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## REELING: THE CHICAGO LGBTQ+ INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES THE LINE-UP OF ITS 36th ANNIVERSARY FILM FESTIVAL

**\*\*Rupert Everett and Scud Scheduled to Attend\*\***

**(August 20, 2018 - Chicago, IL)** English actor/director **Rupert Everett** and Hong Kong film director **Scud** are among the special guests expected to attend the 36<sup>th</sup> edition of Reeling, the second-oldest LGBTQ film festival in the world and a beloved Chicago cultural institution for more than 30 years. Everett will walk the red carpet in support of Reeling's Special Presentation of **THE HAPPY PRINCE**, his forthcoming directorial debut in which he stars as Oscar Wilde in the sunset of his life. The film has won raves for Everett's performance, script, and masterful direction. Director Scud, renowned for his provocative, sexually-infused films, will be on hand for the North American premiere of **ADONIS**, his seventh feature film. The festival's Opening Night film is **FREELANCERS ANONYMOUS**, a delightful lesbian screwball comedy filmed in Chicago, starring **Lisa Cordileone** and Chicago-area native **Alexandra Billings** (*Transparent*, *Goliath*). Cordileone is expected to attend the opening night festivities along with other cast members. Reeling will also present the Chicago premieres of the hotly anticipated biopic **MAPPLETHORPE**, starring Matt Smith (*Dr. Who*, *The Crown*) as the controversial photographer; "Hood by Air" fashion designer Leilah Weinraub's incendiary documentary debut **SHAKEDOWN**; and the festival's Narrative Centerpiece, the offbeat **WILD NIGHTS WITH EMILY**, starring Molly Shannon (*SNL*, *Divorce*, *Superstar*) as Emily Dickinson. **STUDIO 54**, the history of the infamous 1970s era nightclub from director Matt Tyrnauer (*Valentino*, *Scotty Bowers and the Secret History of Hollywood*) closes the fest.

Brenda Webb, Reeling founder and Executive Director of Chicago Filmmakers, commented on the line-up: "This year's programming has a strong historical bent, with films ranging from portrayals of literary figures from the 1800s to reflections on LGBTQ culture of the 1970s and 80s; but the festival also embraces the "now" as we present diverse contemporary stories and introduce the work of new and emerging artists who may be sharing their first films with our audience."

Reeling will present 31 features and 19 shorts programs, all of them Chicago premieres, during the run of the festival from September 20 to 30, 2018. The festival's opening night presentation will take place at the **Davis Theater** (4614 N. Lincoln Ave.) on Thursday, September 20, with an after-party at the adjoining Carbon Arc Bar. Reeling moves to **Landmark's Century Centre Cinema** (2828 N.

Clark St.) from September 21-27, and then concludes September 28-30 at the newly restored firehouse headquarters of **Chicago Filmmakers** (5720 N. Ridge Ave.). Chicago Filmmakers is the presenting organization of Reeling.

Rupert Everett (*My Best Friend's Wedding*, the *Shrek* series, *Cemetery Man*) visits Reeling on Thursday, September 27 in support of **THE HAPPY PRINCE**. In addition to playing the title role of Oscar Wilde, Everett wrote and directed the film which focuses on Wilde in exile in Paris, after his conviction for "gross indecency" and his release from prison in 1897. Bereft, estranged from his wife (Emily Watson) and sons, Wilde is haunted by ghosts of the past, supported by his remaining loyal friends including Reggie (played by Oscar winner Colin Firth). Once one of the most esteemed playwrights and authors in the world, Wilde faces his reduced circumstances with a combination of his famous wit and brutal honesty. When his former lover Lord Alfred Douglas (Colin Morgan) shows up, past crashes into the future, threatening Wilde's hold on reality. Everett will walk the red carpet at 6:30 pm followed by the 7:00 pm screening at the Landmark Century.

