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***Cloudburst* Starring Olympia Dukakis  
Opens 25th Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival**

**Festival Runs June 1-9  
Most Screenings Held at Cinestudio on Trinity College Campus**

**Dual Closing Night Screenings at  
Connecticut Science Center and Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**

HARTFORD, Conn. (May 1, 2012) — A vivid rainbow of genres, topics, voices and viewpoints will be shared in the 25th season of the Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, taking place June 1-9 during LGBT Pride Month. Cinestudio at Trinity College is the site for this milestone season, except for dual closing night screenings at the Connecticut Science Center and Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in downtown Hartford.

“We wanted our 25<sup>th</sup> season to be a blockbuster, and the selection committee has delivered. We’re very pleased by the variety and number of high-quality feature films in this year’s lineup,” says Shane Engstrom, Director of Out Film CT, the not-for-profit organization that produces the festival. “While the films are selected for their interest to the LGBT community, they depict a wide array of human experience and concerns that are universal to all audiences.

“Most of all, the Festival is an entertaining forum that provides interaction with filmmakers and actors. Stay tuned, for early in May we’ll announce very special appearances,” Engstrom concluded.

The Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival is the longest-running cinema festival in the state. It has helped Hartford to become a regional movie-lover’s destination while it has galvanized and knit together the LGBT community since 1988.

Unlike many festivals organized by hired curators, this event is programmed by a group of 15 or so devoted volunteers, who have spent over 150 hours viewing 200 short and feature-length submissions since August 2011 until early April of this year.

Film screenings are at Cinestudio on the campus of Trinity College, 300 Summit Street, Hartford, with the exception of closing night. Movies are shown at 7:30 p.m. every evening during the festival, with Saturday and Sunday matinee screenings at 3:00 p.m.

Single tickets to the opening and closing gala screenings are \$18, \$15 for students and seniors. Single tickets for other films are \$10, \$7 for students and seniors. Three-show passes (excluding opening and closing nights) are \$24. Admission to the entire Festival

is \$75. Single tickets and festival passes are available online at [www.OutFilmCT.org](http://www.OutFilmCT.org) and may be purchased at the door. For more information, visit [www.OutFilmCT.org](http://www.OutFilmCT.org).

The schedule for the 25<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival follows:

Friday, June 1 at 7:30 p.m.

***Cloudburst*** — Drama/Comedy/Adventure

(Canada, 2011) Directed by Thom Fitzgerald. Screenplay by Thom Fitzgerald. Cast: Olympia Dukakis, Brenda Fricker, Kristen Booth, Ryan Doucette.

Starring Oscar®-winning stage and screen icon Olympia Dukakis as a foul-mouthed, tough-talking butch lesbian, and Oscar®-winning Brenda Fricker as her devoted life partner, this is a *Thelma & Louise*-type story with a gay-wedding twist. Dukakis gives a tour de force performance as Dot, who attempts to run off with Stella, her partner of 31 years, after Stella's granddaughter tricks her into moving into a nursing home. Dot springs Stella from the nursing home and they head to Canada to get married in this new, romantic road movie written and directed by Thom Fitzgerald (*The Hanging Garden*). Along the way they pick up a hot and often shirtless hitchhiker, who would give Brad Pitt a run for his money, encounter a naked psychopath and endure a Canadian strip-search. *Cloudburst* is a wonderful, adventure-filled, one-of-a-kind film that will appeal to all audiences.

95 minutes.

Saturday, June 2 at 3:00 p.m.

***Jobriath AD*** — Documentary

(USA, 2011) Directed by Kieran Turner. Written by Kieran Turner.

Called “The American Bowie” and “The True Fairy of Rock & Roll,” Jobriath was a truly unique and brilliant singer/songwriter that few remember. He made only two albums, but his influence as the first openly-gay rock star continues to this day. Initially heralded as the greatest rocker of all time, his career was ultimately sabotaged by a publicity machine run amok and a manager who cared more about his own image and earnings than Jobriath's success. Shunned by the gay community and misunderstood by the masses, Jobriath was excommunicated from the music business and eventually became an early casualty of AIDS. Through interviews, abundant archival material and animation, you'll experience this heartbreaking, unbelievable but true piece of little-known gay history.

102 minutes.

Saturday, June 2 at 7:30 p.m.

***Christopher and His Kind*** — Drama

(UK, 2011) Directed by Geoffrey Sax. Screenplay by Kevin Elyot.

Cast: Matt Smith, Toby Jones, Imogen Poots, Lindsay Duncan, Alexander Doetsch, Iddo Goldberg, Issy van Randwyck, Douglas Booth, Pip Carter.

