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**ACHIEVING NOTORIETY: NORTH CAROLINA GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL_[sm]
COMES OF AGE FOR THE CAROLINA THEATRE WITH WORLD PREMIERES &
SIGNATURE EVENT STATUS!**

Durham, N.C.— The **North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Film Festival_[sm]** (NCGLFF) begins its ninth year at The Carolina Theatre of Durham by establishing itself as the second largest gay and lesbian film festival in the Southeast, attracting 10,000 patrons for the past three years. The prestige of the NCGLFF continues to grow with the inclusion of four feature film world premieres (*Collision*, *Last Ride*, *Nine Lives* and *Surge of Power*) to this year's schedule. The festival brings an international array of shorts, documentaries and feature films and their creators to North Carolina. At the end of the 2003 festival, the Durham Convention and Visitors Bureau recognized the NCGLFF as a *Signature Event* for Durham and North Carolina. The festival runs August 12-15, with the Aprés-Fest August 16-19. Tickets are on sale July 14, 2004, and can be purchased at The Carolina Theatre box office located at 309 West Morgan Street or by calling (919) 560-3030. Five-packs are \$32.00 and single tickets are \$7.50.

Featuring world premieres (most recently, *Tarheels and Short Skirts*, from North Carolina filmmaker Chad Phillips and *200 American* from former North Carolinian Richard LeMay), North Carolina exclusives and guest filmmakers, the NCGLFF grows as an important venue for screening up-and-coming films. "The North Carolina Gay & Lesbian Film Festival was the first stop on the festival circuit for my film *200 American*," said producer/writer/director LeMay, "The venue, the organization, and more importantly, the personal attention given to the filmmakers is top notch. We've now been to festivals all over the world and the experience at the NCGLFF has not been matched. Hands down, an amazing experience that spoilt me. *200 American* has been bought for distribution worldwide and it all started in Durham."

This year's program includes 94 movies with 90 NC premieres in 69 programs over the four-day event. The four feature-length world premieres highlighting the festival are *Collision*, writer-producer-director-actor Arsen Karougian's tale of dramatic relationships; *Last Ride*, a musical re-imagining of the Matthew Shepard myth; *Nine Lives* based on Schnitzler's play *La Ronde* and the cameo-filled superhero/science fiction romp *Surge of Power*.

The festival kicks off Thursday at 7:20 p.m. with a screening of the high-spirited, action-adventure *D.E.B.S.* The NCGLFF was one of the first venues Sony Screen Gems selected to show this much-anticipated

feature film, by African American filmmaker Angela Robinson. The full-length adventure is based on Robinson's popular short film, *D.E.B.S.*, the NCGLFF's 2003 Emerging Film Award for Best Women's Short. The title characters are a group of young, sassy, smart women recruited to work as secret agents and fight America's enemies...while sending up the entire espionage, action-adventure, party and teen-angst film genres. The cast and crew include carryovers from the short plus several exciting Hollywood veterans and newcomers, such as Jordana Brewster (*Fast and Furious*), Meagan Good (*Deliver Us From Eva*), Holland Taylor (*Legally Blonde*), and Michael Clarke Duncan (*Daredevil*).

Starring in gay-oriented films is on the rise for talented performers as the slate of films programmed for the festival is studded with an increasing number of television and cinematic actors. Appearing in various shorts and features are Maria Cina (*Suspended Animation*), Frank Grillo (*Minority Report*), Zack Ward (*Almost Famous*), Arly Jover (*Blade*), Randall Batinkoff (*As Good As It Gets*), Michael Legge (*Angela's Ashes*), Jim Verraros (*American Idol*), Wendy Robie (*Twin Peaks*), Debra Wilson (*MadTV*), William Christian (*All My Children*), Peggy Roeder (*Road to Perdition*), Nichelle Nichols (Uhura from *Star Trek*), Lou Ferrigno (*The Incredible Hulk*), Lisa Loring (Wednesday from *The Addams Family*), Noel Neill (Lois Lane in *The Adventures of Superman*) and Bobby Trendy (*The Anna Nicole Show*) just to name a few.

Friday night, the award-winning documentary *Tying the Knot* (most recently, winner of the Stu & Dave's Excellent Documentary Award at the 2004 San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival) examines gay marriage. In production for three years, the film discusses the history of marriage and the effects of anti-gay discrimination to make a timely and compelling case for same-sex marriage. On Saturday and Sunday nights, the NCGLFF Men's Centerpiece Film, *Eating Out*, and Women's Centerpiece Film, *Make A Wish*, highlight the fun and exciting work of up-and-coming gay and lesbian directors. Q. Allan Brocka's *Eating Out* is also the recent recipient of the Levi's First Feature Award at the 28th Frameline San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival.