Hong Kong film director **Scud**, renowned for his erotically outrageous films (*Voyage*, *Utopians*, *Amphetamine*), pushes the envelope even further with **ADONIS**, the story of a handsome young actor who descends into a world of hedonism after partaking in an infamous gay adult film. When the young man accepts a mysterious invitation, however, the course of his life changes. Filled with the mind-blowing visuals for which Scud is known, **ADONIS** may be the director's most provocative work. **Scud** will walk the red carpet at Reeling on Tuesday, September 25 at 6:30 pm followed by the 7:00 pm screening at the Landmark Century.

The Miss Continental Pageant and the Baton Show Lounge – both Chicago institutions for decades – are profiled in Reeling's Documentary Centerpiece selection, **THE QUEENS**. Director Mark Saxenmeyer focuses on the 35-year-old pageant which explores the subculture of competitive female impersonation in all its glittery glory, and delves into the rich history of The Baton Show Lounge, the Windy City's historic female illusion showplace (now in its 49<sup>th</sup> year). Saxenmeyer and cast members will be present at the screening, which is scheduled for Monday, September 24 at 9:00 pm at the Landmark Century.

In addition to **MAPPLETHORPE** and **STUDIO 54**, other films reflecting on life in the 1970s and '80s include two films from "Down Under": **CANARY (KANARIE)**, set in apartheid South Africa, about a small-town boy who is drafted into the military and finds solace with other "misfits" in the military's traveling choir; and **RIOT**, a drama about Australia's version of Stonewall, the Mardi Gras riot, celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The impact of the AIDS crisis is revisited in the emotionally powerful new drama **1985**, which stars Cory Michael Smith, Virginia Madsen, and Michael Chiklis; as well as in a film that was created in 1985, **BUDDIES**, the first American feature about AIDS, directed by Arthur Bressan, Jr. who later died of an AIDS-related illness, showing at Reeling in a newly restored digital print, thirty-three years after it was the opening night film of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the festival.

Adding to the international scope of the festival are two films about summer encounters that cross ethnic borders. In the Dutch film **JUST FRIENDS**, sparks fly between a Middle Eastern medical student and a young man he meets in a small Dutch city he visits over the summer; in **A MOMENT IN THE REEDS**, the first independent LGBT film made in Finland, the relationship between a Syrian asylum seeker and the son of his Finnish employer erotically unfolds during an idyllic Finnish

summer. Meanwhile, the fraught relationship between two young men is under threat of crumbling when they go on holiday in the Greek film **HE LOVES ME**; while the relationship between two women (Oona Chaplin, *Game of Thrones*, *Black Mirror*) and Kat (Natlia Tena, *Harry Potter's* Nymphadora Tonks) is tested when one of them wants to have a child and the other doesn't in the Spanish film **ANCHOR AND HOPE**, which features Oona's real life mother Geraldine Chaplin as her mother in the film. The Brazilian film **CHRISTABEL**, showing in its North American Premiere, takes us to the tropical savanna for a gothic tale of supernatural romance inspired by the legendary Coleridge poem.

Comedies in the festival include the boisterous Italian film **MY BIG, GAY ITALIAN WEDDING**, based on the long-running Off Broadway hit show, in which a gay couple's aisle to the altar is paved with hijinks and hilarity; **STILL WAITING IN THE WINGS**, a frothy musical about young men pursuing their Broadway dreams, featuring cameos by a host of familiar faces (Chita Rivera, Ed Asner, Patricia Richardson, Cindy Williams, Lee Meriwether, Bruce Vilanch, Sally Struthers); and the German film **COUNTRY NOISE**, about a young pink-haired urbanite who returns home to her small German town and shakes things up when she reconnects with her trombone-playing childhood friend. Reeling also presents the World Premiere of **ANALYSIS PARALYSIS**, about a man searching for love while struggling with his anxiety disorder.