If this riveting biopic about gay author Christopher Isherwood seems a bit familiar, it's because the story it tells is the basis of the stage and screen musical *Cabaret*. “Divinely decadent” 1930s gay Berlin seemed like the ideal place for Isherwood (“Doctor Who” star Matt Smith) to visit his friend, the famed poet W. H. Auden. He quickly befriends would-be actress-singer Jean Ross, life-loving landlady Fräulein Thurau, the older, horny

and bewigged queen Gerald Hamilton, and rent boy Casper. But a chance encounter with sexy street sweeper Heinz changes everything. Against the backdrop of the Nazis' rise to power, Christopher and Heinz try to hold onto their relationship as one obstacle after another gets in their way. Michael Hogan for The Sunday Telegraph (UK) says the film "is handsomely shot, lovingly recreating the period, but with a twinkling, tongue-in-cheek feel – not to mention some lusty sex scenes – that stops it becoming too misty-eyed."

90 minutes.

Saturday, June 2 at 10:30 p.m.

***Varla Jean and the Mushroomheads*** — Comedy

(US, 2011) Directed by Michael Schiralli. Screenplay by Jeffery Roberson and Jacques Lamarre.

Cast: Jeffery Roberson, Matthew Carroll, Seth Rudetsky.

After years of performing in dive bars and bathhouses around New Orleans, semi-celebrity and loose chanteuse Varla Jean Merman (Jeffery Roberson) is watching her audience get older by the minute. In a last-ditch effort to prop up her sagging career, Varla decides to go after a younger crowd – kids. This mockumentary, co-written by Hartford celeb Jacques Lamarre, chronicles Varla's attempt to cobble together an ill-conceived and inappropriate children's show to be aired on a local New Orleans television network. If you're a Varla Jean fan (and who isn't) you won't want to miss the late-night screening of this madcap romp. Not for the faint of heart or the easily offended.

84 minutes.

Sunday, June 3 at 3:00 p.m.

***Jamie and Jessie Are Not Together*** — Musical Comedy

(USA, 2011) Directed by Wendy Jo Carlton. Screenplay by Wendy Jo Carlton.

Cast: Jacqui Jackson, Jessica London-Shields, Fawzia Mirza, Marika Engelhardt.

Have you ever fallen in love with your best friend? Or your roommate? In two weeks, Jamie is moving from Chicago to New York, hoping to become a Broadway actress. Her best friend Jessica is bummed out because she's not-so-secretly in love with Jamie. As moving day gets closer, Jessica tries to make Jamie jealous by dating other girls. But Jessica's plan backfires in a way she could never imagine. Set in working class Chicago, this romantic comedy is infused with musical and dance numbers and tells the tale of two young women whose codependent and loyal friendship is fraught with erotic tension as they try to figure out how to grow together or how to grow apart. It's a love letter to those gray areas of love and lust, and to the young romances we will never forget.

95 minutes.

Sunday, June 3 at 7:30 p.m.

***Wish Me Away*** — Documentary

(USA, 2012) Directed by Bobbie Birleffi and Beverly Kopf.

Chely Wright was one of the biggest female country stars of the past 15 years, with several hit songs, including "Single White Female" and "Shut Up and Drive." She won multiple awards, including being named Top Female Vocalist at the 1999 Academy of Country Music Awards. And then in May 2010, she came out as a lesbian. After a

lifetime of hiding, Wright was the first commercial country music singer to come out, shattering cultural stereotypes within Nashville, her conservative heartland family and, most importantly, within herself. With unprecedented access over a two-year period, including her private video diaries, this documentary intertwines Chely's rise to fame with the execution of her coming out plan, culminating in the exciting moment when she steps into the media glare to reveal she is gay. Tearful and emotional, this film shows both the devastation of internalized homophobia and the transformational power of living an authentic life.

96 minutes.

Monday, June 4 at 7:30 p.m.

***Time to Spare*** — Drama

(Netherlands, 2011) Directed by Job Gosschalk.

Cast: Paul de Leeuw, Karina Smulders, Lineke Rijzman, Alwin Pulinckx, Teun Luijkx, Christopher Parren.

Maarten is a forty-something music teacher and sometimes busybody who has been both brother and father to his younger sister, Molly, since their parents died. When Molly decides to leave home and live with her boyfriend, she leaves Maarten with empty nest syndrome. But her departure does open up new opportunities for Maarten when he meets Arthur, a closeted but very attractive man, and the two hit it off despite their differences. Molly and Maarten wrestle with their personal relationships and also their relationship with one another as the story takes many twists and turns. The multi-layered characters and storyline combine to create a richly moving tale that evokes both laughter and tears. 93 minutes. Subtitles.

Tuesday, June 5 at 7:30 p.m.

***Kiss Me*** — Romantic Drama

(Sweden, 2011) Directed by Alexandra-Therese Keining. Screenplay by Alexandra-Therese Keining.

Cast: Ruth Vega Fernandez, Live Mjönes, Lena Endre.

