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AFI SILVER THEATRE AND CULTURAL CENTER TO OPEN WITH TOP-NOTCH FILMS

Hollywood & Media Luminaries Join AFI in Opening Celebrations for Historic, State-of-the-Art Complex in Silver Spring, MD

Silver Spring, Maryland, March 26, 2003—The American Film Institute (AFI) today announced the programming for the opening weeks of the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, its newly rehabilitated and expanded state-of-the-art theatre complex in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Poised to repeat history, the expanded theatre complex anchors a \$400 million project expected to transform Silver Spring into an arts and entertainment destination. The original Silver Theatre, built in 1938, was a stunning Art Moderne cinema house celebrated as the centerpiece of an innovative shopping center built at the height of the Depression. By the end of the second World War, the Silver Theatre had transformed its community into a bustling business district. Sixty-five years later, amidst sensitive world and economic events, the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center will re-open as the much-anticipated crown jewel of downtown Silver Spring.

During its opening weeks, the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center will present rare film events, reflecting the facilities' historic value and diverse uses. Its opening events and year-round programming also contribute to the institute's substantially increased schedule of film events nationally—making AFI one of the country's leading non-commercial specialty film exhibitors.

Jean Picker Firstenberg, AFI's Director and CEO, comments, "The program lineup for the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center's opening weeks truly exemplifies AFI's commitment to the art of the moving image. The relationship of AFI's mission to a preserved, historic theatre is ideal. We are grateful to Montgomery County for making this idea a reality."

"AFI has hit the ground running with this fantastic array of films," said Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan, who spearheaded the rehabilitation project. "There's something here for everyone. It's a great way to launch their new home in Silver Spring."

Of the broad array of opening events planned for Silver Spring's regional audiences, AFI Silver Director Murray Horwitz, says, "Giving audiences a real idea of the range and depth of the AFI Silver's programming is going to take several months, but this is a terrific start. It gives Washington-area filmgoers an array of screen experiences that they can't find anywhere else."

Opening Events

The AFI Silver will celebrate its grand opening with a series of invitational screenings of historic and preview films beginning Friday, April 4, and continuing through Thursday, April 9. On Friday, April 11, the AFI Silver will officially open its doors to the public, presenting specialty films in each of the center's three theatres.

Invitational Screenings

April 4—Opening Night, THE OX-BOW INCIDENT

The first night of the grand opening celebration, April 4, will honor actor/director Clint Eastwood with the new AFI Silver Legacy Award. Prior to the award ceremony, dignitaries from Capital Hill, the State of Maryland, Montgomery County and the region—together with AFI trustees and film media representatives—will watch the 60th anniversary screening of *THE OX-BOW INCIDENT*, starring Henry Fonda and directed by William Wellman. The ceremony will also salute those who helped bring the theatre's rehabilitation to fruition, led by Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan. Filling out the evening will be an on-stage discussion between Clint Eastwood and *Time* film critic/Eastwood biographer Richard Schickel.

April 5 and 6—ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE

On both nights, Miramax's *ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE* will be screened for invited audiences. This soul music documentary, scheduled for release in May, features musical performances by Jerry Butler, The Chi-Lites, Isaac Hayes, Sam Moore, Ann Peebles, Wilson Pickett, Carla Thomas, Rufus Thomas, Mary Wilson and many others. On April 5, soul artist Sam Moore (from the '60s soul duo "Sam and Dave") will appear onstage. On April 6, film directors Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker will join Moore in a discussion of the film and its music.

April 7 and 8—SINGIN' IN THE RAIN

On April 7 and 8, Gene Kelly fans will have the opportunity to join the AFI Silver's 75th anniversary celebration of the American movie musical with a special screening of *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN*. On April 7, a discussion following the film will feature National Public Radio Special Correspondent Susan Stamberg and AFI Silver Director Murray Horwitz (who originated and co-wrote Broadway's Fats Waller-inspired *Ain't Misbehavin'*).

April 9—A MIGHTY WIND

AFI will again roll out the red carpet on April 9 for a special preview screening of *A MIGHTY WIND*, the Warner Bros. Pictures comedy scheduled for an April 16 Washington, DC release. Directed by Christopher Guest, the noted ensemble cast includes many of the same talents that appeared in *BEST IN SHOW*, *WAITING FOR GUFFMAN* and *THIS IS SPINAL TAP*. Scheduled to appear onstage to answer questions about *A MIGHTY WIND* are director/co-writer/actor Christopher Guest, co-writer/actor Eugene Levy and actor Harry Shearer.

