



May 6, 2008

Media Contact:
Jim Dobson 323-896-6006

**“THE EDGE OF HEAVEN”, “CHRIS & DON: A LOVE STORY” WIN TOP KUDOS
AT THE 10th ANNUAL MIAMI & FORT LAUDERDALE
GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVALS**

“CALL ME TROY”, “THE WORLD UNSEEN” AND “WHO I AM” TAKE AUDIENCE AWARDS

Miami, Fla.–The prestigious 10th Annual Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, and inaugural Fort Lauderdale Gay & Lesbian Film Festival presented by HBO, has enjoyed a successful 10-day run with sold-out screenings and events attended by a spectacular array of special guests including Jennifer Tilly, Jay McCarroll and Nichelle Nichols as well as noted international film directors, producers and distributors Regent Entertainment, here! TV, Logo and TLA Releasing. In the tradition of the Festival, its own competition sponsored by HBO, awarded films were based on program committee panel reviews and audience ratings.

Best Juried Fiction Feature

The Edge of Heaven, directed by Fatih Akin

At the heart of this drama, told in 3 distinct chapters, is a multi-layered continent-crossing electric love affair between two women, at once very different and very much alike. Ayten is an angry and impoverished Turkish activist in Germany searching for her mother. Lotte is a privileged German college student rebelling against her mother and searching for purpose. But Aytens' mother Yeter has embarked on her own journey, from prostitute to "kept woman", employed by a not-so-kindly widower named Ali. The connective thread in all the stories is Ali's bookish son Nejat who forges odd, tender friendships with both Yeter and Lotte's mother Susanne.

Best Juried Documentary

Chris & Don: A Love Story directed by Guido Santi & Tina Mascara

Visionary gay writer Christopher Isherwood is perhaps best known for *The Berlin Stories*, which were the inspiration for *Cabaret*. But it's what happened after he wrote those stories that gave his life its fullest purpose. After he was forced to leave Germany with the rise of Nazism, and after he moved to Southern California to try his hand at screenwriting... Chris met a boy on a beach. Don Bachardy was 30 years younger, and the early days of their romance caused quite a scandal, even among Chris' more open-minded friends.

Audience Favorite Feature

The World Unseen directed by Shamim Sarifis

Amina, a gorgeous no-nonsense, business owner of the Location Café has broken all the rules of her own conventional Indian community. She wears a man's shirt, strides around in pants and, in a system that divides white from black and women from men, she has creatively managed to get a restaurant off the ground in association with Jacob, her business partner, who is harboring a well-guarded secret.

When Miriam, a young traditional Indian wife and mother, meets Amina, their unexpected attraction pushes Miriam to question her loveless marriage to Omar. Vehemently opposed to a system of injustice that separates family and friends based on skin-color, Amina's offer to help Miriam's sister-in-law hide from the police, sets in motion a whole chain of events that will forever change Amina and Miriam's lives.

Audience Favorite Documentary

Call Me Troy directed by Scott Bloom

Documentary about The Reverend Troy Perry who has been, and continues to remain, on the front lines of virtually every major civil rights struggle in gay/lesbian history. In 1969, he performed the first public same-sex marriage in the U.S., and went on to file the first lawsuit seeking legal recognition for same gender marriages.

Audience Favorite Short

Who I Am directed by Jesse Peretz

Shot in Miami in the halls of MAST Academy, a story of two young women, Veronica and Haley, who meet at the crossroads of race and class to confront their sexuality.

Last year's award winners included **The Bubble** (Best Fiction Feature), **Red Without Blue** (Best Documentary) and **Emile Norman: By His Own Design** (Audience Award).

The Festival began on a high note with a memorable Opening Night Gala presentation and East Coast Premiere of Laurie Lynd's **Breakfast with Scot** starring Thomas Cavanagh and Ben Shenkman at the Gusman Center. Special celebrity presenter was Sharon Gless who presented a honorary award to festival founder Robert Rosenberg. The lavish party, which followed at Jungle Island was a smash hit and set the tone for the next nine days of great films, parties and more.

The excitement continued with the Centerpiece Gala Screening of Avi Nesher's **The Secrets**, starring iconic actress Fanny Ardant with the gala after party at the Maxine at the Catalina Hotel.

Producer **Christine Vachon** received the Career Achievement Award at this year's festival prior to the screening of her film "Savage Grace." Also marking its debut at the festival was the successful **Merge Miami** sponsored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences featuring a weekend of panels and discussions with industry leaders and artists.

It was continuous film presentations and great parties all the way through the Festival's Closing Night Gala presentation of Thomas Gustafson's **Were the World Mine** at the Gusman Center, followed by yet another festive event at Miami Art Space. HBO presented the Jury awards to the winning films prior to the screening.

This year's festival included a record number of over 97 presentations comprised of shorts, documentaries and feature films from Canada, Cuba, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. Several of the films made their World Premiere including **Tru Loved** and **Ciao**.

Adding to this year's success, the Festival continued the Fort Lauderdale Gay & Lesbian Film Festival which enjoyed several sold out screenings and special events. "This year the community response from Fort Lauderdale was truly exceptional for all of the local festival events" said Festival Development and Operations Director Keith Cromley. "The community support in Broward County was great with sold out screenings and enthusiastic response which also resulted in the audience award winning film."

The 10th Annual Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival and the Fort Lauderdale Gay and Lesbian Film Festival are presented by HBO, also the festival Award Sponsor. Premiere Sponsors include: Absolut and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences; the Official Host Hotels and Delegate Center are The Catalina Hotel Group. The Official Airline sponsor is Jet Blue Airways. Our other Official Sponsors are Tylenol PM, Miami Downtown Development Authority and the Regal Entertainment Group, and our Official Media Sponsor is Window Media,

with 411 Magazine and Express Gay News. Major Sponsors include Amazon Printers, Comcast, Flamingo South Beach, Miami Art Space (MAS), Macy's, MetLife, Morgan Stanley, Miami Boutique Hotels. Contributing sponsors include BNY Mellon Wealth Management, Chaotic Gardens, Dior, Icandee Productions, Miami Science Museum, Monster Energy, Perrier, Renwood Winery.