American Indies are well-represented in Reeling and include **FUNNY STORY**, about a father and daughter both involved with the daughter's fiancée; **KILL THE MONSTERS**, a sexy road trip drama focused on a three-way relationship; the eye-popping, wildly offbeat tale of twisted love **DADDY ISSUES**, a lesbian dramedy that has been described as the lovechild of Wes Anderson and David Lynch; **ALASKA IS A DRAG**, which follows the dreams of a budding female impersonator working in a fish cannery by day (and featuring a hilarious cameo by Margaret Cho); **DEVIL'S PATH**, a creepy thriller about a killer stalking men in a gay trysting spot in the forest; and the lesbian inter-generational drama **SNAPSHOTS**, starring Piper Laurie, Brooke Adams, and Emily Baldoni.

Documentaries in the festival include **CALL HER GANDA**, the riveting and heartbreaking story of the murder of a trans woman in the Philippines; **CONVERSATIONS WITH GAY ELDERS: KERBY LAUDER**, a fascinating, in-depth examination of one man's life conducted by queer history filmmaker David Weissman (*We Were Here*, *The Cockettes*); **IN MY ROOM**, an intimate look at six teenagers who post videos to YouTube; **THE REST I MAKE UP**, a loving portrait of esteemed nine-time Obie Award winning playwright Maria Irene Fornes by her protégé as the writer is struggling with dementia; and **LEITIS IN WAITING**, the story of an intrepid group of transgender women fighting intolerance in their South Pacific home of Tonga.

In addition to the feature line-up, Reeling will present 19 **SHORTS PROGRAMS** scattered throughout the programming, with the final weekend of the festival at Chicago Filmmakers focusing almost entirely on shorts, making this the most shorts programs ever presented by the festival!

**For Media Updates, Check the Press Section of the Reeling Website:**

<http://reelingfilmfestival.org/2018/media-center/>

#### \* Sponsors

The 36th edition of Reeling is presented by **AARP** and **ROOM & BOARD**, and is a program of **CHICAGO FILMMAKERS**, a non-profit media arts organization that has been serving Chicago's independent film community for more than 40 years. Reeling sponsors also include Premier Sponsors

**GILEAD, CHICAGOPRIDE.COM, and HERE TV; Grand Sponsors BEST WESTERN PLUS HAWTHORNE TERRACE, EDGE MEDIA NETWORK, and NEXUS RADIO.**

**\* Press Screeners**

Press kits and film screeners for selected titles will be made available for accredited press. Please contact [Rob Walton](#) to apply for a press pass.

**\* Filmmaker and Actor Interviews**

Many filmmakers and actors are available for interviews. Please contact [Rob Walton](#) for updates on expected talent and to arrange phone or in-person interviews for our guest artists.

**\* Public Information**

For more information, the public can call **(773) 293-1447**, consult the festival website at: [www.reelingfilmfestival.org](http://www.reelingfilmfestival.org), or follow us on Twitter [@ReelingFilmFest](#), Facebook [@reeling.filmfest](#) or Instagram [@reelingfilmfest](#) for the latest Reeling news.

**\* Ticket Information**

Tickets may be purchased online ([www.reelingfilmfestival.org](http://www.reelingfilmfestival.org)) beginning **August 24** or in person at Chicago Filmmakers (5720 N. Ridge Ave. - enter the building on the Hollywood side of the building) **September 10-19** (11am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat). Ticket prices are **\$13** for regular screenings at the Landmark and **\$11** for screenings at Chicago Filmmakers. Special admission programs include the Opening Night Film, **FREELANCERS ANONYMOUS**, **\$16** for the film only and **\$45** for the film and after-party; **\$18** for the Special Presentation of **THE HAPPY PRINCE**; **\$15** for the Centerpiece Documentary Film **THE QUEENS**; \$15 for the Closing Night Film **STUDIO 54** film only at 5 pm; and \$35 for the Closing Night Film and Party (7:30 pm).

**\* Memberships**

Reeling memberships are available to purchase online, in person at Chicago Filmmakers, or at the festival venues. Membership benefits include discounts on tickets, early ticket purchasing, entrance to the theatre via the members' line for priority seating, and other perks.

**\* Pass Information**

Discount passes are available at **\$50** for a Pick-5 Pass, **\$90** for a Pick-10 Pass, and **\$125** for a Festival Pass. Passes are good for regularly priced screenings only.

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