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***THESE AMAZING SHADOWS PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS
 ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2011 AT 10 PM***

**Film Explores the Iconic Power of American Cinema
 and the Need to Preserve Its Treasures**

What do the films *Casablanca*, *Blazing Saddles*, and *West Side Story* have in common? Besides being popular, they have also been deemed “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant” by the Library of Congress and listed in the National Film Registry, a roll call of American cinema treasures reflecting the diversity of film, and indeed, the American experience itself. The current list of 550 films includes selections from every genre — documentaries, home movies, Hollywood classics, avant-garde, newsreels, and silent films. Shaping a cultural history from pieces of film, [These Amazing Shadows](#) reveals how the National Film Registry is nothing less than a cinematic repository of our nation’s hopes and dreams, myths and truths. Written and directed by Paul Mariano and Kurt Norton, *These Amazing Shadows* premieres on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Mary Louise-Parker on Thursday, December 29, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings).

Rich with imagery, *These Amazing Shadows* interweaves clips from America’s most-beloved films (and many rarer treasures) with moving personal tales of how specific films have reflected our culture and changed lives. Interviews with the Librarian of Congress’ Dr. James Billington, famous directors (including Christopher Nolan, John Lasseter, Rob Reiner, John Singleton, Barbara Kopple, and John Waters), producers (Gale Anne Hurd and James Schamus), archivists, admired actors (Tim Roth, Debbie Reynolds, Zooey Deschanel), and members of the National Film Preservation Board show us how American cinema is truly our “family album.”

These Amazing Shadows tells the story of the passage of the National Film Preservation Act of 1988 and how this law set in motion a system to identify notable films. The Librarian of Congress, with input from the public and advice from the National Film Preservation Board,



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selects twenty-five films each year to add to the Registry. The oldest film listed on the registry is *Newark Athlete* (1891), and the most recent is *Fargo* (1996).

The impact that films have had on the “national memory” and on American attitudes is explored in different ways: the tumultuous and still unsettled history of race relations is reflected and examined in such disparate films as D.W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation*, John Ford’s *The Searchers*, and John Singleton’s *Boyz n the Hood*, while the important role of women in filmmaking is revealed from the pioneering work of Lois Weber and Dorothy Arzner. In addition, Rick Prelinger takes a humorous look at the influence and impact of such cold war propaganda films as *The House in the Middle*.

For over a century, American movies have forged emotional connections with millions of viewers, providing a portal to our past, defining our present, and imagining our future. American films helped shape a global cultural language, connecting audiences across borders and different belief systems. And, just as our ancient ancestors shared stories to connect and thrive, we too share stories, by retelling the mysterious experience of being alive in our movies. *These Amazing Shadows* shows us how movies are part of our history, part of our culture, and part of ourselves.

To learn more about the film, visit the *These Amazing Shadows* interactive companion website (www.pbs.org/independentlens/these-amazing-shadows), which features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmakers and links and resources pertaining to the film’s subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

The participants, in alphabetical order

Jeff Adachi, Filmmaker

Dr. James Hadley Billington, The Librarian of Congress

Robin Blaetz, Professor of film studies, Mount Holyoke College

Brooks Boliek, Journalist

Charles Burnett, Director (*Killer of Sheep*)

Jay Carr, Author and critic

Martin Cohen, Vice President of post production, Paramount Pictures

Peter Coyote, Actor (*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*)

Arlene Damron, Daughter of filmmaker Dave Tatsuno

Julie Dash, Director (*Daughters of the Dust*)

Allen Daviau, ASC (*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*)

Caleb Deschanel, ASC (*The Black Stallion*)

Zoey Deschanel, Actress (*500 Days of Summer*)

Jennifer Hagar, Animator, Disney Animation Studios

Robert Harris, Film restorer, The Film Preserve

Dr. Jan-Christopher Horak, Director of the UCLA Film and Television Archive

Gale Anne Hurd, Producer (*The Terminator*)

Steve James, Director (*Hoop Dreams*)

