

The 5th Beaufort International Film Festival Hits Its Stride



I will sit right down, waiting for the gift of sound and vision

- David Bowie, *Sound and Vision*

FADE IN:

The scene is a packed movie theater on a summer's night. A few stragglers squeeze through the crowded rows to fill odd seats. There is the muted sound of munching popcorn and whispered conversations. Someone's smoking down front. The lights go dim.

On screen the 20th Century Fox logo and fanfare, then -

FADE TO BLACK

All is dark and silent. Someone coughs. The anticipation is as thick as the scent of popped corn and stale carpet.

ON SCREEN a single line bathes us in an eerie green glow...

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...



The next 90 seconds will forever alter my perception as a moviegoer – and I was changed several long minutes before Darth Vader swept onto the rebel ship. From the *STAR WARS* logo, to John Williams' regal theme, to the serene star-scape suddenly disrupted by a chase – two ships, one fleeing another in pursuit – I was transformed. The pursuing ship – the Imperial Cruiser – filled the screen as nothing ever had before. It seemed to fill the theater, too, as though it were flying right above our heads.

It just kept coming

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Written by Mark Shaffer

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I was still (barely) a teenager when George Lucas & Company rebooted my cinematic hard drive. I was a movie buff before *Star Wars*, but ever after I have been an *aficionado*.

The experience – one I recently discovered seems to be common among my peers – literally opened my eyes to the craft of filmmaking. And like any other craftsman, filmmakers start small. Even George Lucas.

The legendary Director, Stanley Kubrick once said, “The best thing that young filmmakers should do is to get hold of a camera and some film and make a movie of any kind at all.” In the modern era of competitive and cheap digital movie making, we would add a second thing: show that movie wherever and whenever possible. This is one of the abiding principles of the Beaufort International Film Festival – to serve as an interactive venue for a wide variety of films and the people who make them.



“Festivals like BIFF are very important for filmmakers,” says Director Seth Boggess whose film *Left Alone*

is a finalist in the Shorts category. Bogus and his producers will travel to Beaufort from Chicago to support their project. Short films are often a filmmaker’s entrée to the bigger things – a way to be noticed – but they are rarely seen outside of the festival circuit.

“As digital technology has made it cheaper and easier to make films, the number of film submissions to the mega-festivals has become astronomical,” says Boggess. “This has increased the importance of more localized and regional film festivals. They’ve become more representative of the independent filmmaking community. If you make a movie, it should be

seen.”



Fans of the critically lauded HBO series *The Wire* know Benjamin Busch as the volatile Officer Anthony Colicchio. He also appeared in HBO's *Generation Kill*

. Busch says he wrote, produced and directed his short film *Bright*

with a cast from both shows, on a shoestring budget and with very little sleep. Like Bogus, he sees BIFF as the perfect venue. And part of the attraction with a smaller, more personal event is the ability to go one-on-one with the audience.

“An independent film festival draws an audience of people who want to see work that is outside the tired templates of commercial fare,” says Busch. “The people who come for these unique experiences are the ones I made my film for. I want to be there to meet viewers and hear their thoughts.”

While the majority of attending filmmakers will fly in from around the nation and the globe, Virginia Friedman will drive down from Charleston along with partner Tim Fennell to show their documentary *Tap-Out*. “The world is running out of fresh water,” says Friedman. “*Tap-Out* looks at water issues, particularly the seemingly water-rich areas of the Carolinas.”

Submitting the film to BIFF was no-brainer for the Emmy winning independent filmmaker. “Beaufort

Sound and Vision: BIFF 2011

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