



“Raise Your Voice”: The 9th Annual African American Film Festival Opens in Southampton

October 1, 2014

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

The Ninth Annual African-American Film Festival arrives in Southampton this week to present four days of films and programming. Film screenings for “Raise Your Voice” take place October 2 to 5 at the **Southampton Arts Center**. Films include features, documentaries and shorts with panel discussions part of the programming. An evening of spoken word and live jazz takes place at the **Southampton Cultural Center** on Oct. 3 from 7 to 9 p.m. The evening features Grammy Winner J. Ivy and Certain Moves Jazz Band.

The African American Film Festival is presented by the Southampton African American Museum. Films were chosen to highlight “... the experiences of people of color from the joyous to the painful,” according to the museum. Films also seek to highlight the talent and artistry of African-American filmmakers, actors, performers and musicians, according to the museum.

“Raise Your Voice” includes 11 films selected by museum Executive Director Brenda Simmons and Nigel Noble, an Oscar-winning film director and museum board member. Highlights include the documentaries “Porgy and Bess: An American Voice” by Noble; “Life’s Essentials with Ruby Dee” featuring Dee, Alan Alda, Ossie Davis, Danny Glover and Harry Belafonte.

Tickets are \$10 (suggested donation). The Spoken Word & Live Jazz evening has a suggested donation of \$25. All festival tickets are \$100 or \$150 for a VIP Package that includes an exclusive VIP Reception with film producers. To Purchase tickets, click [here](#).

The festival is presented by and benefits the Southampton African Museum. The museum’s planned home is “The Barbershop”, a former 1940s gathering place for African Americans located at 245 North Sea Road, Southampton, NY. The museum’s mission is to promote an understanding and appreciation of African American culture by creating programs that will preserve the past, encourage learning and enhance the life of the community.

ABOUT THE FILMS

The opening film “**Fruitvale Station**” (2013, American) is a Sundance and Cannes Film Festival award winner. Written and directed by Ryan Coogler, the film is based on the events leading to the death of Oscar Grant, a young man who was killed by BART police officer Johannes Mehserle at the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Station in Oakland, California.



“Fruitvale Station” poster.

“**The Trials of Muhammad Ali**” portray the religious faith of athlete Muhammad Ali. The documentary includes interviews and archival footage of Ali, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, David Susskind, Wilt Chamberlain and others. Made by Kartemquin Films, who also made the documentaries “Hoop Dreams” and “The Interrupters”, and directed by Bill Siegel.

“**Porgy and Bess: An American Voice**” is directed by Academy Award winner Nigel Noble. The film details the history of Gershwin’s opera and DuBose Heyward’s original novel “Porgy”, and the impact it has had on its casts and audiences and American black culture in general. Includes rare archival footage of the 1952 world tour, clips from the 1993 television production and interviews with Maya Angelou, Ruby Dee, Diahann Carroll and Billy Taylor and others.



Diahann Carroll is featured in “Porgy and Bess: An American Voice” directed by Nigel Noble.

“**Life Essentials with Ruby Dee**” featuring Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Alan Alda, Harry Belafonte, Danny Glover. Written and directed by Dee and Davis’ grandson Muta’Ali Muhammad the film is an open-letter style documentary in which America’s First African American Couple of Stage, TV and Film Ruby Dee & Ossie Davis’ rich lives guide their grandson on his personal quest to master lasting love, conscious art, and undying activism.



Harry Belafonte talks about his friendship with Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis in “Life’s Essentials with Ruby Dee.

“**We Still Live Here (Âs Nutayuneân)**” was awarded the Moving Mountains Prize at Telluride’s Mountain Film and the Full Frame Inspiration Award at the Durham Festival. Made by Anne Makepeace, the documentary tells the story of cultural revival by the Wampanoag of Southeastern Massachusetts.

“**Booker’s Place, A Mississippi Story**” has director Raymond De Felitta revisiting the documentary made by his father in 1965 revealing the life of an African American waiter working in

an all white restaurant and the ways it changed a family forever.



Scene from “Booker’s Place, A Mississippi Story.”

“**Belle**” is inspired by the true story of Dido Elizabeth Belle (played by Gugu Mbatha-Raw), the illegitimate mixed race daughter of a Royal Navy Admiral. Raised by her aristocratic great-uncle Lord Mansfield (Tom Wilkinson) and his wife (Emily Watson), Belle’s lineage affords her certain privileges but her skin color prevents her from fully participating in the traditions of her social standing. “Belle” is an 18th century tale of race and romance reminiscent of Jane Austen with a sophisticated flair and set to a backdrop of a pending legal decision that could signal end times for slavery.



“Belle” poster.

“**This Time**” is a short film portraying the realities when a loved one returns home from war and everything has changed. Written by Reagan Gomez-Preston and directed by Matthew A. Cherry. It stars Reagan Gomez, Michael Moss, Terri J. Vaughn, Barry Floyd and Moss Sinorice.

The film has been screened at various American film festivals including the Rincon International Film Festival, Boston international Film Festival, GI Film Festival, San Francisco Black Film Festival, Martha Vineyard African-American Film Festival, Roxbury International Film Festival, Hawaii International Film Festival, Miami Short Film Festival.

“**Unlocking the Truth**”, a documentary by Luke Meyer, looks at the rise of young teens in an African American heavy metal band from Brooklyn, recently signed with Sony Music. The film grabs the moments right before fame arrives to the 12 and 13-year-old musicians.



Unlocking the Truth’s Malcolm Brickhouse and Jarad Dawkins. Directed by Luke Meyer.

“Showtime”, a short film, is an uplifting and heart warming tale about friendship and loss of innocence. Written and directed by Rashaad Ernesto Green and produced by Reinaldo Marcus Green.

BASIC FACTS “Raise Your Voice” will take place from October 2 to 5 at the **Southampton Arts Center**, 25 Jobs Lane Southampton, NY 11968. **An Evening of Spoken Word & Jazz** will be held at the **Southampton Cultural Center**, 25 Pond Lane, Southampton, New York 11968. For information and a complete schedule, visit www.southamptonafricanamericanmuseum.org

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