

The Staten Island Film Festival

Posted by Perri Nemiroff
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Hi, this is Alison. I'm the REEL TALK intern. Since our show is based here in NYC, we have access to lots of great movie-related events, including a number of film festivals. Thursday night I attended the opening night for the **2008 Staten Island Film Festival**. That's right, folks. STATEN ISLAND (that fifth NYC borough that no one ever thinks twice about) has its very own film festival! "It's a wonderful thing for SI, the long forgotten

borough, to have an opportunity to expose itself with film and culture," says festival participant, Grace Guagliardo.

With strong support from producer Jules Nasso as the Honorary Film Industry Chairman, the SINY FF has become Staten Island's summer jewel. Nasso won the "Best Picture" award from the film festival last year with his independent film entitled, "Poet." His success did not stop there. He has worked with the likes of Tom Cruise in production and won much attention in the media as well as other awards.

Other names mentioned at the festival included "One Life to Live" actor, David Fumero, who stars alongside Kim Shaw in the festival opener, "**Greetings from the Shore.**" Producer and writer Gabrielle Berberich says the title comes from a famous postcard reflecting the real Jersey Shore. New Jersey and Staten Island both share a somewhat negative image as dirty, industrious, politically corrupt and mobbed with mobsters. Here's what Greg Chwerchak, the director and producer of "Greetings," had to say about that:

Berberich believes this film will "avenge her postcard Garden State." I must say, there were some amazingly breathtaking shots of the shore in this film. You would never think it was Jersey! ...or the fact that it was produced for only \$500,000!

"Greetings from the Shore" is close to the heart for Berberich as it's somewhat autobiographical. Since the film is a dedication to her late father, thinking of the story as a true event will have you tearing up in your seat while relationships unfold from a world of high-stakes and uncertainty. "Greetings from the Shore" is due to have its official premiere on August 8, 2008 in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Director and producer Chwerchak (seen at right with Berberich and Fumero) has plans to



premiere the film in other states, so if you don't live in the Northeast, patience! You'll get your chance to see it. With 27 festival awards already under his belt, Chwerchak has high expectations for the film's success.

Another independent filmmaker at the festival is optimistic. Staten Islander, Alain Alfano, calls himself a "Latin-American hoping to have a chance to tell story through fictional life." He aims to win "Best Short Romantic Comedy" and "Best Cinematography" at the award ceremony on Sunday for his entry, "Waiting for Her."

The SINY FF will be held from Thursday, June 5th to Sunday, June 8th. Hope those of you who live in the Tri-state area will get a chance to make it to at least one event. Staten Island is closer than you think! But if you're still reluctant to take that ferry ride, check out the schedule to see when screenings play in Manhattan or Brooklyn... Or perhaps you're in the party mood, here's the schedule for you!