

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cinetopia International Film Festival scheduled for June 6-9 in Ann Arbor, Detroit

Includes partnerships with Detroit Film Theatre and University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Mich. – When the **Michigan Theater** started the **Cinetopia International Film Festival presented by AT&T** last year, its staff was expecting a modest success. But the actual results exceeded those expectations – nearly 5,000 people attended the first annual Cinetopia. “My favorite thing about the festival was the variety of indie films,” said one attendee in a post-festival survey. “I think this is a great event, not only for Ann Arbor, but Michigan as a whole.”

Another oft-mentioned perk by last year’s Cinetopia attendees: you don’t have to travel very far to have a world-class film festival experience. “If you can’t make it to Cannes or Toronto, or if Sundance in Utah in January seems too cold and far away, know that Cinetopia will bring the best films from the world’s best film festivals to southeastern Michigan,” says Russ Collins, Michigan Theater Executive Director.

In fact, the second annual Cinetopia International Film Festival – scheduled for June 6-9 this year – is expanding its southeastern Michigan reach by partnering with the **Detroit Film Theatre at the Detroit Institute of Arts**. The newly renovated DFT will serve as an official venue for nine Cinetopia films. “It’s hard to think of a more natural fit for the Detroit Film Theatre than being a part of the Cinetopia International Film Festival in partnership with Ann Arbor’s legendary Michigan Theater,” says Elliot Wilhelm, Detroit Film Theatre Director and Curator of Film. “The DFT and the Michigan are far more than just two of this region’s restored gems – for decades both venues have remained indispensable resources for movie lovers of all ages, drawing some of the largest and most enthusiastic audiences in the nation for ongoing programs of the most important in classic and contemporary world cinema. In both Ann Arbor and Detroit, this year’s Cinetopia promises to be a jam-packed, wonderfully intense, four-day celebration of what our theaters do all year long.”

Cinetopia is also collaborating with the **University of Michigan Department of Screen Arts & Cultures** to honor Robert Altman, the director of *M*A*S*H* and dozens of other acclaimed films. The **Robert Altman Symposium** will bring Altman collaborators and scholars from around the globe to Ann Arbor, and will include screenings of several of his films. Altman has strong ties to the area; UM houses his archives and he taught classes, directed a Stravinsky opera, and filmed *Secret Honor* at the university.

One of the goals of this year’s Cinetopia is to bring additional special content to every film at the festival, not just at the Altman Symposium. “Our theme is ‘**Cinema Comes Alive**,’ which means getting our audiences to interact with each film in some meaningful way, whether it’s participating in a Q&A with the actors and filmmakers, listening to a panel discussion by industry and academic experts, or sharing their thoughts with us and other festival-goers at a coffee shop or bar after the show,” says Amanda Bynum, Festival Director.

The Michigan Theater’s strong relationship with the **Sundance Film Festival**, including its status as one of ten Sundance USA venues across the country, makes Cinetopia the perfect medium for channeling the independent festival spirit. “We’re hand-picking the best films from the best festivals around the world for Cinetopia,” says Brian Hunter, Festival Programmer. “Our schedule this year is even better than last year!” The 2013 Cinetopia program will offer more than 40 different feature-length dramas, comedies, and documentaries – many of which are making their world, North American, or Michigan premiere. See the end of this press release for a

selection of this year's titles; the full Ann Arbor Cinetopia program will be released on Monday, April 22, and the full DFT Cinetopia program will be released in early May.

Besides the Michigan Theater and the DFT, the other Cinetopia venues include the **State Theater** and **UM Angell Hall**. The close proximity of the three Ann Arbor locations and the lively State Street-area environment encourages informal gatherings before and after films in local restaurants, cafés, and public spaces, where you just might bump into a movie star. "We're aiming for a true festival feel – similar to what you'd find at Sundance, Tribeca, and southeastern Michigan events like Arts, Beats & Eats, the Ann Arbor Street Art Fairs, and the Detroit Jazz Festival," says Steve Crowley, Festival Operations Manager.

Cinetopia welcomes back title sponsor **AT&T** for a second year, as well as charter sponsors **Zingerman's Community of Businesses** and **Dickinson Wright**. Supporting sponsors include the **Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors' Bureau**, the **Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia**, the **Michigan Film Office**, **Whole Foods Market Ann Arbor**, **The University of Michigan International Institute**, and the **Center for World Performance Studies**. Media sponsors include **Detroit Public Television** and the **Ann Arbor Observer**. Individual film sponsors include the **Jewish Federation** and the **Jewish Community Center**.

Tickets for this year's Cinetopia will go on sale to the general public on April 29. Tickets are \$9 for Michigan Theater members and \$12 for non-members; weekend festival passes and voucher books are also available. Visit cinetopiafestival.org for full pricing and purchase information.

About Cinetopia International Film Festival presented by AT&T: Experience more than 40 of the best feature-length dramas, comedies, and documentaries from the world's best film festivals, including Sundance, Cannes, Venice, Toronto, and Berlin, all selected exclusively for Cinetopia by the Michigan Theater programming team. Cinetopia will honor the rich world history of cinema artists and Michigan's proud legacy of outstanding screenwriters through special pre- and post-film events, including presentations, discussion panels, and Q&A sessions with directors, writers, and stars. Venues include the Michigan Theater's historic auditorium and screening room, the State Theater, the University of Michigan's Angell Hall, and the Detroit Film Theatre at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Visit cinetopiafestival.org for more info.

