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Headliners Announced for 2020 Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival

“Humans” Writer-Director Stephen Karam and
“The Virtuoso” Producer Chris Bongirne to Appear!

WAVERLY, PA (XXXX, 2019) – The Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival, presented by The Waverly Community House, is excited to announce that Stephen Karam and Chris Bongirne, nationally renowned filmmakers who both grew up in the Scranton area and whose 2020 film projects have direct ties to Scranton, will headline this year’s festival slated for March 27 through 29 in a variety of venues throughout downtown Scranton and the Waverly Community House.

Dedicated to nurturing emerging and independent filmmakers from Northeast Pennsylvania and around the world, the three-day festival correspondingly promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of film as an art form by exposing local audiences to unique and original cinema. Now in its fourth year, the Festival’s growing reputation is built on a commitment to offer the region access to new and independently produced films by a wide range of emerging and established filmmakers.

An OBIE Award winner and a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist, Stephen Karam is directing and adapting his Tony-winning play *The Humans* for the big screen, making his film debut as a director (he previously wrote the screenplays for the film versions of *Speech & Debate* and *The Seagull*). Set to be released in 2020, the film version of his comedy drama about a family from Scranton stars Amy Schumer, Beanie Feldstein, Richard Jenkins, Steven Yeun and Jane Houdyshell.

A graduate of Scranton High School and Brown University, Stephen is the son of Albert and Marie Karam and grew up in Green Ridge. In addition to receiving the festival’s F. Lamot Belin Award for Excellence in Cinema this year, he will share insight on his play being made into a film on Saturday, March 28, at 4 p.m. at Madame Jenny’s, 126 Franklin Ave., Scranton. General

seating tickets are \$50 in advance with VIP tickets for reserved seating and a 3:00pm meet and greet reception ticket for \$65, in advance. Seating is limited for this intimate event.

Archbald native and Bishop O'Hara graduate Chris Bongirne is the executive producer of *The Virtuoso*, starring Anthony Hopkins, Anson Mount and Abbie Cornish. The film about a hitman was partially shot in downtown Scranton and includes scenes in the former Dime Bank building on Spruce Street and the former Hotel Jermyn. The film's climactic scene features a collision between a car and a recreational vehicle that was filmed on the 200 block of Wyoming Avenue in March 2019.

In addition to *The Virtuoso*, which is set to be released in 2020, Bongirne executive produced *The Binge* with Vince Vaughn as Hulu's first theatrical feature, and *Bashira*, a scary thriller based in the Japanese Manga style.

Bongirne was also Executive Producer of the critically acclaimed film, *Marshall*, about the early life of Thurgood Marshall, with Chadwick Boseman playing the title role alongside Josh Gad and Sterling K. Brown. An encore screening of *Marshall* will be offered as part of the festival's kickoff gala slated for Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., at the Waverly Community House.

Joining Chris on stage to discuss "Filmmaking in the Electric City" will be Nick Stagliano, director/producer of *The Virtuoso* who also serves as an Executive Producer on the action thriller "Doorman" starring Ruby Rose and Jean Reno, which starts principal photography in May. The cinematic duo will introduce the film *Marshall* and host an audience Q+A after.

Tickets for the gala event are \$65 in advance, \$70 at the door and can be purchased online at nepafilmfestival.com or by calling 570-586-8191.

Now in its fourth year, the Festival's growing reputation is built on a commitment to offer the region access to new and independently produced films by a wide range of emerging and established filmmakers. The 2020 NEPA Film Festival will screen three days' worth of films, including features, horror and animated shorts, documentaries, and international films along with the opening night gala, artist tributes, presentations and panel discussions, and the ever-popular Mystery Box Challenge.

The full festival schedule will be announced Feb. 24, 2020.

A limited number of All-Access Film Festival Passes are currently available for \$120 in advance and includes admission to the Opening Night Gala, the Stephen Karam event as well as all films and other events. For more information or to purchase All-Access passes, individual tickets or day passes, please visit nepafilmfestival.com.

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ABOUT THE NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 2016 by the Waverly Community House, The Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival is supported by the F. Lamot Belin Arts Foundation and its mission to "build community through the arts."

Dedicated to nurturing emerging and independent filmmakers from Northeast Pennsylvania and around the world, the three-day festival correspondingly promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of film as an art form by exposing local audiences to unique and original cinema. For more information or to purchase tickets for events scheduled March 27 through 29, 2020, visit nepafilmfestival.com. Also follow Northeastern Pennsylvania Film Festival on Facebook and Instagram.

ABOUT OUR SPONSORS

The third annual Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival, a project of Scranton Tomorrow, is sponsored by The Lackawanna County Council of the Arts, WVIA Public Media and the People's Security Bank and Trust.