GayCharlotte Film Festival kicks off April 3

Fest is first-ever large-scale LGBT cultural event since 1990s' OutCharlotte festival

by Will Billings . Contributing Writer

CHARLOTTE — For LGBT Charlotteans who miss the queer cultural scene celebrated by the 1990s' OutCharlotte festival, the long wait will come to a close during the first weekend in April.

The first annual GayCharlotte Film Festival kicks off at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 3 at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center of Charlotte. The Festival, which runs through Sunday, April 5, features more than a dozen LGBT-themed films, some with a local Charlotte and North Carolina focus. The films represent a wide variety of tastes and styles, including full-length movies and shorts, documentaries and narrative fictions, as well as nationally and critically acclaimed films on transgender issues, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of the U.S. military and films by and about African-American and Latino LGBT communities.

The event is sponsored by the Community Center. Festival organizer Teresa Davis said hosting the weekend-long event at the Center, as opposed to renting space at an actual movie theater, was as much about practicality as economics.

"The Center's rooms, located at The Music Factory, are extremely versatile," explained Davis. "Some of the well-established, mainstream Carolina film festivals screen many of their movies at similarly-sized venues, so it didn't make sense to rent a movie theater when we could bring audiences to our wonderful space and pass the cost-savings along to them."

Davis said the Festival planning committee was thrilled to learn that Takeover Friday, a regular event popular with gay and lesbian nightlife-goers, had agreed to "takeover" one of the Friday night films. All ticket holders will receive half-off admission to the Garden & Gun Club, located next door to the Center. The Takeover feature film begins at 8 p.m., after the "Hometown Shorts" series at 6 p.m.

Proceeds from the Festival benefit the Community Center, "although the mission of the Festival is as much about bringing quality movies to our LGBT Community as it is about raising funds so we can keep our doors open," Davis said.

Movies include "Ask Not" which addresses challenges faced by gays in the military, "Dear Jesse," about a gay North Carolinian's ties to the late U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms and two movies actually filmed at the Center: "Queer: Out and About in Charlotte" and "Coming Out/Coming In."

Full-length features include "Hard" where a young, gay cop must work in a homophobic police unit while catching a serial killer who murders gay johns, and "Christopher Street" which is the East Coast version of L.A. television series "Noah's Arc."

Davis is also proud the Festival will screen "Barbara & Tibby," a work she said is of "utmost importance" to all Carolina LGBT communities. The film addresses Virginia's anti-gay marriage legislation and constitutional amendment. A similar amendment has been introduced in the N.C. General Assembly again this year; it has failed to gain traction in five previous legislative sessions.

— The GayCharlotte Film Festival will be held April 3-5 at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center of Charlotte, 820 Hamilton St., Suite B-11. For ticket information and movie schedules, visit www.GayCharlotteFilmFestival.com.

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Calendar

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Game Night with Bingo & Other Games
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Customer Appreciation Night.
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Disco Diva Show at 12 Midnight

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS
Sat., March 21
Red Ribbon Friends Spring Benefit Show
Fri., March 27
Isabella Diamante. Morgan Richards. Manerva
Sat., March 28
Isabella Diamante and Dance Party
Sat., April 4
Scarlett Dailey
Fri., April 10
Elaine Davis

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