

Contact:

Kasia Iverson
Marketing Coordinator
CICFF
1517 W. Fullerton
Chicago, IL 60614
(p) 773.281.9075
(f) 773.929.0266
kasia@facets.org



Largest Children's Film Festival Launches 22nd Kidsfest!
Chicago International Children's Film Festival Welcomes Hollywood Stars and 100 International Filmmakers

Chicago, IL – The CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL (**Thursday, October 27-Sunday, November 6**) launches into its 22nd year complete with celebrity guest appearances and a rich palette of the best children's films from around the world. The largest and longest running festival of children's films in the U.S., the 2005 Festival brings over 240 films (165 premieres) international films to Chicago audiences and welcomes such celebrity guests as acclaimed actor Harold Ramis (*Ice Harvest*, *Groundhog Day*) and actress Sonya Eddy (*Barbershop*, *Daddy Day Care*, *Come Away Home*).

On Thursday, October 27th, the CICFF's **Opening Night Gala** kicks off 10-days of films, workshops and fun-filled events and will be hosted by actor/director **Harold Ramis**, director of *Groundhog Day* and *Ice Harvest*. The event includes a special sneak preview of the Festival's award-winning short film offerings, including *Domo-kun and the Egg*, an animated film featuring the popular character Domo-kun that is sweeping audiences in Japan, as well as the rare Looney Toons© short *Daffy for President*, storyboarded by legendary animator Chuck Jones in the 1950's, but not realized until 2004.

Acclaimed actress, **Sonya Eddy** (*Barbershop*, *Daddy Day Care*) will be in town to attend the Chicago premiere of her recent film *Come Away Home*, that tells the tale of 12-year-old Annie who when forced to live with her grandparents over the summer finds more than she bargained for including important traits needed for her transition into adolescence – also starring Tom Gibson (*Dharma and Greg*), Lea Thompson and Jordan-Clare Green. On Sunday, November 6th, Eddy will also lead the *TakeOne! Workshop* **"Breaking Through the Color Bars: with Sonya Eddy"**. This workshop – suitable for both parents and children – will offer insights on what's it's like being a an African American actor in Hollywood.

"We are truly honored that such talented and remarkable artists are willing to share their insights with CICFF audiences," says Director of Children's Programming, Nicole Dreiske, "Their presence gives young film lovers the courage to take pride in their city and their art."

On weekends – October 29th-30th and November 5th-6th – the CICFF continues the cinematic celebration with 33 World Premieres, 30 North American Premieres, 32 U.S. Premieres, and 72 Chicago Premieres of the best children's films in the world! Chicago audiences will be treated to such entertaining flicks as: *Bibi Blocksburg and the Secret of the Blue Owls*, the story of a full-fledged witch who could give Harry Potter a run for his broomstick; *Golden Blaze*, a high powered animated adventure about Jason, who finds out that comic books and superpowers are not as

important as one's inner strengths, *Sprit Bear: The Simon Jackson Story*, the touching tale chronicling the life and times of the young environmental activist, Simon Jackson, starring Graham Greene, Ed Begley Jr., and Mark Rendall; and *Laura's Star*, a celebrated animated film from Germany that tells the tale of friendship between a little girl and a fallen star. "These 246 films from 37 countries represent the best of their craft from around the globe," states CICFF Programmer Diedre Searcy, "It is my hope that Chicago audiences will come away from these screenings feeling enlightened, touched and inspired."

Festival screenings will be held at 3 locations – Facets Multi-Media, 1517 West Fullerton Avenue; AMC City North 14, 2600 North Western Avenue; and the Vittum Theater, 1012 North Noble Street.

Opening Night Gala festivities will be held at Thorne Auditorium, Northwestern University, 375 East Chicago Avenue and the American Airlines Closing Night Awards Ceremony will be held at the historic Vittum Theater, 1012 North Noble Street.

Admission to film screenings is \$6 for children and \$8 for adults. Group discounts are available. Advanced ticket sales are available online starting October 1st via Ticketweb. A complete schedule is available on-line at www.cicff.org or for more information call Kasia Iverson at (773) 281-9075.

CICFF 22nd Anniversary Festival Highlights include:

- **Opening Night Gala with Harold Ramis** is on Thursday October 27th at the Thorne Auditorium on the downtown campus of Northwestern University, 375 East Chicago Avenue. The reception starts at 6 p.m. followed by a special screening of the top short films in the Festival including the rare Looney Toons© short *Daffy for President*, shown at 7:15 p.m. Admission is \$50 for adults, \$25 for children and a four-person pass is available for \$75. For more information call Kidsfest at (773) 281-9075.
- **Sonya Eddy** leads the *TakeOne! Workshop* "Breaking Through the Color Bars with Sonya Eddy" where she gives the inside scoop on what's it's like being a an African American actor in Hollywood. Bring the whole family – this workshop is suitable for both children and parents. Sunday, November 6th, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. at the Vittum Theatre, 1012 N. Noble.
- **Four O'Clock = Fabulous Films** – New this year! After-school screenings will be available at 4 o'clock on weekdays for Boys and Girls Clubs, Park Districts, Scouts, children's parties and social service organizations. Take your pick of films from our schedule and call to arrange a screening of your favorite films!
- **Kid Flix – Visions of Film's Future Stars** – They made it and now we're showing it. On Sunday, October 31st, 5::00 p.m. at the Vittum Theatre (1012 N. Noble), this program of short films features the latest and greatest by young filmmakers ages 6-14 in Chicago and from around the world. From clay animation to live action to documentary, these young filmmakers have filmed it!
- **"Czech This Out – Animation Gone Wild"** will take audiences through wondrous landscapes and enchanting stories of Eastern Europe, created by some of the best contemporary animators from the world-famous Zlin School of animation in the Czech Republic.

- **Take One!** Festival workshops, sponsored by the Hot Topic Foundation, are mini lessons that engage kids in hands-on animation, film production and script writing. Workshops are for kids aged 7 – 14 and are scheduled on both Festival weekends. Registration is required and fees range from \$15 - \$75 per participant. To register, call Kidsfest at (773) 281-9075.
- **My First Movies** – Pint-sized flicks for our youngest audiences! Special programs of short films designed specifically for children ages 2-5 are screened daily at Facets and the Vittum Theater on weekends during the festival. Look for the ‘My First Movies’ icon!
- **The American Airlines Award Ceremony** starting at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 6th at the Vittum Theatre will feature a special cash prize of \$2500 awarded as the “Best of the Fest” Prize sponsored by Facets Multi-Media. Every child who attends the festival has the chance to vote for the winner. Plus, emerging filmmakers who have directed fewer than three films are eligible to compete for the Kenneth F. and Harle G. Montgomery Award (\$2500). The Liv Ullman Peace Prize (\$500) and the Rights of the Child Prize (\$500) celebrate children’s films that encourage peaceful resolutions of conflict and promote the rights of children. Admission is \$25 for all seats.
- Short films that receive the Best of the Fest Prize from the Adult Jury may automatically qualify to enter the Short Films category of the **Academy Awards**.
- The **Facets Multi-Media 4th Annual Gala** will honor Mr. and Mrs. Chaz and Roger Ebert with its *Legacy Award*, Thursday, October 6th at the Peninsula Hotel, 108 E. Superior Street in Downtown Chicago. Cocktail Reception starts at 6 p.m. followed by a film and honoree presentation, dinner and silent auction at 7:30 p.m. Benefactor, Patron and Donor level tables and tickets are available. Call (773) 281-9075 for more information.

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