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## AFI Fest adding day, marathon

By Gregg Kilday

The AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival said Monday that this year's edition will run from Nov. 1-12. It has added an extra day — expanding the event to 12 nights and 11 days by opening on a Wednesday rather than a Thursday — in order to accommodate additional activities marking its 20th anniversary.

The fest will be presented by Audi and headquartered at the ArcLight Cinemas in Hollywood.

“Celebrating the art of filmmaking is at the heart of AFI’s national mandate. Our festival has done this proudly for more than 20 years — and we think the future will be even more exciting,” AFI Fest director Christian Gaines said.

The fest, which began when the AFI adopted FILMEX, the festival founded by the late Gary Essert and the late Gary Abrahams in 1971, also will recognize FILMEX’s legacy.

“This is much more than a history lesson, this is history in the making, and recognizing the legacy that ‘the Garys’ created is long overdue,” said Tom Pollock, partner of the Montecito Picture Co., FILMEX co-founder and former chairman and vice chair of AFI’s board of directors.

He cited such FILMEX milestones as Luis Bunuel’s first appearance in the U.S. with 1972’s “The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,” Alfred Hitchcock’s arrival at the premiere of 1976’s “Family Plot” and Laurence Olivier’s last public appearance with 1979’s “A Little Romance.”

In a nod to FILMEX’s famous movie marathons, a 24-hour

marathon will be held on AFI’s Hollywood Campus at the Mark Goodson Theatre beginning at noon Nov. 11. The marathon is open to “passport”-holding audience members and will benefit the Global Fund, which fights AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in developing countries, by asking family and friends to make donations in the names of the marathongoers.

“Movie marathons were a programming staple in the FILMEX days, but the increasingly frantic pace of our modern lives frames it more as a nice idea but a tough commitment,” Gaines said. “By offering participants the opportunity to raise money for the Global Fund, we’re giving people a chance to make a contribution to a relevant cause — and see some superb films in the process.”

The marathon will begin with a screening of Peter Bogdanovich’s “The Last Picture Show.” The fest will also present Bogdanovich in “Sacred Monsters,” his one-man show in which he shares anecdotes about his encounters with such film greats as Hitchcock, Cary Grant and Orson Welles.

AFI Fest’s researchers also have teamed with Baseline StudioSystem to launch a searchable online database offering complete access to 6,000 AFI Fest and FILMEX titles dating back to 1971.

The American Film Market, running Nov. 1-9 in Santa Monica, will serve as the festival’s market partner. ■