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**THE THIRD ANNUAL BOSNIAN-HERZEGOVINIAN FILM FESTIVAL™
 KICKS OFF ON MAY 19, 2006 IN NEW YORK CITY**

Award winning and emerging filmmakers explore identity, survival, resilience, and justice in wartime and post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

NEW YORK, May 5, 2006: After a careful review of films submitted through the film contest opened in January, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival™ (BHFF™) announced its official film selection for its third annual event, May 19 - 21, 2006 at the Anthology Film Archives. This unique cultural event organized by two New York area-based not-for-profit organizations, Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc. and Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, represents and celebrates contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian cinematography and provides a platform for the international exposure for emerging Bosnian-Herzegovinian filmmakers.

“This year’s carefully-chosen program consists of twenty four groundbreaking and thought provoking feature, documentary, short, and animated films, which bring to life the passion, hope, humanity and beauty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people,” said Leila Rachidi, member of BHFF™ Film Selection Committee.

Eight documentaries, two feature films, seven short films and seven animated films selected for this year’s BHFF™ predominantly address issues of identity, survival, resilience, and justice in wartime and post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. For the first time, the Festival will introduce BHFF™ 2006 Audience Award for the Best Short or Feature Film and BHFF™ 2006 Audience Award for the Best Documentary Film, presented to films selected as outstanding by the audience members.

Six films will have their U.S. premiere at the BHFF™: **“Paycheck,” “Justice Unseen,” “Frame For the Picture of My Homeland,” “I See You My Friend,” “Asim Free Man” and “On Wednesdays.”**

Nominated for the Best Short Film for the 2005 European Film Academy Awards and winner of several regional awards, **“Paycheck”** is a commentary on the stark post-war economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The documentary, **“Justice Unseen,”** by Aldin Arnautovic and Refik Hodzic, examines whether the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), established by the United Nations to provide justice to war crimes victims, achieved what it was intended to do. Also exploring the theme of the search for justice is the short film **“Frame For the Picture of My Homeland,”** which received Special Mention as the Best Short Film at the 2005 Sarajevo Film Festival.

“I See You My Friend” is a heart-warming story of Robert and Halid, two blind teenagers who help each other overcome life’s many challenges. **“Asim Free Man”** features a garbage truck driver who lives modestly and has hard feelings from the recent war but despite life’s obstacles, he rehearses with his band every day, finding peace and solace in his music.

Winner of the International Students’ Film Competition audience award at goEast – Festival of Central and Eastern European Film in Wiesbaden, **“On Wednesdays”** is a story about how tango changed the life of its lonely middle-aged protagonist Panje.

Exploring the complex themes of religious, cultural and sexual identity are the feature film **“Go West,”** the short film **“If I Wasn’t Muslim”** and the documentaries **“Borderline Lovers,” “Boy From a War Movie,”** and **“Not so Humble Pie.”**

“Go West” is a thought-provoking and groundbreaking film about a same-sex male couple - Kenan, a Bosniak, and Milan, a Serb - and their attempts to escape Bosnia and Herzegovina at the start of the war in 1992. As the first film in Bosnia to address issues of religious and sexual identity in the context of the recent war and Bosnian social traditions, it has spurred much controversy. The director, Ahmed Imamovic, has even received death threats before film screening in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A short piece by Damir Niksic that recently took Sarajevo by storm, **“If I Wasn’t Muslim”** is a wholehearted and open monologue in the spirit of the Broadway musical **“Fiddler on the Roof”** that examines the complexity of religious and cultural identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina while addressing stereotypes and promoting tolerance.

Also celebrating diversity and tolerance is **“Borderline Lovers,”** a film that follows three ethnically diverse couples who dare to be in love, in spite of their families, war, and religion. This film won the Human Rights Jury Special Mention at the Sarajevo Film Festival, and several other awards at major film festivals.

Dedicated to the children of rape victims during the Bosnian-Herzegovinian war who were adopted and dispersed throughout the world under false identities, **“Boy From A War Movie”** tells the story of Alen, whose mother was raped by a Serb soldier during the war, and how he comes to terms with the truth years later. Since its premiere at Tribeca Film Festival in 2005, the film was widely acclaimed by international media including Associated Press, ABC, Al-Jeezira, Dutch Television and others.