Mia and Frida, both in their thirties, meet for the first time at the engagement of Mia's father and Frida's mother. Mia has not visited her father in years and arrives with her boyfriend, Tim, to whom she's engaged. But as Mia and Frida get to know one another, the initial friction between them turns into something much more, and strong emotions begin to stir. Their relationship will turn everything upside down with dramatic consequences for everyone close to them.

105 minutes. Subtitles.

Wednesday, June 6 at 7:30 p.m.

***Melting Away*** — Drama

(Israel, 2011) Directed by Doron Eran. Screenplay by Bili Ben Moshe.

Cast: Chen Yani, Limor Goldstien, Ami Weinberg.

This heartfelt drama tells the story of a family drawn into crisis when the parents discover their son is secretly cross-dressing and lock him out of the house. Years later, when the father is dying, the mother hires a private detective to track him down. But instead of a "son," the detective finds a woman who earns her living performing at gay cabarets. Will

the parents be able to adapt to and accept their new daughter? Will the daughter manage to overcome the past and forgive her parents? The answers are surprising in this riveting film that everyone will enjoy.

86 minutes. Subtitles.

Thursday, June 7 at 7:30 p.m.

**Vito** — Documentary

(USA, 2011) Directed by Jeffrey Schwarz.

This absorbing documentary chronicles the life of author and activist Vito Russo. In the aftermath of Stonewall, a newly politicized Russo found his voice as a gay activist and wrote the best-selling and now classic book *The Celluloid Closet*, the very first critique of Hollywood's portrayal of gays and lesbians on screen. During the early years of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s, Vito became a passionate advocate for justice with the newly-formed ACT UP, and he hosted one of the first gay talk shows, "Our Time," for WNYC-TV public television. Be sure not to miss this extraordinary story about the life of a true gay pioneer.

93 minutes.

Friday, June 8 at 7:30 p.m.

**August** — Romantic Drama

(USA 2010) Directed by Eldar Rapaport. Screenplay by Eldar Rapaport and Brian Sloan.

Cast: Murray Bartlett, Daniel Dugan, Adrian Gonzalez.

Two former lovers, Troy and Jonathan, reunite after a long-ago painful breakup. After spending several years in Spain, Troy returns to Los Angeles and decides to phone Jonathan and meet for coffee. A seemingly innocent rendezvous turns into an attempt to revive past passions. But this time it's not that simple— Jonathan has a new beau, Raul, and is trying to make the right decision a second time around. Can three beautiful men make sense of their lives and find love and happiness with the right partner?

100 minutes.

Saturday, June 9 at 3:00 p.m.

**Love Free or Die: How the Bishop of New Hampshire is Changing the World** —

Documentary

(USA, 2012) Directed by Macky Alston.

Premiering at this year's Sundance Film Festival, this documentary examines the fascinating life and personal journey of Gene Robinson, whose ordination as the first openly gay Episcopal bishop rocked the Anglican church. His consecration in 2003, to which he wore a bullet-proof vest, caused an international stir, and he has lived with death threats every day since. Robinson set a precedent in New Hampshire state politics and in the battle for LGBT people to receive full acceptance in the faith community and in society. His story is a powerful argument for the dignity and value of all of God's children.

83 minutes.

Saturday, June 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Connecticut Science Center, 250 Columbus Boulevard

**Gayby** — Comedy

(USA, 2012) Directed by Jonathan Lisecki. Screenplay by Jonathan Lisecki.

Cast: Jenn Harris, Matthew Wilkas.

Now in their thirties, Matt and Jenn are best friends from college. Jenn spends her days teaching hot yoga, while Matt suffers from comic-book writer's block and can't get over his ex-boyfriend. They decide to fulfill a longstanding promise to have a child together... the old fashioned way. This hilarious, crowd-pleasing full-length feature is based on a short film shown at last year's festival. But this isn't a mere rerun. The feature introduces a cast of hysterical friends, sidekicks and potential love interests. Can Matt and Jenn navigate the serious and unexpected snags they hit as they attempt to get their careers and love lives back on track while preparing for parenthood? Find out in this irreverent comedy about friendship, growing up, sex, loneliness and the family you choose.

89 minutes.

Saturday, June 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main Street  
***The Night Watch*** — Drama

(UK, 2011) Directed by Richard Laxton. Screenplay by Paula Milne.

Cast: Anna Maxwell-Martin, Claire Foy, Jodie Whittaker, Harry Treadaway.

Set against the turbulent backdrop of 1940s wartime London, this adaptation of Sarah Waters' best-selling novel follows four young Londoners who are inextricably linked by their wartime experiences. In a time when the barriers of sexual morality and social convention have broken down, Kay, Helen, Viv and Duncan enjoy a freedom they never experienced before. During the chaos of the wartime Blitz, the lives, loves and losses of these four central characters unravel. But postwar victory is bittersweet, for it returns them to the margins of society from which they hoped they had been liberated. In order to build their future they now must make peace with their past.

89 minutes.

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