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THE 13TH LOS ANGELES LATINO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (LALIFF) ANNOUNCES WINNERS

“Anita” (Argentina) directed by Marcos Carnevale Wins Best Film and Audience Awards;
“Cinco Dias sin Nora” (Mexico) directed by Mariana Chenillo Wins Best Opera Prima and
Best Director; “Morenita” (Mexico) written and directed by Alan Jonsson Gavica, written
by Jonsson Gavica and Annabel Oakes Wins Best Screenplay

Following the Award Ceremony, LALIFF concluded with a special preview screening of
“Women in Trouble” written and directed by Venezuelan filmmaker Sebastian Gutierrez

LOS ANGELES, CA, Oct. 18, 2009 - The **13th Annual Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF)** concluded on Friday, October 16 with its **Award Ceremony & Closing Night Gala** that took place at the Paramount Theatre on the Paramount Lot in Hollywood. Festival co-founders Edward James Olmos and Marlene Dermer led the award ceremony presentation.

Winners were announced in the categories of best feature film, best director, best screenplay, best *opera prima*, best short, best documentary, and audience awards in the feature and documentary categories. Special mentions from the jury were also announced.

Award-winning director Simon Brand; screenwriter, producer and actor Rick Najera; Benjamin O’Dell, Head of Development and Production Panamax Films, and award winning motion picture editor Dan Fort served as jurors in the official selection and opera prima category. The jury members for the documentary category included Randal Johnson, distinguished film scholar and director of the Latin American Institute in the UCLA International Institute, filmmaker Robert Young, and filmmaker Nancy De Los Santos. Director Patricia Rigger, visual effect artist Charlie Iturriaga; actors William Marquez, and Jeremy Ray Valdez were the jurors in the shorts category.

Following the award ceremony, filmmakers, celebrities and guests enjoyed a special preview screening of **“Women in Trouble”** written and directed by Venezuelan director Sebastian Gutierrez. The film stars Carla Gugino, Adrienne Palicki, Connie Britton, Marley Shelton, Cameron Richardson, Garcelle Beauvis, Caitlin Keats, Paul Cassell, Simon Baker, Elizabeth Berkley, Josh Brolin, Emmanuelle Chriqui, Sarah Clarke, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Isabelle Gutierrez and Rya Kihlstedt.

The following includes the list of the winners for the **13th Annual Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival:**

FEATURES CATEGORY:

Best Film (RITA AWARD)

Sponsored by: Deluxe Laboratories

Winner: **“Anita”**

Director: **Marcos Carnevale**

Screenwriter: **Marcos Carnevale, Lily Ann Martin, Marcela Guerty**

Country: **Argentina**

Synopsis: Anita has all, or nearly all, the features of Down children, affected by this condition the incidence of which is roughly estimated at 1 per 800 to 1,000 births. Anita lives a happy life,

lovingly cared for by her mother (Norma Aleandro), who runs a small stationery store in the Buenos Aires neighborhood known as "Once," once mostly populated by shop owners of Jewish origin. Feldman, that's Anita's last name, but she doesn't know it because of her limited cognitive abilities. Feldman's, like many other Jewish community members, live around the area, and the AMIA is where most of their social, medical care and other paperwork are handled. A morning or afternoon brief run to the AMIA is nothing out of the ordinary for them. When Anita's mother goes to the AMIA to cash a subsidy check for her child with Down syndrome, she tells the infant: "It's a quarter to 3. When the big hand on that clock reaches the top, mom will be back." Mom is gone, never to return.

Best Screenplay: Features Category

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

Winner: **"Morenita"**

Director: **Alan Jonsson Gavica**

Screenwriter: **Alan Jonsson Gavica, Annabel Oakes**

Country: **Mexico**

Synopsis: Homing pigeons, drug lords, and the Virgin of Guadalupe all come into play in Morenita. Add familial ties and the testing of one's faith and the result is an extraordinary film. Mateo Cruz, desperate to save his family from a notorious drug dealer, causes absolute pandemonium when he kidnaps Mexico and Latin America's most adored religious icon, the Virgin of Guadalupe to get money for the ransom.