Public Opening

April 11—

LE CERCLE ROUGE, THE LAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI JUKES and FOUR DAUGHTERS

The AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center will officially open its doors to the public on April 11 with an eclectic mix of notable films in all three theatres.

LE CERCLE ROUGE is the restored, uncut version of Jean-Pierre Melville's 1970s film noir classic starring Yves Montand and Alain Delon. This will be the film's first Washington, DC screening. It has been shown to sell-out audiences in New York City and Los Angeles.

THE LAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI JUKES, a blues documentary, will feature a stage presentation by director Robert Mugge, as well as live blues performances that weekend by the film's Vasti Jackson and Patrice Monsell.

FOUR DAUGHTERS was the film shown in 1938 on the Silver Theatre's original opening night. Directed by Michael Curtiz, the film stars Priscilla Lane, John Garfield and Claude Rains.

A cycle of films from 1938, the year the original Silver Theatre opened, will continue throughout the opening weeks. These include ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES, YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU, JEZEBEL, GRAND ILLUSION, HOLIDAY, ALEXANDER NEVSKY, OLYMPIA, CAREFREE, THE LADY VANISHES, MAYTIME, THE DAWN PATROL and TOO HOT TO HANDLE.

APRIL 12 and 13—Open House

On April 12 and 13, the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center will host two days of open houses to welcome the community, featuring a variety of screen and live entertainment. The days' activities will be free of charge.

Other Film Programs

June 18 through 22—SILVERDOCS

The AFI Silver will launch SILVERDOCS: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival, presenting more than 60 provocative films and videos from a wide range of genres.

September through October—LATIN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

With a schedule of more than 20 feature films, the Latin American Festival provides an extensive annual exploration of filmmaking throughout the Americas. In collaboration with the Cultural Foundation of the Americas and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the Festival will be held this year at the AFI Silver.

October through November—EUROPEAN UNION FILM SHOWCASE

Moving to the AFI Silver in its 18th year, the Showcase provides a snapshot of filmmaking in the E.U. with more than 20 films drawn from major European festivals. In partnership with the European Commission and the embassies of its member states,

the Showcase brings to Washington the major prize winners from Cannes, Berlin, Venice and more.

More About the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center

The AFI Silver will be a major, internationally recognized exhibition center offering film and video generally unavailable elsewhere—independent features, shorts, foreign films, documentaries and classic cinema. Anchored by the rehabilitation of noted architect John Eberson's historic 1938 Silver Theatre, the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center is a 49,000 square foot complex with three theatres—one historic, two new state-of-the-art stadium-style theatres—a café, a film-based retail outlet, office and meeting spaces, and reception and exhibition areas. It is the anchor of an unprecedented public/private redevelopment effort in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland.

The AFI Silver is located in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland, at 8633 Colesville Road (between Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street). Conveniently located, the AFI Silver is two blocks from the Silver Spring Metro stop and easily accessible from the Capital Beltway (I-495), less than two miles from either the Georgia Avenue or Colesville Road exit. Phone: 301.495.6720. Web: <http://AFI.com/Silver>. Tickets will be available online at www.AFI.com/Silver and at the AFI Silver box office.

More About AFI

AFI is the preeminent organization dedicated to advancing and preserving the art of film, television and other forms of the moving image. AFI trains the next generation of filmmakers, coordinates nationwide film preservation efforts and explores new technologies in moviemaking. AFI also presents the best of film through the AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival (AFI FEST); the AFI National Film Theater at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC); and the AFI Life Achievement Award, the highest honor given for a career in film. AFI's annual almanac for the 21st century, **AFI AWARDS**, honors the most outstanding motion pictures and television programs of the year. In addition, **AFI's 100 Years . . . 100 Movies, 100 Stars, 100 Laughs, 100 Thrills, 100 Passions and 100 Heroes & Villains** (airing June 2003) have ignited extraordinary public interest in classic American movies. More information about AFI can be found by visiting its Web site, located at www.AFI.com.

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***See following page for press information:**

****PRESS TOUR INVITATION FOR YOU****

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A press tour of the expanded facility will be held on April 4 from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. Those members of the press who wish to cover opening events from April 4 through April 11 should RSVP to Joan Kirby at 301.495.6747 or jkirby@AFI.com by 3:00 p.m. the day of the event.