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“GUYS READING POEMS” TO PREMIERE DURING NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

INNOVATIVE NEO-NOIR FEATURE USES POETRY AS FRAMING DEVICE

Neo-noir poetry drama “Guys Reading Poems” will debut at the Palm Beach International Film Festival this April during National Poetry Month. The innovative feature film uses poetry as a framing device to tell the story of a creative but troubled family living in a downtown Los Angeles artist’s loft. “Guys Reading Poems” intertwines poetry from 17 writers with its narrative, including selections from William Blake, Emily Dickinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay and Walt Whitman. Most of the poetry is public domain work from deceased authors but the film also includes two poems from West Hollywood poet laureate Steven Reigns. “Guys Reading Poems” is a rare feature-length entry into the poetry film genre.

The story follows an all-male literary secret society that intervenes in the life of a family headed by a disturbed avant garde painter (Patricia Velasquez, “The Mummy,”) whose sanity dissipates when she’s abandoned by her handsome lothario husband (Alexander Dreymon, “The Last Kingdom”) for his stunningly beautiful mistress (Lydia Hearst, “South of Hell”). In a feature debut performance, eight-year old Luke Judy plays the vulnerable child left in her care. The supporting cast includes Rex Lee (“Entourage”), Christos Vasilopoulos (“Banshee”) and Jerod Meagher. Mr. Lee and Mr. Vasilopoulos will attend the premiere on Sunday, April 10th at 7:40 p.m.

“Guys Reading Poems” is the directorial debut from Hunter Lee Hughes, who credits finding the poetry collection of his late grandmother as inspiration for the project. “My

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grandmother not only read a lot of poetry, she marked up the poems, underlined certain passages and wrote notes in the margin comparing cherished phrases to figures in her life. The poetry she left behind served as psychological puzzle pieces to fill in gaps in my knowledge of my grandmother as a woman. It was a powerful experience and eventually I decided to make a mindbender film that employs individual poems as psychological clues to the journey of a protagonist. My grandmother loved poetry. I've always loved mindbender films like "Mulholland Drive" and "Eyes Wide Shut." So, I designed "Guys Reading Poems" as a unique and compelling marriage of those forms of creative expression. I'm thrilled that we're premiering during National Poetry Month - it's perfect for us."

In addition to Palm Beach International, the film has won the support of Danny Simmons (Producer, HBO's "Russell Simmons' Def Poetry Jam"), who will present the film at his Corridor Gallery in New York City later in the Fall. Of the film, Simmons says, "The characters are interesting and well-defined and the storyline is gripping and magical. The crisp cinematography pulled me into every nuance of the story, but the poetry itself was the best of all the film's commanding qualities. The poems themselves are thoughtful and complex. Words that I wanted to continually contemplate. They carry the production and never let go."

Before directing "Guys Reading Poems," Hughes wrote and directed the internet television series "Dumbass Filmmakers!" and authored two plays, "Fate of the Monarchs" (Critic's Pick, "Backstage West") and "The Sermons of John Bradley" as well as the dark short film "Winner Takes All." "Guys Reading Poems" was produced by Debbie Vandermeulen, Jason Fracaro and Hughes, with cinematography by Michael Marius Pessah, who won the Outfest "Five in Focus" award for his work in black-and-white on the feature film "Joshua Tree 1951: A Portrait of James Dean."

For the screening schedule, visit pbfilmfest.org and for news and upcoming festival announcements related to "Guys Reading Poems," please visit: guysreadingpoems.com.

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