

For Immediate Release

ASPEN FILM ANNOUNCES 27TH ACADEMY SCREENINGS PROGRAM

- 15 films likely vying for Oscar® gold to screen from December 26-30, 2018 -

Aspen, Colo. (November 20, 2018) — Aspen Film announced today the program for its 27th Academy Screenings, which runs December 26-30, 2018 at the Wheeler Opera House and Paepcke Auditorium in Aspen.

With Aspen being a longtime favorite winter destination for voting members of AMPAS, BAFTA, DGA, PGA, SAG-AFTRA, WGA and other applicable entertainment guilds, what began as an intimate and exclusive industry-only event has grown into a holiday week tradition. From buzzy, big-name features to fresh independent voices, Aspen Film Academy Screenings brings the thrill of the Oscar® race to mountains for a showcase of awards season contenders.

The 15-film showcase will open on Wednesday, December 26 with *AMAZING GRACE* (4:30pm), the soon-to-be-released documentary directed by Sydney Pollack that captures what is considered to be Aretha Franklin's most transcendent gospel performance 46 years after it was filmed and *VICE* (6:45pm), directed by Adam McKay and starring Christian Bale as former Vice President Dick Cheney.

"I had the pleasure of curating what we perceive to be the most exciting and provocative films of the season, which celebrate incredible characters, social issues, art, politics and the world around us. Academy Screenings will take you from Mexico to Iceland, from Queen Anne's court in 18th-century England to El Capitan in Yosemite National Park and beyond," says Aspen Film Executive Director and Artistic Director, Susan Wrubel. "Many of these films take a look through a social lens, offering commentary on the state of the nation and the world today, while reaching new heights in cinematic achievement. We are presenting world-class directors alongside fresh voices in filmmaking, showcasing outstanding performances, lauding the craft of screenwriting, marveling at captivating cinematography and art direction."

As an encore, independent fundraising event to Academy Screenings, Aspen Film is also pleased to announce a special 20th anniversary celebration of Terry Gilliam's 1998 cult classic film *FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS* on Friday, January 4, 2019 at the Wheeler Opera House. In partnership with the Gonzo Foundation, the evening will benefit both Aspen Film and the Hunter S. Thompson Scholarship for Veterans at Columbia University—the late journalist's alma mater following his service in the U.S. Air Force. The evening will commence with a reception at 5:30pm with a conversation with Anita Thompson and special guests immediately following the 7:00pm screening. Tickets are \$30 (screening) or \$75 (reception and screening) and are available through Aspen Show Tickets at the Wheeler Opera House Box Office (320 E. Hyman Ave., 970.920.5770, aspenshowtix.com). Please note that Academy Screenings passes and Aspen Film membership pricing are not valid for this event.

Academy Screenings Ticket and Pass Information

SINGLE TICKETS

Tickets will go on sale to the public Wednesday, December 12. Advance tickets are available for purchase for Aspen Film members beginning Friday, December 7. All tickets (\$15 for Aspen Film members, \$20 general admission; \$25 for Aspen Film members for Opening Night features, \$30 general admission for Opening Night features) are available through Aspen Show Tickets at the Wheeler Opera House Box Office, 320 E. Hyman Ave., 970.920.5770, aspenshowtix.com.

INDUSTRY PASS

Voting members of AMPAS, BAFTA, DGA, PGA, SAG-AFTRA, WGA and other applicable entertainment guilds receive a complimentary Industry Pass to Academy Screenings, which allows complimentary entry 30 minutes prior to all screenings. To obtain an Industry Pass, please contact Aspen Film directly by email info@aspenfilm.org or by phone at 970.925.6882.

VIP PASS

Available to Aspen Film Visionary + Benefactor Level Members; includes unlimited entry for (2) to all Aspen Film festivals, a year-round membership and guaranteed reserved seat bearing your name for all screenings.

PRIORITY PASS

Available to Aspen Film Star + Producer Level Members; includes a year-round membership; Stars receive access to seating in a special reserved section for all screenings; Producers receive access to the best available seating 30 minutes before show time.