“Not so Humble Pie” unfolds the story of burek, Bosnia's favorite traditional dish, which has recently become a popular addition to the New York City gourmet scene. The story of burek's

popularity in America is intertwined with the history of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and the Balkan expatriate community living in the United States and remarks on their struggle to preserve their identity while adapting to a new environment.

Among films exploring the themes of survival in Bosnia and Herzegovina and demonstrating the resilience of the human spirit is the documentary “**Totally Personal**” in which filmmaker Nedžad Begovic reflects on his life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, incorporating deeply personal details of his family’s struggle during the war. Since its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2005, the film has been screened at numerous festivals in Europe and the United States, including Palm Springs International Film Festival, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam and others.

Also important to note is the feature film “**Well Tempered Corpses**” by Benjamin Filipovic, a drama/comedy about two coroners at the Sarajevo city morgue who bet on the number of dead bodies that will come in, and the documentary “**Counterpoint for Her**” by Danijela Majstorovic, which follows the untold stories of women in Bosnia caught in the vicious circles of sex trafficking, an under-explored but critical issue in Bosnia.

For the first time in the history of BHFF™, audience members will be able to see a selection of animated films, including “**Halt Disney Give Me Five**,” presented in an independent competition at this year’s Animafest Zagreb, one of Europe’s oldest animation film festivals.

For a full program, descriptions of additional films presented at BHFF™ 2006 and information on tickets, please visit <http://www.bhffnyc.org>.

About Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF™)

The Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF™) is an annual event, which features award-winning films by emerging Bosnian-Herzegovinian filmmakers or films that have Bosnia-Herzegovina as their theme. Since its founding in 2003, BHFF™ has attracted significant public attention in New York City, the tri-state area and beyond and has brought together a wide spectrum of audiences, including film enthusiasts with diverse backgrounds and from all walks of life, as well as the Bosnian-American and greater Balkan community proud of its cultural heritage.

“This year, as well as in the past years, BHFF™ was truly a community effort helped by the support of the participating actors, filmmakers, production companies, volunteers, sponsors and people from all over the world,” said Selma Avdicevic, member of BHFF™ Executive Committee.

The third annual Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival™ could not be realized without the support of its sponsors, which include Sarajevo Graduate School of Business (SGSB), Raccoon, Inc., Harriman Institute, School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, Blackheath Financial, Cevabdzinica Sarajevo, Bosnian-American Association and Balkan Radio 387. Media partners include Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, BH Radio 1, Balkan Radio 387, *Sabah*, *Europa Magazine*, Bosnjaci.net and Peta Strana Svijeta.

About the Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc.

The Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and raising awareness of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture in the tri-state area and beyond by broadcasting a weekly radio program in Bosnian language on radio station WNYE 91.5 FM and organizing cultural and social events for Bosnian-Herzegovinian immigrants. This year, the Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina is celebrating the 13th anniversary of uninterrupted broadcasting. Since 2005, with the introduction of its online programming, the Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc. has expanded its audience to hundreds of listeners around the United States and the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.voiceofbh.org>.

About the Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc.

The Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a member-based not-for-profit organization with a mission to support the empowerment process of a new generation of Bosnians and Herzegovinians living in the United States and around the world by networking their intellectual potential and creativity. The goal is to strengthen the professional member communities, and promote Bosnia's cultural contributions and political standing abroad. Some of the most recent events organized by the Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina included "Commemoration of the Srebrenica Massacre" speaker and art presentation at the United Nations and "Genocide and Aftermath: Rationalizing the Process of Truth and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina," at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. For more information, please visit <http://www.academybh.org>.

About the Anthology Film Archives

Anthology Film Archives is an international center for the preservation, study, and exhibition of film and video with a particular focus on American independent and avant-garde cinema and its precursors found in classic European, Soviet and Japanese film. In addition to being a public movie theater, Anthology is a film museum, archive, research library, and art gallery. After 35 years in existence, Anthology remains the only non-profit organization of this type in New York. For more information, please visit <http://www.anthologyfilmarchives.org>.

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