The festival closes on Sunday night with *90 Miles*, a personal examination of one man's journey from being a devout young Communist in Cuba to exile in Miami after the Mariel boatlift. The film takes a candid look at the transformations the filmmaker and his family make as emigrants during an historic turning point in the history of their country.

As in the past cast and crewmembers from several of the films will be at the festival to talk about their work and join in the celebration. Previous attendees include Anne Misawa, director of the Emerging Film Feature *Eden's Curve*. She said: "Everyone at the festival as well as the community were not only extremely generous and hospitable, but fun too! It was wonderful to see the Aloha Spirit in action so many miles away from Hawai'i." Ty Phillips, director *Wall-to-Wall*, added: "Each year I come away energized and inspired, not only by the screenings, but also by the large and supportive audience which helps to give the festival such an amazing atmosphere."

To further support filmmakers gain recognition and acceptance for their efforts, the NCGLFF Programming Committee bestows the Emerging Film Award each year. The awards celebrate up-and-coming features and shorts that deserve more attention and find a larger audience. Past winners have been able to secure distribution agreements and financing for new projects. The winner of the 2004 NCGLFF Emerging Film Award for Best Men's Feature is *Eating Out*, a sexual roundelay about college students scheming too much to win the hearts of those they love; the Best Women's Feature winner is *Mango Kiss*, a tale of best friends pursuing their dream, exploring new roles, and finding romance; Men's Best Short winner, *Blessing*, examines the difficulties for a gay son when his Mormon father has a heart attack; and the Women's Best Short winner is *You're Still Young*, the story of a young woman grappling with first love and the pain of questioning her sexual identity.

The NCGLFF continues its strong lineup of international features and shorts this year. Though the majority of films are from the U.S.A., the festival includes works from Australia, Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and India. These films show us the differences and the similarities of life for gays and lesbians around the world. Some of this year's most anticipated films hail from abroad, including *Grand École*, *Adored: Diary of a Male Porn Star*, *Goldfish Memory*, *Mango Souffle*, *Bulgarian Lovers* and *Cowboys and Angels*. Not all films about life abroad are from overseas, however. The acclaimed documentary *Dangerous Living*, exploring the persecution and social penalties facing gays and lesbians around the world, comes from the America team that created the influential documentaries *Before Stonewall* and *After Stonewall*.

The lives of gays and lesbians in North Carolina find many outlets in this year's festival. Local filmmakers are bringing stories about charity, love, transvestites, and more, to The Carolina Theatre. *Drag Bingo: The Documentary* explores North Carolina's love affair with raising money and hemlines. North Carolina drag queen Mary K. Mart, the focus of *The Joy of Being Mary*, takes us into the underground world of bars and drag in Raleigh. And, last, but in no way least, comes *Trash: The Movie*, a screening of a work-in-progress from the hilarious Triangle team that brought us *Camp: The Movie*.

The NCGLFF again features an extensive program of community outreach activities this year. The lobby of The Carolina Theatre will be home to the Community Resource area this year as 50 LGBT groups, organizations and companies display information materials serving the lesbian and gay community. The fundraising reception takes place on Friday, August 13 from 8pm – 11pm in the Durham Civic Center to help the festival and The Carolina Theatre bring such a high quality event to Durham. Tickets to the fundraising reception are \$25 and will include admittance to a silent auction, light refreshments, live entertainment and other special events. The NC Pride marching band will again perform on the plaza, Pride Café benefiting North Carolina PRIDE will be open in the Connie Moses Ballroom and photographer Penny Coleman will present a short lecture and photo exhibit on her book *Village Elders* and the upcoming *Transgender Elders* occurs Sunday, August 15th at 2:00 P.M. in the Connie Moses Ballroom during the festival's weekend of events.

Cowboys and Angels, Goldfish Memory, Bulgarian Lovers and *Adored: Diary of a Male Porn Star* make up the 2004 Apres-Fest from *Monday*, August 16 to *Thursday*, August 19, as part of The Carolina Theatre's regular film schedule.

Patrons can purchase a "Five-Pack" of film tickets for \$32 or single tickets for \$7.50. The "Five-Pack" discount is available for purchases through 6 p.m., *Wednesday*, August 11. Tickets to the reception are \$25. To purchase tickets, contact The Carolina Theatre Box Office located at 309 West Morgan Street, Durham, or by calling (919) 560-3030. Single tickets are available online for purchase at www.carolinatheatre.org.

[Photos and artwork available upon request; filmmaker interviews possible.]

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