Best Director: Features Category

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

Winner: **"Cinco Días sin Nora"**

Director: **Mariana Chenillo**

Screenwriter: **Mariana Chenillo**

Country: **Mexico**

Synopsis: Before dying, Nora devises a plan to make José, ex-husband, take care of her funeral. But she misses something - the only flaw in the plan, a mysterious photograph left under the bed, will lead to an unexpected outcome that will remind us that sometimes the greatest love stories are hidden in the smallest places.

OPERA PRIMA CATEGORY:

Best Opera Prima

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

Winner: **"Cinco Días sin Nora"**

Director: **Mariana Chenillo**

Screenwriter: **Mariana Chenillo**

Country: **Mexico**

Synopsis: Before dying, Nora devises a plan to make José, ex-husband, take care of her funeral. But she misses something - the only flaw in the plan, a mysterious photograph left under the bed, will lead to an unexpected outcome that will remind us that sometimes the greatest love stories are hidden in the smallest places.

DOCUMENTARY CATEGORY:

Best Documentary

Sponsored by: Fuji Film

Winner: **"Sons of Cuba"**

Director: **Andrew Lang**

Country: **Cuba**

Synopsis: Sons of Cuba is set in the legendary Havana Boxing Academy, and this is no ordinary institution: This is a boarding school that hand picks 9-year-old boys, and turns them into the best boxers in the world. The results have been stunning: Cuba has dominated Olympic boxing for the past quarter of the century. The boys' duties extend far beyond the ring: They are groomed not only as world-class fighters, but also to be international symbols for their country. Sons of Cuba follows the stories of three young hopefuls through 8 dramatic months of training and schooling as they prepare for the biggest event of their lives: Cuba's National Boxing championship. In this rare documentary, the filmmakers gain extraordinary access to deeply personal subject matter. The film combines tender observational sequences with

heartfelt interviews to generate the narrative tension of a dramatic feature film. Sons of Cuba is perhaps one of the most emotionally charged documentaries you'll see all year.

Honorable Mention: Documentary Category

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

“Titón, de la Habana a Guantánamera”

Director: **Mirtha Ibarra**

Country: **Spain**

Synopsis: Titón, Tomás Gutierrez Alea (1928-1996), remarkable filmmaker and one of film history's paramount names. From his birth at Havana and up to “Guantánamera”, his last movie, this documentary broadly traces Titón's work, his outlook, and vital engagement as reflected in his own words and in the opinions of family members and professionals. An essential and touching thread is provided by the account of actress Mirtha Ibarra, the director of the documentary and Titón's lifelong companion.

Honorable Mention: Documentary Category

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

“La Vida Loca” (The Crazy Life)

Director: **Christian Poveda**

Country: **Mexico/France/Spain**

Synopsis: In Central America they are referred to as the “Maras”: modeling themselves on Los Angeles youth gangs, these groups are now spreading terror in El Salvador and further afield. A youth at once terrifying and hateful but strangely captivating which typifies the disintegration of family life within Salvadorian society and the despair in which they have grown up. La Vida Loca is what life is really about over there: youths who suffer; who resent and dislike us. Though this vision of evil stirs up our fears and provokes nightmares, I also hope shall invoke compassion and cause us to question our notion of the world. And so, like cornered dogs, this lost generation responds with pessimism, revolt, and death. A total lack of communication! La Vida Loca is a documentary about absolute human solitude.