FLEX PASS

\$350; Valid for 10 ticket vouchers of your choice during any Aspen Film Festival: Academy Screenings, Shortsfest and Filmfest; also includes a year-round Director level membership.

SUPER SCREENER PASS

\$150; For young professionals (35 & under) a Super Screener Pass includes a single ticket admission to all Academy Screenings presentations; also includes a year-round Director level membership.

For the complete program and to purchase Academy Screenings passes or a year-round Aspen Film membership, visit aspenfilm.org.

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27th Academy Screenings Program

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26
WHEELER OPERA HOUSE**

4:30pm

AMAZING GRACE

Directed by Sydney Pollack (USA, 2018, 87 minutes, Not rated)

Film courtesy of AI's Records and Tapes

In January 1972, Aretha Franklin gave two days of gospel performances at the New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Watts, Los Angeles, recording what would become her bestselling album Amazing Grace. The sessions were captured by a film crew led by Sydney Pollack, but the footage wound up shelved in a vault and has remained one of the lost cinematic treasures of twentieth-century music. Before Pollack's death in 2008, he expressed a wish for the film to be completed, and producer Alan Elliott took it up with a team of supporters as a passion project.

6:45pm

VICE

Directed by Adam McKay (USA, 2018, 132 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Annapurna Pictures

The story of Dick Cheney, the most powerful Vice President in history, and how his policies changed the world as we know it. *VICE* explores the story of Dick Cheney (Christian Bale), a bureaucratic Washington insider, who quietly wielded immense power as vice president to George W. Bush, reshaping the country and the globe in ways that we still feel today. Directed and written by Adam McKay, *VICE* stars Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Steve Carell, Sam Rockwell, Tyler Perry, Alison Pill, Lily Rabe and Jesse Plemons.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27
WHEELER OPERA HOUSE**

3:00pm

WOMAN AT WAR

Directed by Benedikt Erlingsson (Iceland, France, Ukraine, 2018, 100 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Magnolia Pictures

Halla is a fifty-year-old independent woman. But behind the scenes of a quiet routine, she leads a double life as a passionate environmental activist. Known to others only by her alias "The Woman of the Mountain," Halla secretly wages a one-woman war on the local aluminum industry. As Halla's actions grow bolder, from petty vandalism to outright industrial sabotage, she succeeds in pausing the negotiations between the Icelandic government and the corporation building a new aluminum smelter. But just as she begins planning her biggest and boldest operation yet, she receives an unexpected letter that changes everything. Her application to adopt a child has finally been accepted and there is a little girl waiting for her in Ukraine. As Halla prepares to abandon her role as saboteur and savior of the Highlands to fulfill her dream of becoming a mother, she decides to plot one final attack to deal the aluminum industry a crippling blow.

5:30pm

ROMA

Directed by Alfonso Cuarón (Mexico, USA, 2018, 135 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Netflix

The most personal project to date from Academy Award®-winning director and writer Alfonso Cuarón, *ROMA* follows Cleo (Yalitza Aparicio), a young domestic worker for a family in Mexico City's middle-class Roma neighborhood. Delivering an artful love letter to the women who raised him, Cuarón draws on his own childhood to create a vivid and emotional portrait of domestic strife and social hierarchy amid Mexico's political turmoil of the 1970s.

8:30pm

THE FAVOURITE

Directed by Yorgos Lanthimos (Ireland, UK, USA, 2018, 119 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Fox Searchlight Pictures

Early eighteenth century. England is at war with the French. Nevertheless, duck racing and pineapple eating are thriving. A frail Queen Anne (Olivia Colman) occupies the throne and her close friend Lady Sarah (Rachel Weisz) governs the country in her stead while tending to Anne's ill health and mercurial temper. When a new servant Abigail (Emma Stone) arrives, her charm endears her to Sarah. Sarah takes Abigail under her wing and Abigail sees a chance at a return to her aristocratic roots. As the politics of war become quite time consuming for Sarah, Abigail steps into the breach to fill in as the Queen's companion. Their burgeoning friendship gives her a chance to fulfill her ambitions and she will not let woman, man, politics or rabbit stand in her way.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28
PAEPCKE AUDITORIUM**

