

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MADE IN HAWAII FILMS SHOWCASED AT 2009 HAWAII
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL SPONSORED BY BANK OF HAWAII**

HONOLULU, HI (October 01, 2009) – Local and homegrown content is a major component of the 29th Hawaii International Film Festival. This year, HIFF is proud to recognize local filmmakers in our Made in Hawaii section sponsored by Bank of Hawaii, presenting world premieres of the best work to come from Hawaii's emerging and veteran filmmakers and documentarians. In addition to the presentation of these films, the Festival will also present a candid discussion by leaders in the local film industry in our "State of the Film Industry in Hawaii" seminar, especially notable as it faces a global recession, the closing of the Hawaii Film Office and the demise of Act 221.

HIFF will host the world premiere of the much-anticipated film BARBARIAN PRINCESS, based on the inspiring true story of Hawaii's Princess Ka'iulani, at the Hawaii Theatre on Friday, October 16 at 8:00 p.m. The Festival is also pleased to present two documentaries that represent Hawaii's socio-cultural and political heritage. One is the world premiere of PIDGIN: THE VOICE OF HAWAII, a whimsical journey through Hawaii's working-class language from its rise as plantation jargon to a source of island identity and pride.

HIFF will also host the world premiere of Cinematographer Anne Misawa's (TREELESS MOUNTAIN) newest documentary STATE OF ALOHA, which traces the journey of Hawai'i's fifty years of statehood. HIFF will screen the expanded theatrical version of this timely and well-balanced documentary, signifying the 50th anniversary of Statehood. An expanded Q & A session, about what it means to be a State, will follow the screening with special guests from the community.

Stalwart documentary filmmaker Tom Coffman will unveil his latest film, NINOY & THE RISE OF PEOPLE POWER, which chronicles an eyewitness account of dictatorship, assassination and revolution matching Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and opposition leader Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. in a power struggle that catches the United States in a diplomatic dilemma. Both NINOY and STATE OF ALOHA are competing for the Halekulani Golden Orchid Award for Best Documentary.

Then, on October 24th at 12:30 p.m. the Made In Hawaii seminar entitled "State of the Film Industry in Hawaii" will be held at Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Cinemas. Industry leaders in the local film, TV and commercial fields will discuss the challenges ahead as Hawaii filmmakers deal with reduced ACT 221 tax credits for film production and the imminent closing of the Hawaii Film Office. Confirmed speakers are Donne Dawson, State Film Commissioner, producer Angela Laprete (ONE KINE DAY, YOU MAY NOT KISS THE BRIDE, LYCHEE THIEVES), Jason Lau and John Ching of Talk Story Productions (Julie Taymor's TEMPEST, BEYOND THE BREAK, AZTEC REX, HEATSTROKE, SPY VS. STU), Ric Galindez and Roy Tjioe of Island Film Group (BARBARIAN PRINCESS), indie and commercial directors James Sereno (Kinetic Films, SILENT YEARS and the upcoming GROWING UP LOCAL) and Brett Wagner (Wagnervision, the award-winning CHIEF).

A highlight of the Made in Hawaii Films is the world premiere of LYCHEE THIEVES from writer-director Kathleen Man. Born and raised on Oahu, Man is currently a film professor at Vassar College. She was inspired to write this story after having read an article in the newspaper about two men who robbed a lychee farm on the Big Island. "I'm thrilled to be premiering the film at HIFF. Being from Hawaii, and this being my first film about Hawaii and made in Hawaii, it makes perfect sense to me to premiere at HIFF. I am overjoyed at the prospect," says Man. LYCHEE THIEVES will be playing as part of Shorts Program 6 on Sunday, October 18th, 8:30 p.m. at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18.

Other films being featured are HOLOMUA from director Vince Keala Lucero, works from THE ACADEMY FOR CREATIVE MEDIA (ACM) NIGHT, and THE ROYAL GIFT SEMINAR, the first in a four-part historical series from the PUA Foundation examining Hawaiian society in the years before Kamehameha I up through Kamehameha III.