SHORTS CATEGORY:

Best Short

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

Winner: **“Red Mesa”**

Director: **Ilana Lapid**

Screenwriter: **Ilana Lapid**

Country: **USA**

Synopsis: Unable to share her beloved grandfather's dreams for her future, Lynn charts her won path by seeking love beyond familiar borders. Caught in the crossfire of her affection for her grandfather and her secret love with an undocumented worker, Lynn must decide which borders she is willing to cross. Set on a cattle ranch on the US/Mexico Border, RED MESA is a powerful cinematic exploration of love, loyalty and coming of age through a young woman's struggle with difficult choices.

Special Mention: Shorts Category

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

“El Tux”

Director: **Paco Farias**

Screenwriter: **Paco Farias**

Country: **USA**

Synopsis: Chubby and shy Bobby Gomez (Harvey Guillen) jumps at the chance to be a last-minute escort for his dream girl, Suzy Lopez (Shelbie Bruce) and her quinceañera, but when he can't find a tuxedo in his size fast enough, he's forced to borrow his father's very *special* tuxedo.

Special Mention: Shorts Category

Sponsored by: Final Draft, Showbiz Software/Movie Magic

“Niña Quebrada”

Director: **Jen Kleiner**

Screenwriter: **Diana Romero, Danny Klein, Jen Kleiner**

Country: **USA**

Synopsis: Niña Quebrada is the story of Lucena, a teenage girl who runs away from her family in Mexico for the love of a boyfriend who promises her a better life in Los Angeles. The reality, unbeknown to her, is that she has been sold into sex slavery. Against the backdrop of an illegal cockfighting ring, Lucena must fight for her life to escape the horrors of this nightmarish world of child prostitution and human trafficking.

AUDIENCE AWARD CATEGORY:

CineLatino Audience Award: Features

Sponsored by: CineLatino

Winner: **“Anita”**

Director: **Marcos Carnevale**

Screenwriters: **Marcos Carnevale, Lily Ann Martin, Marcela Guerty**

Country: **Argentina**

Synopsis: Anita has all, or nearly all, the features of Down children, affected by this condition the incidence of which is roughly estimated at 1 per 800 to 1,000 births. Anita lives a happy life, lovingly cared for by her mother (Norma Aleandro), who runs a small stationery store in the Buenos Aires neighborhood known as “Once,” once mostly populated by shop owners of Jewish origin. Feldman, that’s Anita’s last name, but she doesn’t know it because of her limited cognitive abilities. Feldmans, like many other Jewish community members, live around the area, and the AMIA is where most of their social, medical care and other paperwork are handled. A morning or afternoon brief run to the AMIA is nothing out of the ordinary for them. When Anita’s mother goes to the AMIA to cash a subsidy check for her child with Down syndrome, she tells the infant: “It’s a quarter to 3. When the big hand on that clock reaches the top, mom will be back.” Mom is gone, never to return.

CineLatino Audience Award: Documentary

Sponsored by: CineLatino

Winner: **“Titón, de la Habana a Guantamamera”**

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Country: **Spain**

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The **Closing Night & Award Ceremony Gala** concluded the 13th edition of the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival where 75 films were showcased. LALIFF ran October 11-16 and opened with the West Coast Premiere of Pedro Almodóvar’s **“Broken Embraces”** (Spain) who also was awarded the festival’s GABI Lifetime Achievement Award. General screenings held at the Mann Chinese 6 Cinemas in Hollywood, California.

The **Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival** (LALIFF) was founded in 1997 by producer, director, actor and activist **Edward James Olmos**; independent producer **Marlene Dermer**, and independent film and music producer **George Hernández†**. **LALIFF** is a **non-profit 501c (3) organization** with the mission to support the development and exhibition of diverse visions by Latino filmmakers and to promote awareness of the richness and diversity of Latin cultures, artistry and countries through film, the most powerful medium in the world. A competitive festival with prizes, LALIFF serves as a venue where Latino filmmakers come together with industry buyers and distributors. The **Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science** recognizes LALIFF as a qualifying festival, making the winner of its **Short Film Category** eligible for Oscar® consideration.

LALIFF is also a membership organization, for more information, please visit: www.latinofilm.org



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