



International film festival crazy, crowded on 2nd night

Event director '100 percent positive' momentum will carry into next year

By Adam Parker
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Nothing, it seemed, could spoil the good vibe at the second evening of the first Charleston International Film Festival.

Moviegoers were dressed up and raring to go. They filed into the Terrace Theatre, happy to check out untested short and feature films and hobnob with actors and directors.

Terrace owner Mike Furlinger took tickets and smiled. When Summer Spooner approached him last year with the idea of a film festival, Furlinger was cautious.

Tickets, schedules

The inaugural Charleston International Film Festival continues through Sunday at the Terrace Theatre. The screening schedule is broken into blocks, with a ticket price of \$8 per block. Passes, tickets and a schedule of screenings are available at the Terrace Theatre box office or online at charlestoniff.com, which also offers individual film synopses.

"Hosting a festival means not showing something else," he said. But Spooner and her partner, Brian Peacher, brought lots of experience to the venture, and Furlinger soon was persuaded.

So on the second evening of the festival, what was his assessment? "Crazy," he said.

The 4 p.m. screening of Rick Bieber's film, coincidentally called "Crazy," was a near sellout. And everyone stayed for the Q&A that followed, Bieber said.

"I've been really impressed," he said, praising the idea of combining short and feature films into viewing "blocks." It means that short movies are seen by many people who otherwise would never get a chance to enjoy the genre, Bieber said.

Todd Wolfe, who co-directed and edited "Left/Right," a film written by and starring his brother, Matthew Wolfe, which had its world premiere Friday evening, said this was his first film festival. Such events are essential for independent filmmakers hoping to achieve success, he said.

The theater filled up for the 7 p.m. feature, which was introduced by the Wolfe brothers. The short film "Nosebleed," starring David Arquette, was supposed to screen first, but the

reel was wound backward. The film began with the end credits, upside down. No worries. Furlinger simply started "Left/Right" right away.

Virginia Friedman is psyching up for today's 2 p.m. screening of "Saint of the Zuiderzee," a short film she produced and co-wrote, based on her short story "The Saint of Fresh Kills." Friedman teaches at the College of Charleston's Center for the Documentary.

Another local, Grainger David, makes his Charleston film debut at 6 p.m. with the funny and poignant five-minute short film "George and Karl." David attended Porter-Gaud. He is finishing up at New York University's graduate film program.

Spooner said she is thrilled about the way things are going and "100 percent confident" that things will keep on going in Charleston for years.

"It's like I gave birth to a baby," she said of the festival. "I have a feeling, come Sunday night, I'll be going through withdrawals."

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