Barry Jenkins, Filmmaker

Barbara Kopple, Director (*Harlan County, USA*)

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Antonia Lant, Professor, New York University
Mick LaSalle, Author and critic
John Lasseter, CEO Pixar Studios
Stephen C. Leggett, Coordinator, The National Film Registry, Library of Congress
Patrick Loughney, Chief, Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation, Library of Congress
John Magary, Filmmaker
Leonard Maltin, Author and critic
Roger Mayer, Retired studio executive
Betsy A. McLane, Ph.D., Author
Farran Nehme, Writer
Christopher Nolan, Director (*Inception*)
Heather Linville, Archivist, Academy Film Archive
Nina Paley, Animator
Stephen J. Peck, Director of US VETS Community Development
Jennifer Phang, Filmmaker
Rick Prelinger, Archivist, Prelinger Archive
John Ptak, Producer, Arsenal
Rob Reiner, Director (*This is Spinal Tap*)
Del Reisman, Former president, Writer's Guild of America - West
Debbie Reynolds, Actress (*Singin' in the Rain*)
Robert Rosen, Retired dean, UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television
Tim Roth, Actor (*Lie to Me*)
James Schamus, CEO Focus Features
Paul Schrader, Writer (*Taxi Driver*)
Eric J. Schwartz, Attorney
John Singleton, Director (*Boyz N the Hood*)
Anthony Slide, Author and historian
Michael Smith, Director of the Indian Film Institute
Shelley Stamp, Professor, University of California, Santa Cruz
Liz Stanley, Archivist, Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation, Library of Congress
George Takei, Actor (*Star Trek*)
Wayne Wang, Director (*Chan is Missing*)
John Waters, Director (*Hairspray*)
George R. Willeman, Nitrate Vault Manager, Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Center, Library of Congress
Jan Yarbrough, Colorist, Warner MPI
Kevin Yost, Editor, Lucasfilm LTD.

About the Filmmakers

Paul Mariano (Co-Director/Writer/Producer) was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts, where he graduated from the oldest public high school in the country, Boston Latin School. He moved to California and served in the United States Air Force at Mather AFB in Sacramento. After completing his studies at Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, he practiced as a criminal defense attorney in the Contra Costa County Public Defender Office for 27 years. Upon retirement, he co-founded Gravitas Docufilms with co-director Kurt Norton. For

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several years, Mariano and Norton produced “mitigation videos” for defendants in death penalty cases. Mariano’s directorial debut, *Also Ran*, won the award for Best Political Documentary at the 2006 Atlanta Docufest. His film *Faces of Genocide* began the International Citizens’ Tribunal on Sudan, held in New York City on November 13, 2006. The film also showed at the Sarajevo Biennial Meeting of the International Association of Genocide Scholars in June 2007.

Kurt Norton (Co-Director/Writer/Producer) was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, where his family has lived for four generations. After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley (political science), he established *Colorado Sports Monthly*, a successful regional sports publication. After returning to the Bay Area he became a private investigator specializing in death penalty cases, primarily working with the Contra Costa County Office of the Public Defender. At the same time he pursued his passion for filmmaking by writing and directing numerous shorts that have screened in film festivals across the country. *These Amazing Shadows* is his second documentary feature in collaboration with co-director, Paul Mariano. His mother, Audree Norton, was the first deaf actor on American network television, with a featured appearance on the CBS show *Mannix* (episode entitled “The Silent Cry”) in 1968.

Christine O’Malley (Producer) was born in Manhattan and raised outside of Chicago. In 2004 she served as Associate Producer on the Academy Award®-nominated documentary film *Enron: The Smartest Guys In The Room*. *Wordplay* was the first feature-length film she produced through her production company O’Malley Creadon Productions. It was a breakout hit at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival and went on to become the second-highest grossing documentary of 2006. O’Malley’s second documentary, *I.O.U.S.A.*, premiered at Sundance in 2008. It had a successful theatrical run and was broadcast on PBS.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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