Festival going ‘virtual’ we all will miss being together in the beautiful Warner Grand Theater, but I am grateful that this harbor area tradition has been kept alive, allowing people to enjoy classic Hollywood movies and learn from thoughtful documentaries, from the safety of their homes.”

The 19th annual LAHIFF is on calendar for March 10-13, 2022 probably again “virtual” if the planned WGT renovation begins that is still to be determined. Sponsorship opportunities available; categories and benefits vary depending on the designated level. Programming will be announced early next year.

Media relations, information, and “Sponsorship Opportunities Guidelines” contact: Stephanie Mardesich, Festival Director at stephaniemardesich@yahoo.com or telephone (310) 519-0756. See WEBSITE www.laharborfilmfest.com for this year’s complete schedule, current and historical photos, and archives.

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(sm:3/2021)

Link for poster unveiling Feb. 19.2021: <https://youtu.be/d2j9OBqsMTs>

Link for “Welcome” for “Read the Book, See the Movie” March 11, 2021: <https://youtu.be/rytjcVLWve8>

Link for Thank you notes for RBSM from Gulf Avenue Elementary School, Wilmington, CA: <https://padlet.com/cuchi1/dnir70t2oa0d1x2vS>

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List of films and links to view:

March 11 Prog. A – 10:30 am RBSPM *Pollyanna* real time Webinar presentation <http://bit.ly/rtbstmpollyanna>
March 12 Prog. B - Opening Night “Mangia Italiano 4” *IL POSTINO* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110877/?ref=fn_al_tt_1
March 13 Prog. C - New Filmmakers L.A. lahiff.eventive.org (Must pre-register at this link to view and for Q&A)
March 13 Prog. D - HNT *Phantom Of The Opera* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036261/?ref=nm_flg_act_45
March 14 Prog. E - DocSunday *John Van Hamersveld’s Crazy World Ain’t It* <https://vimeo.com/480561807> Password: CWAJ
March 14 Prog. F - DocSunday *The Endless Summer* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0060371/?ref=fn_al_tt_1

Complete LAHIFF Sponsor List

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Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, District 4

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Epicurean Sponsors (websites /contact tel. listed for “outdoor dining/ordering to go/ curbside pick up”)

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Wienerschnitzel www.wienerschnitzel.com/location/59-north-gaffey-west-sepulveda-san-pedro-230-north-gaffey-san-pedro-ca-90731/

San Pedro Brewing Company <https://sanpedrobrewing.com/>

Sacred Grounds (telephone) (310)514-080 <https://www.sacredgrounds.coffee/>

The Whale & Ale <https://www.thewhaleandale.com/>

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The Sandwich Saloon <https://www.sandwichsaloonndeli.com/>

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Big Nick’s <https://bignickspizza.com/>

Sebastian’s Mediterranean Cuisine <https://www.sebastiansmc.com/>

La Bocca Felice <https://www.bfelice.com/>

Think Prime (telephone) (310) 221-0415