Over 170 films from 36 different countries will be featured at this year's festival. HIFF's 2009 program is being held at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Cinemas from October 15-25. Tickets go on sale Thursday, October 1st for HIFF Ohana members and Monday, October 5th to the public. General admission tickets are available for \$10 or \$9 for students, seniors, children and military. Tickets may be purchased in person at HIFF's box office at 650 Iwilei Road #101 across from Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Cinemas or by phone at (808) 548-5905. The film guide is available online at www.hiff.org.

FILM SYNOPSES: (All screening times subject to change)

(MY HIFF: Indicates Other Films Viewers Might Like)

BARBARIAN PRINCESS

Made in Hawaii

World Premiere

Scarcely 13 years old, Princess Ka'ulani is separated from her family and her homeland and sent to a climate and a country that couldn't be more different from Hawai'i - Victorian England. Coming to terms with her fate, Ka'ulani undergoes a harsh and testing education that equips her with a sense of honor, duty and pride. Based on the inspiring true story, Barbarian Princess is a breathtaking romance about an unlikely heroine and her unwavering fight to defend the independence of her people. This screening is sponsored by Bank of Hawaii.

United States, United Kingdom 2009 | 130M

Director: Marc Forby

Cast: Q'orianka Kilcher, Barry Pepper, Kaimana Pa'aluhui, Will Patton, Shaun Evans

16-Oct 8:00 PM Hawaii Theatre Center

MY HIFF: YANG YANG / STATE OF ALOHA

NINYOY & THE RISE OF PEOPLE POWER

World Premiere

An eyewitness account of dictatorship, assassination and revolution matching Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and opposition leader Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. in a power struggle that catches the United States in a diplomatic dilemma. The political rivalry between President Marcos and Senator Aquino Jr. reaches its boiling point in 1972 after the top opposition leader launches a Senate inquiry. This screening is sponsored by Bank of Hawaii.

United States | 2009 | 56m

Director: Tom Coffman

Cast: Ken Kashiwahara, Lupita Aquino, Butz Aquino, Tessie Aquino, Kim Dae-jung

18-Oct 12:00 PM Dole

21-Oct 4:30 PM Dole

MY HIFF: 9500 LIBERTY / STATE OF ALOHA

LYCHEE THIEVES

Short Program # 6

World Premiere

LYCHEE THIEVES is a short dramatic film about four local characters on the island of Oahu who clash over a miraculously bountiful lychee tree. This screening is sponsored by Vitamin Water.

United States | 2009 | 35m

Director: Kathleen Man
18-Oct 8:30 PM Dole

PIDGIN: THE VOICE OF HAWAI'I

Made in Hawaii
World Premiere

Born on sugar plantations and once spoken by more than half of Hawaii's population, the Pidgin language - part English, part Hawaiian, with influences from other languages - captures the essence of multi-ethnic Hawaii. PIDGIN: THE VOICE OF HAWAII profiles this working-class language from its rise as plantation jargon to a source of island identity and pride. This screening is sponsored by Bank of Hawaii.

United States 2009 | 57M

Director: Marlene Booth

Featuring: Kanalu Young, Lee Tonouchi, Teresa Lau
18-Oct 7:00 PM Sunset on the Beach

MY HIFF: STATE OF ALOHA / NINOY

STATE OF ALOHA

Halekulani Golden Orchid Award Nominee: Documentary
World Premiere

Directed and produced by Anne Misawa (TREELESS MOUNTAIN, HIFF 2008), STATE OF ALOHA traces the journey of Hawai'i's fifty years of statehood through more than 30 key interviews, which cover a representative span of the Hawai'i population including witnesses from the political arena, entertainment, business, and academia. Anchored by personal stories, the motivating paths toward statehood are addressed as well as the legacy left behind. This screening is sponsored by Bank of Hawaii.

United States | 2009 | 80M

Director: Anne Misawa

Featuring: Jason Scott Lee, Al Quan Mcelrath, Daniel Inouye, Don Ho, John Waihee
18-Oct 2:45 PM Dole
22-Oct 2:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: NINOY / PIDGIN

STATE OF THE FILM INDUSTRY IN HAWAII

A Candid Discussion by Leaders in the Local Creative Content Industry

Join us for a very candid talk with industry leaders in the local film, TV and commercial fields as they discuss the accomplishments and many challenges they face everyday. The discussion will visit many topics ranging from developing scripts with local/global appeal, nurturing emerging artists, financing in a post Act 221 world, and predictions on the state of the industry in the months and years to come. This discussion is sponsored by Bank of Hawaii.

