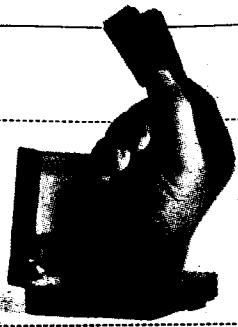


January 27, 2005

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Weekend Pa

Something to See

The rowdy Guerrilla Film Festival finds a home for rogue flicks

FILM | There's a lovely irony to staging the Guerrilla Film Fest in an august edifice built with Carnegie family capital. Even better is the festival logo — Che Guevara meets "Planet of the Apes."

But festival director John Hanshaw is hell-bent on spotlighting indie and foreign films — the kind that lack a Denzel or a Sundance seal of approval — by any means necessary.

Of the 2,613 feature films submitted last year to the Sundance Film Festival, only about 120 made the cut. Maybe a dozen of those will find distributors. The most recognized name in American film festivals offers emerging filmmakers all the dignity of a cattle auction, at about the same odds for success.

Enter Hanshaw's vision. Harking back to the days when Sundance was a rowdy upstart, eager to poke a stick in Hollywood's eye, the Guerrilla Film Fest was born. This latest installment builds on the grassroots buzz that has been crescendoing since the first Guerrilla event in June 2003.

The festival anchor is "Beat the Drum," a South African entry. Musa, a 9-year-old Zulu boy, is soon to be orphaned by AIDS — which the villagers believe to be a curse ravaging their village.

When the family sacrifices its lone cow in an attempt to save Musa's father, Musa journeys alone



THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY: The character Musa (Junior Singo) sets out for the city in the South African film "Beat the Drum."

to Johannesburg to find his uncle and somehow earn enough money to replace the cow.

Like the Inuit drama "Whale Rider" or the Iranian tale "The White Balloon," director David Hickson artfully navigates the country's grim situation to create a hopeful tale of a young hero.

The 2003 movie has already wowed audiences and critics on

the worldwide film festival circuit. Yet, despite a raft of awards, this may be the only time it plays Washington, D.C.

Six short films round out the offering. They range from slapstick ("The Climactic Death of Dark Ninja"), to noirish dystopian sci-fi ("Natural Selection"), to speculative history of two prison escapees who disappear the same

night CBS radio reports UFOs over the U.S. ("Apple Jack").

As a great American said, the revolution will not be televised. But that doesn't mean you can't watch.

BOB MASSEY

Carnegie Institution, 16th and P streets NW; Sat., Jan. 29., short films at 7 p.m., feature at 9:30 p.m., \$12-15; www.gfilmfest.com or 202-234-2889. (Dupont Circle)

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Swing Time: Jazz

Blowing in the Wind:

Mix Master: Deep house

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