

FILM FESTIVAL REVIEW

Feeling Good At The Feel Good Film Festival

Warren Davis and Ron Rogge

The 5th Annual "Feel Good Film Festival" got under way August 3 in the trendy new art district of No Ho (North Hollywood) under the keen and joyful direction of Karyn Jones and festival founder, Kristen Ridgway Flores. The traditional "red carpet" gave way to a glowing sunburst carpet in keeping with the "Feel Good" theme of sunflowers that, by the way, always face the sun's rays. Certainly, the sunburst carpet, the festivities and the films kept up to the promise of this festival and one could not help going away feeling kissed by the sun. Valente Rodriquez, Ernie, from the successful *The George Lopez Show* led the way followed by an array of talented filmmakers including director, Michael Gooch, *Death* (yes, it's wonderfully uplifting) and up and coming stars such as Linsey Godfrey from *The Assignment*, Fabienne Maurer, Emmanuelle Weisbach from *C'est Magique!*, Narmar Hanna, star and producer of the hysterical *The Diner's Club* and Ian Hyland from *The Man At the Counter*.

After a very lively gala opening night party, the evening continued with films screening at the new Laemmle's all digital theater, a welcome addition to NoHo which years ago was devastated by the Northridge earthquake. The night started with two marvelous shorts *The Man At The Counter* and *The Parachute Ball*, a tale of two older sisters in London during WW II who end up being held hostage by a fallen German paratrooper. The acting and costumes were so remarkable that one wished the film would continue. Opening night feature film was *Red Dog* with Josh Lucas. Set in Australia, it is a true life story of a dog that brings a mining community together. At one point, you could hear sobs echoing throughout the audience and I walked out wanting to see it again. No surprise it won Best Feel Good Feature. One of the finest documentaries that I have ever screened was *Dave*. The film follows a young 5'8" basketball coach who struggled for his success in his favorite



sport (due to height) and how he mentored and cultivated a 6'5", 345 pound special needs young man, Dave, and turned him into the star of the basketball team. Dave, whose Father had abandoned him years prior due to his special needs, ends up bringing Coach Donyes to search for his Father, too.

Saturday brought the well anticipated Screenwriting Panel with Brian Bird, *Touched By An Angel*, Dean Batali, *That 70's Show*, and Key Payton, 28 year writing and editing pro. Feel Good, whose philosophy is to encourage the beauty amongst us in the world really encourages passionate film makers to develop their view point and then give them a venue to express themselves. Founder Kristen Flores gives film makers an opportunity to cultivate relationships that will transcend time and boundaries by nurturing an intimate venue with a popular courtyard meeting place. Hat's off to the fine selection committee.

Closing Night ceremonies were helmed by Dominic Flores from *The Young and the Restless* with a special performance of the dance and

acrobatics group BBoy whose short screened at the festival.

And the winners of the 5th Feel Good Film Festival:

Best Feel Good Feature: RED DOG
 Best Feel Good Short: THE FIRST 70
 Best Director: Kriv Stenders RED DOG
 Best Actor: Fabian Kruger DER SAND-MANN
 Best Actress: Carmen Sanchez LA ULTIMA ISLA
 Audience Award Feel Good Feature: PAD YATRA: A GREEN ODYSSEY
 Audience Award Feel Good Short: C'EST MAGIQUE
 Best Screenplay: GETTING THE BUSINESS by Haik Hakobian
 Best Student Film: CHALK TALK

Can't wait until next year.

(Patricia J. Pawlak has attended film festivals throughout the world including Cannes, London, Rio, Shanghai and Berlin.)