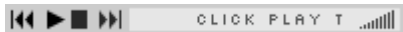




Temecula

Film festival rolling into Temecula



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By SEAN NEALON
The Press-Enterprise

TEMECULA - A Murrieta man's romantic comedy shot in southwest Riverside County. A documentary about the man who built the Palomar Observatory in northern San Diego County. Four films featuring motocross stars with Inland ties. A documentary by an Idyllwild man about a Cahuilla performance artist returning to his Anza-area reservation.

These are among the more than 160 films being shown Wednesday through Sunday at the 13th annual Temecula Valley International Film & Music Festival. The festival begins at 5 p.m. Wednesday with a vintage car parade and a red-carpet celebration. "Greetings From the Shore," a coming-of-age tale of love, loss and pirates that pays homage to "Dirty Dancing" and "Mystic Pizza," will be screened.

Fourteen bands will play Friday and Saturday and five workshops will be held Saturday and Sunday.

The festival concludes with a black-tie gala and awards ceremony at 5 p.m. Sunday at the Pechanga Resort & Casino near Temecula. Honorees include musician Smokey Robinson and actor Michael Madsen, who has appeared in films such as "Reservoir Dogs" and "Donnie Brasco."

Inland-Area Films

Two films with Inland ties have drawn much interest from ticket buyers, said Jo Moulton, founder and organizer of the festival. They are "April Moon," the romantic comedy directed by Murrieta resident David Asmussen, and "Journey to Palomar," a documentary about the man who built the observatory that looms over Temecula.

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Special to The Press-Enterprise

Husband and wife filmmakers Todd and Robin Mason, of Los Angeles, have produced a 96-minute documentary that tells the story of George Ellery Hale, who built the Palomar Observatory near Temecula, which was dedicated in 1948.

"April Moon" was shot over 15 days in November in Temecula and Murrieta, at locations including the Old Town Temecula Community Theater, Scarcella's Italian Grill and the offices of the Garrett Group, a Temecula real-estate investment management company. Asmussen is the company's communications and technology manager.

About 10 actors with minor speaking roles from Riverside and San Diego counties were drawn from a casting call in Temecula. Another 75 residents are extras. Moulton was the line producer.

Asmussen started work on "April Moon" in 1998 and was excited to learn that it was accepted at the film festival, where it will be screened for the public for the first time.

"I'm ready to get it out there," said Asmussen, who is now trying to distribute the film. "I've been living with it too long."

"Journey to Palomar" is the work of Todd and Robin Mason, husband and wife and independent filmmakers in Los Angeles. The 96-minute documentary tells the story of George Ellery Hale, who built the Palomar Observatory, which was dedicated in 1948.

Amateur astronomers will set up telescopes in connection with the screenings, the first time the documentary is being shown to the public, Robin Mason said.

The film is scheduled to air on PBS in the spring, she said.

Reservation, Motocross Life

"Borderlands" is a 46-minute documentary focusing on Gerald Clarke, whose performance art satirizing television shows, such as "Antiques Roadshow" and "Extreme Makeover," highlights some current dilemmas of American Indian life.

The documentary touches on questions such as what defines a Cahuilla, what motivates tribal members

to return to the reservation and how they adapt to reservation life.

It's directed by Sean Owens, an Idyllwild resident who was the former dean of students at Idyllwild Arts Academy. He met Clarke 2 ½ years ago at the school, where he teaches painting and sculpture.

Owens is now working on a documentary about the traditional singers of the Cahuilla.

Four motocross documentaries -- "FMX Riot 2, Swingarm City," "Enduro at Erzburg: The Iron Giant Strikes Back," "Baja Diaries" and "FMX Prague" -- will be screened Friday and Sunday.

The documentaries feature motocross stars, including Travis Pastrana, former Canyon Lake resident Jeremy McGrath, Menifee resident Mike Metzger and Murrieta resident Robbie Maddison.

Jeff Pakosta, who directed and produced three of the documentaries, said several of the riders featured in the films are expected to attend the festival.

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Several films with Inland ties will be shown at the Temecula Valley International Film and Music Festival. They include:

"Enduro at Erzburg: The Iron Giant Strikes Back" -- A documentary about a grueling motocross race in Austria. The cast includes former Canyon Lake resident Jeremy McGrath.

Screening: 9 p.m. Friday; noon Sunday

"FMX Prague" -- A documentary about a freestyle motocross competition in Prague. The cast includes Murrieta resident Robbie Maddison.

Screening: 6 p.m. Friday; 11 a.m. Sunday

"The Journey to Palomar" -- A documentary about George Ellery Hale, who built the observatories at Mount Palomar in northern San Diego County and Mount Wilson in Pasadena.

Screening: 8 p.m. Thursday; 3:30 p.m. Saturday

"April Moon" -- A romantic comedy by Murrieta resident David Asmussen, shot entirely in southwest Riverside County.

Screening: 7 p.m. Friday; 3 p.m. Sunday

"Borderlands, George Clarke: Cahuilla Artist Crossing the Line" -- A documentary by Idyllwild resident Sean Owens about Gerald Clarke, a Cahuilla artist who recently returned to the reservation near Anza.

Screening: 5 p.m. Friday; 3:30 p.m. Sunday
