

MIDDLEBURY NEW FILMMAKERS FESTIVAL

Press Release

For immediate release: June 22, 2017

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Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival Announces First Wave of Special Events for 3rd Annual Event

Middlebury, Vermont. . .The Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival is pleased to announce the first wave of special events slated for the 3rd Annual Festival scheduled for this August 24-27. In addition, the Festival expand to include films on Thursday, prior to Opening Night.

Last year, the Festival filled more than 3,000 seats and welcomed the likes of legendary documentarian Barbara Kopple, actors Maggie Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard, and acclaimed Vermont author Russell Banks. Close to forty filmmakers attended the Festival, many travelling internationally, and nearly 80 films screened across three venues and four screens.

“This year’s festival promises what people have enjoyed about our previous two rounds,” said MNFF Artistic Director Jay Craven. “Audiences will also encounter new features at this year’s festival. Audience support provides the crucial backing for our intimate yet ambitious four-day celebration of cinema. We are grateful—and excited by what’s in store this year.”

Without further ado, the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival is pleased to announce the following guests and tributes slated for this August’s festival.

THURSDAY GETS BIGGER

The Festival is pleased to announce it will expand the program for Thursday, screening two blocks of films at 10:30am and 1:30pm, at two of its key venues: Town Hall Theater and the Marquis Theater. These early bird screenings will kick off this year’s festival in high style.

“The sheer number of exceptional films that we have received has propelled us towards an expanded Thursday program,” noted MNFF Producer Lloyd Komesar. “Festival Passholders are welcome at any of these screenings on Thursday and our walk up tickets will be available at a lower price than the weekend screenings. Our Opening Night Film will still screen on Thursday at 7pm at Town Hall Theater, concluding what will be a lively first day at the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival.”

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT ALTMAN

The Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival is thrilled to announce its tribute to the legendary director, **Robert Altman**, the fiercely independent creator of numerous acclaimed films including "M*A*S*H," "McCabe & Mrs. Miller," "The Long Goodbye" and the Oscar winning "Nashville," which will screen at MNFF.

Join Altman’s top assistant director, **Allan Nicholls**, and actor **Michael Murphy**, an essential member of the Altman tribe, for a special On-Stage Event with MNFF Artistic Director Jay

Craven following the “Nashville” screening, which, according to Craven, will “open the door for us to explore the work of this pioneering director, and his many contributions to independent filmmaking.”

An incredibly prolific composer, actor, Assistant Director, and screenwriter, Nicholls wrote the screenplays for Altman’s “The Wedding” and “A Perfect Couple.” He served as First Assistant Director on “Streamers,” “Secret Honor,” “The Player,” and “Ready to Wear.”

Michael Murphy has extensive Altman credits, including prominent roles in “M*A*S*H,” “Brewster McCcloud,” “McCabe & Mrs. Miller,” and “Nashville.” Murphy was also featured in Woody Allen’s “Manhattan” and Peter Weir’s “The Year of Living Dangerously.”

The Tribute screening and event will take place at 1:30p on Saturday, August 26 at the Town Hall Theater. The event will be ticketed, with free entry for all Festival Passholders. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

COFFEE WITH M. EMMET WALSH AND MICHAEL MURPHY

On Saturday morning of the Festival, join Jay Craven at the Middlebury Inn for a discussion with the prolific **M. Emmet Walsh** (whose credits include "Blood Simple," "Blade Runner," "Slap Shot") and **Michael Murphy** as they reflect on their long and fruitful careers as high profile character actors in the film industry.

“People probably don’t realize that the legendary character actor, Emmet Walsh, was born in Ogdensburg, NY and lives in Vermont,” said Jay Craven. “Film Critic Roger Ebert cited what he called the Stantont/Walsh rule that states that any film starring Emmet Walsh or equally fine character actor Harry Sean Stanton must have merit. We’re truly thrilled to have Emmet and Altman and Woody Allen Mainstay Michael Murphy with us – to explore this fascinating world of the character actor.”

The event is open to the public and is set for 9am at the Middlebury Inn.

DICK LEHR: THE CUTTING EDGE OF JOURNALISM

Riding on the heels of last summer’s fascinating journalism panel featuring New York Times’ Op Docs series, the MNFF is delighted to welcome noted journalist and author **Dick Lehr** to the festivities.

Lehr is a Pulitzer Prize finalist for investigative reporting while working on the Boston Globe’s Spotlight Team, and co-authored "Black Mass: Whitey Bulger, the FBI and a Devil's Deal" and "Judgment Ridge: The True Story Behind the Dartmouth Murders.”

In addition to his lauded journalism career, Lehr also wrote the script for a PBS Independent Lens film, Birth of a Movement, which explores “Birth of a Nation,” DW Griffith’s classic film that re-ignited the Ku Klux Klan. His book, “The Fence” is currently in development at Fox Searchlight, with a screenplay by Dennis Lehane (Mystic River, Shutter Island) and George Pelecanos (The Wire).

Lehr will join Craven on Saturday, June 24 at 4p to discuss all this, and more, at a public talk at the Middlebury Inn.

NOTES FROM MNFF HQ

Tickets to Opening Night on Thursday, August 24 (which include access to the Opening Night film at Town Hall Theater and an After Party at the historic Swift House) are limited and can be purchased online at the THH website: <http://bit.ly/2rR48Js>. Please note that Festival Passes do not extend to Opening Night, and must be purchased separately. Festival and Day Passes are available at middfilmfest.org/ticket-sales/.

The MNFF Jury, led by Jay Craven, is hard at work screening the more than 350 films submitted for this year's festival. Filmmakers will be notified of their acceptance status on July 10, and the Festival Program is set for release in August.

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