

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES OPENING AND CLOSING NIGHT FILMS

**“SERIOUS MOONLIGHT” OPENING NIGHT
“UP IN THE AIR” CLOSING NIGHT**

CHERYL HINES AND JASON REITMAN TO ATTEND

FULL FILM SCHEDULE OUT

Austin, TX – September XX, 2009 – The 16th annual Austin Film Festival & Conference (October 22-29), the premiere film festival recognizing writers’ and filmmakers’ contributions to film, television and new media, is pleased to announce this year’s opening and closing night films along with the star-studded casts. *Serious Moonlight*, directed by Cheryl Hines and written by the late Adrienne Shelly, will open the festival on Thursday, October 22nd at 7pm at the Paramount Theatre, and Hines is coming down to accompany the film’s regional premiere. Closing the festival will be *Up in the Air*, directed by Academy Award®-nominated Jason Reitman and written by Reitman and Sheldon Turner. Also a regional premiere, the film, playing Thursday, October 29th at 8pm at the Paramount Theatre, will bring Reitman to town for the event.

Serious Moonlight is Hines’ directorial debut and Shelly’s final screenplay. Hines, two-time Emmy® nominee for her role as Cheryl David on HBO’s “Curb Your Enthusiasm”, played the role of Betty in Shelly’s critically acclaimed 2007 film *Waitress*. *Serious Moonlight* is a dark relationship comedy starring Meg Ryan, Timothy Hutton, Kristen Bell and Justin Long.

Up in the Air is the story of a corporate downsizer and frequent flyer, played by George Clooney, who has to learn what it means to make a real connection and have a home as he faces the prospect of being permanently called in from the road. The film stars Clooney, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick, Melanie Lynskey, Danny McBride, Jason Bateman, and Zach Galifianakis. Reitman is an Oscar®-nominated director whose films include popular titles like *Thanks You for Smoking* and *Juno*. His short film *In God We Trust* won the Narrative Jury award at AFF in 2000.

Serious Moonlight and *Up in the Air* join the full AFF film lineup of world and regional premieres just released, including Centerpiece Film *The Messenger*, directed by accomplished screenwriter Oren Moverman (*I’m Not There* and *Jesus’s Son*) and starring Woody Harrelson, Ben Foster, Samantha Morton and Jena Malone. Other films announced include *Precious: Based on the Novel ‘Push’ by Sapphire*, *The Young Victoria*, *Calvin Marshall*, *American Cowslip*, *Red Cliff*, *Little Fish*, *Strange Pond*, *Herpes Boy*, *The Donner Party*, *Love the Beast*, *Harmony and Me*, and many more.

For a complete list of films, events and panelists, as well as additions and updates, visit www.austinfilmfestival.com or call 512.478.4795 or 800.310.3378. Special early bird festival badge rates will end September 30, 2009, so registrants are encouraged to purchase badges in advance. All badges grant admission to all films. For more information about festival badges and Awards Luncheon tickets

please visit the AFF Web site at www.austinfilmfestival.com. Badges and film passes are on sale now and can be purchased online or by phone.

For the very latest Austin Film Festival updates, follow us on Twitter (@austinfilmfest), and become a fan of the AFF page on Facebook.

Serious Moonlight

(USA, 84 min)

Writer: Adrienne Shelly

Director: Cheryl Hines

Cast: Meg Ryan, Timothy Hutton, Kristen Bell, Justin Long, Nathan Dean, Andy Ostroy

Regional Premiere

Thursday, October 22, 7:00 pm – Paramount Theatre

After she arrives at her country home for a romantic weekend getaway, things don't go exactly as planned for high-powered Manhattan lawyer Louise (Meg Ryan). First, her husband of 13 years, Ian (Timothy Hutton), tells her that he's leaving her for a younger woman. Then, one thing leads to another, and pretty soon Ian finds himself held captive by an oddly cool Louise who explains that she won't release him until he professes his love for her and commits to working on their marriage. That's when things really start to go wrong. The unexpected arrival of an opportunistic young gardener (Justin Long) and Ian's impatient mistress (Kristen Bell), only serve to complicate the crisis even further, while somehow forcing Louise and Ian to reckon with their past and realistically deal with their future.

As a director, Hines shines and is able to deliver the right comic timing while keeping the emotional strengths of the film intact. From a sharp-witted script by the late Adrienne Shelly, the cast has great dialogue to go with in this emotionally charged dark comedy.

Up in the Air

(USA, 108 min)

Writer: Jason Reitman, Sheldon Turner

Director: Jason Reitman

Cast: George Clooney, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick, Melanie Lynskey, Danny McBride, Jason Bateman, Zach Galifianakis, J.K. Simmons

Regional Premiere

Thursday, October 29, 8:00 pm – Paramount Theatre

The timely odyssey of Ryan Bingham (Oscar® winner George Clooney), a corporate downsizer and consummate modern business traveler who, after years of staying happily airborne, suddenly finds himself ready to make a real connection.

Ryan has long been contented with his unencumbered lifestyle lived out across America in airports, hotels and rental cars. He can carry all he needs in one wheel-away case; he's a pampered, elite member of every travel loyalty program in existence; and he's close to attaining his lifetime goal of 10 million frequent flier miles – and yet . . . Ryan has nothing real to hold onto.

When he falls for a simpatico fellow traveler (Farmiga), Ryan's boss (Bateman), inspired by a young, upstart efficiency expert (Kendrick), threatens to permanently call him in from the road. Faced with the prospect, at once terrifying and exhilarating, of being grounded, Ryan begins to contemplate what it might actually mean to have a *home*.

ABOUT AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL

The Austin Film Festival (AFF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the art, craft and business of writers and filmmakers and recognizing their contributions to film, television and new media. The AFF champions the work of aspiring and established writers and filmmakers by providing unique cultural events and services, enhancing public awareness and participation and encouraging dynamic and long-lasting community partnerships. www.austinfilmfestival.com.

The Austin Film Festival is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

Special support is provided to the Austin Film Festival by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences®, Continental Airlines, Clear Channel Radio, KVUE, Target, and Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation.

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