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Local Film Fest Announces International Line-up for 10th Anniversary

Chatham—Returning for its tenth year, the four-day long movie marathon known as FilmColumbia comes to the village of Chatham from October 22 - 25. Bringing a star-studded lineup of more than 30 international screenings, plus panel discussions, script readings, parties, and more, the festival “has something for everyone,” says Peter Biskind, executive director and co-programmer (along with Larry Kardish) of FilmColumbia. This year, he adds, “we have more comedies than before . . . and our sneak preview for Saturday night has created a lot of buzz in the industry.” With their career connections to the film industry, Columbia County residents Biskind and Kardish curate the selection of new works each year from filmmakers around the world, making FilmColumbia one of the most diverse, intimate, and respected cinematic events on the east coast.

Highlights of the 2009 schedule include noteworthy releases such as *The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus*, the last movie to star actor Heath Ledger, who died in the midst of production. The film would’ve died too, Biskind explains, were it not for the unique script. “The characters plunge through a mirror confronting their true selves and changing their physical selves. That premise allowed three other actors—Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell, and Jude Law—all friends of Ledger—to be incorporated into the story without revisions.”

Other movies showing this year at FilmColumbia spotlight historical characters (Mussolini in *Vincere*; Queen Victoria in *The Young Victoria*; Barack Obama in *By the People*); political drama (*The White Ribbon*, *Axis of Good*, *The Men Who Stare At Goats*);

documentary work (*Living In Emergency, I.O.U.S.A*); comedy (*The Maid, A Serious Man*, and the Saturday night sneak); and melodrama (*That Evening Sun, Against the Current, Fish Tank*), plus numerous special interest films and cutting-edge adult animation. Many of the screenings are followed by a Q&A session in which the director, producer, and/or actors in a film discuss the making of the movie and field questions from the audience.

Produced and organized by an all-volunteer group of members from the Chatham Film Club under the direction of Calliope Nicholas, FilmColumbia uses three Chatham village venues—the Crandell Theatre, The Morris Memorial, and the Tracy Memorial—for film screenings and special events. For a complete listing of movies and events at this year’s festival, go to www.filmcolumbia.com. Tickets may be purchased individually for each film or moviegoers can pre-order an All-Film Pass (\$80 members; \$110 non-members) or a Gold Pass (\$125 members; \$175 non-members), which allows entry into all events. Ticket sales to Chatham Film Club members begin on October 1 by mail or telephone (518-392-3445). Sales to the general public start October 9, including online ticket orders and in-person advance sales at the Chatham Book Store. Tickets may also be purchased during the festival at the Tracy Memorial. However, most films sell out early, so advance purchases are highly encouraged.



A scene from *The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus*, starring the late Heath Ledger, to be screened at the upcoming FilmColumbia festival.