

NFF⁶

THE SEARCH FOR DISTINCTION IN THE ART OF SCREENWRITING
THE 6TH ANNUAL NANTUCKET FILM FESTIVAL
JUNE 20-24, 2001

For Immediate Release

SIXTH ANNUAL NANTUCKET FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES ITS PROGRAM FOR 2001

-- Festival Takes Place June 20-24, 2001 --

World Premiere of Paramount Classics' *American Rhapsody* Opens Festival

Stanley Tucci to Head Up Jury for The Tony Cox Award For Screenwriting

Screenwriters Tribute to Honor Walter Bernstein

May 7, 2001 (New York, N.Y.) The world premiere of Paramount Classics' *American Rhapsody* kicks off the Sixth Annual Nantucket Film Festival (NFF) on June 20, 2001, it was announced today by Festival Executive Director Jonathan Burkhart and Festival Artistic Director Jill Goode. The film will be among the 21 feature films presented at New England's premiere film festival, which takes place from June 20 – 24, 2001 on picturesque Nantucket Island. Included in this slate are five world premieres, one U.S. premiere, and seven East Coast premieres. 23 short films will also be presented at this year's festival.

Established in 1996, the NFF is dedicated to the concept that the writers' contribution is at the core of all good filmmaking. The festival showcases these innovative voices in film while paying special tribute to the screenwriters that created them.

"Most great films start with a great screenwriter who conceives of the original creative idea or concept which is often overshadowed by so many other elements," commented Burkhart. "The Nantucket Film Festival is proud to be one of the few forums that celebrates the work of screenwriters by presenting a slate of films that truly represents their large collective contribution to the creative community."

The NFF has established itself as a premiere U.S. film festival which continues to present an intimate forum for screenwriters, producers, agents and development executives to enjoy the many notable films that will unspool on the island. Daily events include: Morning Coffee With...hosted by Rolland Legardi-Laura, Staged Readings of original screenplays performed by noted stage and screen actors and co-produced by Naked Angels Theatre Company and Industry Panel discussions with featured guests and nightly parties.

The festival kicks off on Wednesday, June 20 with Paramount Classics' *American Rhapsody* which was written and directed by Éva Gardos. The film stars Nastassja Kinski and Tony Goldwyn. There will be a sneak screening of an undisclosed film to take place on Saturday night. The festival will close with a surprise world premiere of a much anticipated feature.

For the second year, the festival will present the NFF 2001 Writer/Director Award to honor writers who wear the dual creative hats of both writer and director. Among the jury members are: John Pierson, the host of Bravo's *Split Screen* and author of *Spike, Mike, Slackers & Dykes*; Stephen Garrett, film editor for *Time Out New York*; Nancy Gerstman, co-president of Zeitgeist Films Ltd., a New York based distribution company whose recent films include the restored version of *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. The Audience Award for Best Feature Film and for Best Short Film will be announced on the closing night.

A special screenwriter's tribute presented by sponsor NBC will be given to Oscar Nominated screenwriter Walter Bernstein. In addition to *The Front* and *Semi-Tough*, which will be screened at the festival, other distinguished works by the prolific film scribe include *The Molly McGuires*, *The Magnificent Seven* and *Miss Evers' Boys*.

The NFF has preserved its tradition of honoring talented writers with The Tony Cox Award For Screenwriting, sponsored by Showtime Networks. The award is named after Showtime's former Chairman and CEO, Tony Cox, a long time resident of Nantucket and a devoted contributor to the festival. Cox especially believed in mentoring writing talent. In keeping with this, the goal of the competition has been, and remains, the celebration of the achievements of promising new writers by providing them the recognition and encouragement they deserve. Three screenplays will be identified as finalists and one will receive The Tony Cox Award for Screenwriting Excellence, which is accompanied by a first-look option for possible development from Showtime Networks and a \$2,000 cash prize.

The jury for the Tony Cox Award For Screenwriting consists of renowned actors, writers, directors and producers who are faced with the considerable task of distinguishing three finalists from a large field of entries. Among this year's jurors are: Stanley Tucci, who wrote and directed the award winning film *Big Night* and won both an Emmy and Golden Globe for his portrayal of Walter Winchell in the

TV film *Winchell*; Mary Jane Skalski, whose production credits include *Wonderland*, *Myth of Fingerprints*, *The Brothers McMullen* and *Trick*; L.M. Kit Carson, actor, writer and producer who worked on films such as *Paris, Texas*, *Breathless* and *Perfume*.

Festival sponsor Perrier will bestow its Perrier Bubbling Under Award to the most promising first-time feature film director at the NFF. Perrier is partnering with five film festivals nationwide to give individual awards to first-time feature directors. At the end of the year, Perrier will assemble a jury to review these five films and select a grand-prize winner, who will receive a grant of \$50,000 to be applied to their next production.

Two themed side bars will be presented this year: Spotlight On New England and Featuring India. Spotlight On New England will focus on filmmakers from the New England area and Featuring India will focus on Indian filmmaking.

The 2001 NFF is grateful for the generous support of its sponsors. Showtime Networks returns this year sponsoring the Tony Cox Award for Screenwriting in addition to NBC, once again a sponsor of the NFF Writer's Tribute. Additional returning sponsors include Boston Magazine, Pacific National, a FleetBoston Financial Company, Cape Air/Nantucket Airlines, Eastman Kodak, Mumm Cuvee Napa and Writers Guild of America, East. Further support is made possible by Perrier, Labatts USA and Sundance Channel.

Press Contact:

John Murphy/Joe Quenqua
mPRm Public Relations
212-268-3080
jmurphy@mprm.com
jquenqua@mprm.com