Confirmed Panelists: Brett Wagner, Angela Laprete, Donne Dawson, James Sereno, Jason Lau, John Ching, Ric Galindez and Roy Tjioe.

24-Oct 12:30 PM Dole

HOLOMUA

With land being sold off to foreign hands at an alarming rate, a disconnect develops between Hawaiians and their spiritual connection to the aina. This screening is sponsored by Vitamin Water.

Director: Vince Keala Lucero, USA, 2009, 8m

ACM NIGHT These screenings are sponsored by the University of Hawaii, Academy of Creative Media

DOG AND CAT

A fun story about a brother and sister stuck together in the family van on a hot winter's day in Hawai'i while taking care of their senile uncle.

Director: Robert K. Omura, USA, 2009, 11m

FLOWERS, CHOCOLATES, AND CANDLELIT DINNERS

Determined to show just how serious he is about the relationship, a young man plans on showing his love by relying on the "classic romantic gestures."

Director: Priscilla Stafford, USA, 2009, 12m

JIXIANG JUNCTION

Two stories about two different girls set in the heart of Jixiang, a suburb of Shanghai, where they each begin in one place and end in another.

Director: Kevyn Fong, Gloria Pan Huijia, China, 2009, 10m

LI HING MUI, LILIKOI, & LYCHEE

This is the story of two young boys on a lazy summer day on the north shore and their quest to find shave ice. Through their journey, they learn that when you do things for yourself you don't get very far, but when you do things for others you truly succeed.

Director: Lauren Cheape, USA, 2009, 11m

LIVE TONIGHT

Miki'ala is surrounded by his Hawaiian culture and language, but being raised on Oahu, he wants to be more like everyone else, more American.

Director: Aina Paikai, USA 2009, 9m

LULU

Nicole gets a surprise one day from her parents, a cute puppy, which she names Lulu. This begins a beautiful everlasting friendship.

Director: Brittany Itsuno, USA, 2009, 4m

WATCH YOUR TONGUE

This film is about a 13 year-old boy who goes to a soccer tryout dreaming that one day he will play in the Hawaiian soccer league, but his handicapped father who has a high temper stands in the way.

Director: Nasser Marghalani, USA, 2009, 16m

PUA FOUNDATION SEMINAR

Free Seminar

The PUA Foundation will present THE ROYAL GIFT, the first video in a four-part historical series, as well as a panel discussion with Board President Mark Kawika Patterson, Executive Director Toni Bissen, and commissioned staff Dr. David Keanu Sai and Kauai Sai Dudoit. THE ROYAL GIFT examines Hawaiian society in the years before Kamehameha I up through Kamehameha III. The video will help the panel members convey a deeper and clearer understanding of the historical, cultural, spiritual, economic and political environment surrounding the overthrow and reconciliation.

24-Oct 11:00 AM Dole

Festival Information

Established in 1981, the Hawaii International Film Festival is dedicated to the advancement of understanding and cultural exchange among the peoples of Asia, the Pacific and North America through the medium of film. HIFF is the premier international film event in the Pacific and has won the praise of governments, filmmakers, scholars, educators, programmers and film industry leaders throughout the world. For the discovery and exhibition of Asian and Pacific features, documentaries and short films in the nation, it is a primary source. The festival has premiered such movies as ONCE WERE WARRIORS, THE PIANO, SHINE, SHALL WE DANCE, Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN and CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON. Plus, DEPARTURES, a Japanese film, had its U.S. premiere at HIFF in 2008, won the HIFF Audience Award and then went on to win the 2009 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

HIFF's major sponsors include: Regal Entertainment Group, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Hawaii, Halekulani, Hawaii Tourism Authority and The VILCEK Foundation.

The 2009 Hawaii International Film Festival will be held October 15-25 at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Cinemas. Images of the films can be downloaded at

<http://picasaweb.google.com/hiff2009images/>

[2009FallFilmImages?authkey=Gv1sRgCOjSudrp5ob2iwE&feat=directlink](http://picasaweb.google.com/hiff2009images/2009FallFilmImages?authkey=Gv1sRgCOjSudrp5ob2iwE&feat=directlink). For more information please visit our website at www.hiff.org.

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