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THE PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL FILM FEST AT 20

8 days of surprising films (and celebrities, too)

2015 FILM FESTIVAL HONOREE ELLAR COLTRANE



Ellar Coltrane began filming "Boyhood" at age 6. In the first years, the movie's story mostly reflected the experiences of director Richard Linklater and actor Ethan Hawke. But as he grew up, Coltrane provided more input. IFC FILMS



Austin native Ellar Coltrane, now 20, will receive the Shooting Star Award at the Palm Beach International Film Festival. CHRISTOPHER POLK / GETTY IMAGES

20 years later, focus is on movies, as filmmakers evolve.

By Hap Erstein
Special to The Palm Beach Post

By the time you turn 20, your personality is pretty well formed, you've made some significant friends and you're starting to think about moving into your own home, right?

That is the way the two-decade old Palm Beach International Film Festival feels, having showcased emerging filmmakers from Nia Vardalos ("My Big Fat Greek Wedding") to documentarian Rick McKay ("Broadway: The Golden Age") and grown into a venue for independent movies and independent-minded moviegoers from around the world.

Plus, it is now announcing plans to open its own venue at the former Plaza Theatre in Manalapan.

In its formative years, the festival may have put most of its emphasis on luring celebrities here to party and pick up awards. Gradually, though, the focus has changed to the movies themselves.

Today through April 2, the film festival offers more than 100 movies and shorts we don't get to see every day – idiosyncratic, often challenging films, that go beyond mainstream Hollywood studio fare.

"As we turn 20, we're starting to see the evolution of some of the filmmakers who got their start with us," says Randi Emerman, PBIFF president and CEO.

Strong opener, memorable closer

She points with pride to Shira Piven, who dipped her toe into the world of film festival four years ago with her first feature, "Fully Loaded," which was voted that year's Audience Favorite. Piven returns now with her latest, the opening night film, "Welcome to Me," which Emerman describes as "a quirky comedy."

That would be an understatement, since it stars Kristen Wiig ("The Skeleton Twins") as an Oprah Winfrey-obsessed woman diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, who wins \$86 million in a lottery and buys her own way-too-frank-and-personal television talk show.

Festival continued on D2

BEYOND 'BOYHOOD'

Actor recalls 'intense' emotion of seeing his life play out on film.

By Hap Erstein
Special to The Palm Beach Post

What do filmmaker Richard Linklater and the Palm Beach International Film Festival have in common?

They both have their eyes out for promising young talent, and they both recognized it in Ellar Coltrane.

In Linklater's case, the discovery happened 14 years ago, when he found 6-year-old

Ellar and cast him in "Boyhood," perhaps the most acclaimed film of 2014. For the festival's part, the recognition comes Saturday, when it presents the Austin, Texas, native with its Shooting Star Award.

Each year for 12 years, Coltrane and the rest of the "Boyhood" cast would reunite to shoot more of the fictional tale of a boy's restless growth into his teens.

"It's been a hell of a journey," Coltrane says now. "All of the recognition and stuff has been really wonderful. That's definitely a part of why you make something like this,

to kind of connect with people, to be understood and be able to understand people a bit more.

Still, he adds, "Looking back, that was never our goal necessarily. Even though the character's not me, I used a lot of myself, so it was always a way to explore what I was going through."

Even by 6, Coltrane – whose full name is Ellar Coltrane Kinney Salmon – was an experienced actor. "Yeah, I mean I did a lot of theater when I was real young, so I definitely knew that I enjoyed it," he says by phone. "I

was pretty bashful, I was pretty shy, so at first I was kind of hesitant, but when I got the audition for 'Boyhood,' I had done a couple of indie films and commercials and stuff, so I was getting more comfortable with being in front of a camera."

For an unusual project like this, his audition for Linklater was unconventional. "It was just kind of a conversation," says Coltrane. "He didn't have a script written or anything. He just kind of wanted to get to know me. And five or six

Coltrane continued on D2

OPENING NIGHT FILM:

KRISTEN WIIG WIGS OUT IN 'WELCOME TO ME'

The comedienne had a huge hit with "Bridesmaids," but as the star of "Welcome to Me," she takes her quirky style to a brave new level. She plays a woman with borderline personality disorder who buys her way into her own TV show. **REVIEW, D3**



Kristen Wiig

IF YOU GO

Palm Beach International Film Festival

What: Nearly 130 films – features, shorts and documentaries – unspooling at venues throughout Palm Beach County, including 12 world premieres and 15 United States premieres.

When: Today through April 2

Where: Muvico Parisian 20 in West Palm Beach, Cobb Downtown at the Gardens and Cinemark Palace 20 in Boca Raton.

For a schedule: www.pbifilmfest.org

Festival continued on D2

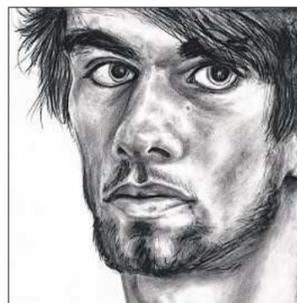
YOUR WEEKLY CULTURAL CALENDAR

3 TO SEE

Looking for something fun to do this week? Check out these suggestions from the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County:

FREE: A Santana Tribute

An outdoor concert Saturday billed as a "real Santana experience" stars Galo Rivera, a performer from Puerto Rico. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy this tribute to the '60s favorite Latin maestro. The show runs from 7-9 p.m. at the Dolly Hand Center, 1977 College Drive, Belle Glade. For more information: 561-993-1160 or dollyhand.org



Explore the "Interior/Exterior" exhibition when it opens tonight. It includes this self-portrait of one of the artists, Krystofer Kimmel. CONTRIBUTED

DEAL

"Interior/Exterior" art exhibit for kids of all ages

The Center for Creative Education, a repurposed roller rink, will host an artist's reception to showcase the work of Krystofer Kimmel, Hilmar Stemmler and Raul Vega.

The exhibition program at the center is part of a larger plan to get all ages interested in art and culture.

Opening night reception \$10 tonight from 6-8 p.m. Exhibition free through April 24 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Marjorie

S. Fisher Gallery, 424 24th St., West Palm Beach.

For more information: 561-805-9927 or cceflorida.org

SPLURGE

Palm Beach International Film Festival

See the surprising and challenging movies you never thought would come to Palm Beach County theaters. Read all about the eight-day festival today in Accent.

Tomorrow in TGIF: Reviews of five films from Hap Erstein.

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