3:00pm

NEVER LOOK AWAY

Directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck (Germany, Italy, 2018, 189 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

Inspired by real events and spanning three eras of German history, *NEVER LOOK AWAY* tells the story of a young art student, Kurt (Tom Schilling), who falls in love with fellow student, Ellie (Paula Beer). Ellie's father, Professor Seeband (Sebastian Koch), a famous doctor, is dismayed at his daughter's choice of boyfriend, and vows to destroy the relationship. What neither of them knows is that their lives are already connected through a terrible crime Seeband committed decades ago.

7:00pm

STAN & OLLIE

Directed by Jon S. Baird (USA, 2018, 97 minutes, Rated PG)

Film courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

Laurel & Hardy, one of the world's great comedy teams, set out on a variety hall tour of Britain in 1953. Diminished by age and with their golden era as the kings of Hollywood comedy now behind them, they face

an uncertain future. As the charm and beauty of their performances shines through, they reconnect with their adoring fans. The tour becomes a hit, but Stan & Ollie can't quite shake the specter of Laurel and Hardy's past; the long-buried ghosts, coupled with Oliver's failing health, start to threaten their precious partnership. A portrait of the most tender and poignant of creative marriages, they are aware that they may be approaching their swan song, trying to rediscover just how much they mean to each other.

9:00pm

FREE SOLO

Directed by Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, Jimmy Chin (USA, 2018, 100 minutes, Rated PG-13)

Film courtesy of Greenwich Entertainment, National Geographic Documentary Films

From award-winning documentary filmmaker Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and world-renowned photographer and mountaineer Jimmy Chin, the directors of *MERU*, comes *FREE SOLO*, a stunning, intimate and unflinching portrait of free soloist climber Alex Honnold, as he prepares to achieve his lifelong dream: climbing the face of the world's most famous rock ... the 3,200-foot El Capitan in Yosemite National Park ... without a rope. Celebrated as one of the greatest athletic feats of any kind, Honnold's climb set the ultimate standard: perfection or death. Succeeding in this challenge places his story in the annals of human achievement.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29
PAEPCKE AUDITORIUM**

12:15pm

CAPERNAUM

Directed by Nadine Labaki (Lebanon, USA, 2018, 121 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

CAPERNAUM ("Chaos") tells the story of Zain (Zain al Rafea), a Lebanese boy who sues his parents for the "crime" of giving him life. Zain, a gutsy streetwise child, flees his negligent parents, survives through his wits on the streets, takes care of Ethiopian refugee Rahil (Yordanos Shiferaw) and her baby son, Yonas (Boluwatife Treasure Bankole), is jailed for a crime, and finally, seeks justice in a courtroom. *CAPERNAUM* was made with a cast of non-professionals playing characters whose lives closely parallel their own. While steeped in the quiet routines of ordinary people, the film has an expansive palette: without warning it can ignite with emotional intensity, surprise with unexpected tenderness, and inspire with flashes of poetic imagery. Although it is set in the depths of a society's systematic inhumanity, *CAPERNAUM* is ultimately a hopeful film that stirs the heart as deeply as it cries out for action.

3:00pm

BOY ERASED

Directed by Joel Edgerton (USA, 2018, 115 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Focus Features

BOY ERASED tells the courageous story of Jared Eamons (Lucas Hedges), the son of a Baptist pastor in a small American town, who must overcome the fallout of being outed to his parents (Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe). His parents struggle with reconciling their love for their son with their beliefs. Fearing a loss of family, friends, and community, Jared is pressured into attending a conversion therapy program. While there, Jared comes into conflict with its leader (Joel Edgerton) and begins his journey to finding his own voice and accepting his true self.