About the Michigan Theater: Now celebrating its 86th year, the Michigan Theater is Ann Arbor's not-for-profit historic center for fine film and performing arts. The theater is located in downtown Ann Arbor at 603 East Liberty Street. Regular movie prices are \$10 for the general public; \$8 for students, seniors, U.S. veterans, and children under 12; \$7.50 for Michigan Theater members; and \$7 for weekday matinees before 6pm. Visit michtheater.org or call the 24-hour information line at (734) 668-TIME for more info.

A selection of titles from the 2013 Cinetopia International Film Festival presented by AT&T:

5-25-77. Michigan premiere. In 1976, a young small-town movie geek is given the opportunity of a lifetime — to travel to Hollywood and see an advance screening of the yet-to-be released *Star Wars* — in this charming and inspirational coming-of-age story based on the real-life experiences of director Patrick Read Johnson.

A Band Called Death. SXSW selection. In the early 70s, three teenage brothers from Detroit formed a new punk band named Death. Record companies found their music too intimidating, and they disbanded before they even completed one album. But nearly 30 years later, Death is finally receiving their long overdue recognition as true punk pioneers.

Blancanieves. Toronto International Film Festival selection. This lush black-and-white homage to European silent film offers a fresh twist on the classic Snow White fairy tale: a young girl in 1920s Spain escapes her tyrannical stepmother and joins a traveling troupe of bullfighting dwarves, eventually rising to toreador fame under the stage name Blancanieves.

Body Fat Index of Love. North American premiere. Stigu settles for a sex-only relationship with Ella, because she wants nothing more. But when they're assigned to the same work project, they must delve into the secrets of relationships, starting with the place where Finnish men and women go to show their worth: the annual Wife Carrying Contest.

Dangerous Liaisons. Toronto International Film Festival selection. This Chinese-language version of the 18th-century French novel is set in 1930s Shanghai. Xie, a suave rake, spends his nights busily bedding the local talent and his days sharing gossip with Mo, his female confidante, as they conspire to seduce, conquer, and destroy their prey amid mounting geopolitical tensions.

Dear Mr. Watterson. Michigan premiere. Die-hard *Calvin & Hobbes* fans pay tribute to creator Bill Watterson, whose comic strip was in over 24,000 newspapers from 1985 to 1995. Although Watterson hid from the spotlight, his incredible imagination shone through in his work, which offered deeper characters and more complex stories than the average strip.

Fill the Void. Venice Film Festival winner for Best Actress. In Tel Aviv's ultra-Orthodox community, strict social codes and rabbinical decrees govern the way members interact – especially men and women. When her sister dies, leaving behind a bereaved husband whom she might have to take as her own, 18-year-old Shira's cloistered life takes a dramatic turn.

Hannah Arendt. Toronto International Film Festival selection. Margarethe von Trotta directs Barbara Sukowa in an award-worthy performance as Hannah Arendt, the Jewish, German-born philosopher who coined the phrase “the banality of evil.” Assigned to cover the trial of Adolf Eichmann, Arendt meets fierce opposition when she dares to write that some Jewish leaders collaborated with the Nazis.

A Hijacking. Toronto International Film Festival selection. Tensions are high after a Danish freighter is captured and held for ransom by Somali pirates, leading to weeks of high-stakes negotiations — and an escalating potential for explosive violence — in Tobias Lindholm's grittily authentic and suspenseful thriller.

I Am Divine. SXSW selection. When Harris Glenn Milstead met aspiring director John Waters, the larger-than-life drag queen Divine was born. Roles in classic Waters cult films like *Pink Flamingos* and *Polyester* made Divine an anti-establishment hero(ine), but what he really craved was legitimacy as a character actor – and to play male roles.

Lasting. Sundance Film Festival selection. Twenty-year-old Michał and Karina are impossibly attractive Polish students who fall blissfully in love while working summer jobs in Spain. But on a scuba outing at a nearby lake, something terrible happens to Michał, and a nightmare breaks into their sweet, dun-dappled existence.

Pieta. Venice Film Festival winner of the Golden Lion. A heartless loan shark uses brutality to collect payments from desperate borrowers. When a woman claiming to be his long-lost mother appears, he decides to turn over a new leaf – but it may be too late to escape the consequences his merciless actions have already set in motion.

The Source Family. Michigan premiere. The Source Family was a radical experiment in 1970s utopian commune living. The 150 members of this “Aquarian tribe” followed “Father Yod,” a controversial restaurateur-turned-spiritual leader with fourteen wives and his own psychedelic rock band. But their outsider ideals led to their exile and, ultimately, their demise.

This is Martin Bonner. Sundance Film Festival winner of the Audience Award in the NEXT category. Fifty-something Martin leaves his old life behind and relocates to Reno, where he finds work for a program that helps released prisoners transition to life on the outside. His unlikely friendship with Travis, a former inmate, gives them both the support and understanding they need to start their lives over.

Twenty Feet From Stardom. Sundance Film Festival selection. What would a pop song be without its backup vocalists? Although these singers are usually relegated to the margins, their work has defined countless songs that remain in our hearts and collective consciousness. *Twenty Feet from Stardom* takes a look at the moving personal journeys of these uncelebrated, but crucial, artists.

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