5:45pm

IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK

Directed by Barry Jenkins (USA, 2018, 119 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Annapurna Pictures

Based on the novel by James Baldwin, *IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK* is the story of Tish, a newly engaged Harlem woman who races against the clock to prove her lover's innocence while carrying their firstborn child to term. It is a celebration of love told through the story of a young couple, their families and their lives, trying to bring about justice through love, for love and the promise of the American dream.

8:30pm
VOX LUX

Directed by Brady Corbet (USA, 2018, 110 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Neon

VOX LUX begins in 1999 when teenage sisters Celeste and Eleanor survive a seismic, violent tragedy. The sisters compose and perform a song about their experience, making something lovely and cathartic out of catastrophe—while also catapulting Celeste to stardom. By 2017, the now 31-year-old Celeste is mother to a teenage daughter of her own and struggling to navigate a career fraught with scandals when another act of terrifying violence demands her attention.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30
WHEELER OPERA HOUSE

3:00pm

BATHTUBS OVER BROADWAY

Directed by Dava Whisenant (USA, 2018, 87 minutes, Rated PG-13)

Film courtesy of Focus Features

When he started as a comedy writer for the *Late Show with David Letterman*, Steve Young had few interests outside of his day job. But while gathering material for a segment on the show, Young stumbled onto a cache of vintage record albums that would change his life forever. Bizarre cast recordings — marked “internal use only” — revealed full-throated Broadway-style musical shows about some of the most recognizable corporations in America: General Electric, McDonald’s, Ford, DuPont, Xerox. They also featured writers and performers who would become legends, such as Chita Rivera, Kander & Ebb, Florence Henderson, and Bob Fosse. Young didn’t know much about musical theater, but these recordings delighted him in a way that nothing ever had. This documentary follows Young on his quest to uncover all he can about this hidden world. While delving into treasure troves of forgotten archives, tracking down rare albums, unearthing unseen footage, and rediscovering composers and performers, he comes to form unlikely friendships and discovers how this discarded musical genre starring tractors and bathtubs was bigger than Broadway.

5:45pm

AT ETERNITY’S GATE

Directed by Julian Schnabel (Switzerland, UK, France, USA, 2018, 110 minutes, Rated PG-13)

Film courtesy of CBS Films

Julian Schnabel’s *AT ETERNITY’S GATE* is a journey inside the world and mind of a person who, despite skepticism, ridicule and illness, created some of the world’s most beloved and stunning works of art. This is not a forensic biography, but rather scenes based on Vincent van Gogh’s (Academy Award® Nominee Willem Dafoe) letters, common agreement about events in his life that present as facts, hearsay, and moments that are just plain invented.

8:30pm

BEN IS BACK

Directed by Peter Hedges (USA, 2018, 103 minutes, Rated R)

Film courtesy of Lionsgate, LD Entertainment, Roadside Attractions

Nineteen-year-old Ben Burns (Lucas Hedges) unexpectedly returns home to his family’s suburban home on Christmas Eve morning. Ben’s mother, Holly (Julia Roberts), is relieved and welcoming but wary of her son staying clean. Over a turbulent 24 hours, new truths are revealed, and a mother’s undying love for her son is tested as she does everything in her power to keep him safe. *BEN IS BACK* also stars Courtney B. Vance (“The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story”) and Kathryn Newton (*LADY BIRD*).

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SPONSORS:

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ABOUT ASPEN FILM:

Established in 1979, Aspen Film is one of Colorado's most active film arts organizations, presenting dynamic programs and featured guest artists throughout the year. Internationally recognized, Aspen Film organizes a major film event in every season, along with an extensive education program: Aspen Filmfest, Academy Screenings, Aspen Shortsfest and Film Educates. With a mission to enlighten, enrich, educate and entertain through film, Aspen Film stimulates thought, encourages dialogue and broadens understanding of our world and serves through the diverse spectrum of ideas presented by filmmakers worldwide. To learn more, visit aspenfilm.org.

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