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HOUSTON CINEMA ARTS FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS DIVERSE LIVE PERFORMANCES AND ASIAN ARTS AT DOWNTOWN AND MUSEUM DISTRICT VENUES

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE U.S. PREMIERE OF STUNNING LIVE MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE

HOUSTON – The Houston Cinema Arts Festival (HCAF) has begun unveiling its fourth annual festival program with the announcement of its most impressive lineup yet of live film and music performances. Held November 7 – 11, 2012 in major Downtown and Museum District venues in the Bayou City, HCAF 2012 will feature as its main live cinema event the American premiere of **SUPEREVERYTHING***, orchestrated by London-based **The Light Surgeons**. The project, a kaleidoscopic view of the cultural landscape of Malaysia, will be presented at Houston's newest arts and culture center, Asia Society Texas Center, and cosponsored with the University of Houston's Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, on **Friday and Saturday, November 9 and 10, at 7:30p.m.**

With multiple projections and a variety of media, SUPEREVERYTHING* layers together stunning documentary footage and motion graphics with an original, live electronic musical score. Filmed on location across Peninsular Malaysia, and drawing upon the collaborative contributions of cutting-edge Malaysian artists (including visual artist Fauzi Yusoff, composer N Chor Guan, and the HANDS Percussion ensemble), SUPEREVERYTHING* weaves a poetic, audio-visual tapestry exploring both Malaysian culture and larger themes of identity, ritual and place.

The Light Surgeons' work spans many diverse mediums: print, photography, motion graphics, short films, exhibitions and installations. Over the past ten years they have helped to pioneer new forms of cross platform practice, particularly with their audio-visual performances, expanded cinema projects and installations. Their work is exhibited at art museums and film festivals internationally.

Houston Cinema Arts Festival, whose program foregrounds the dynamism of Houston's arts scene and involves the collaboration of many Houston arts organizations, will be partnering for the first time with Houston's newest cultural center, the **Asia Society Texas Center**. The Center's 40,000-square-foot headquarters opened on April 14, 2012 and was designed by architect Yoshio Taniguchi—the same talent behind the Museum of Modern Art's 2004 expansion. The building features classroom and conference space, an art gallery, a 273-seat theater, three gardens, and a cafe. Asia Society Texas Center is the only U.S. branch of the Asia Society, other than its New York headquarters, that has its own building.

"We are thrilled to partner with the Asia Society Texas Center and the University of Houston Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts for the fourth annual Houston Cinema Arts Festival," said Richard Herskowitz, Artistic Director for HCAF. "Recognizing and sharing the Asia Society's dedication to promoting understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples of Asia and the U.S., our program this year will give special emphasis to Asian art and cinema."

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In addition to **SUPEREVERYTHING***, the festival will present the Texas premiere of director Ann Hui's moving film, **A SIMPLE LIFE**, winner of the five top awards at the 31st Annual Hong Kong Film Awards-- Best Film, Best Screenplay, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Actress. Inspired by the true story of its producer-screenwriter, Roger Lee, **A SIMPLE LIFE** is the story of the poignant relationship between a film producer, played by Chinese superstar Andy Lau, and the "amah" (maid) who raised him, played by actress Deanie Ip. Ip won the Venice International Film Festival's Volpi Cup for Best Actress for her role in this film. In addition to Lau and Ip, the film is loaded with cameos by celebrities from Hong Kong's action-packed cinema including martial-arts legends Tsui Hark and Sammo Hung.

In the U.S., acclaimed critic, Roger Ebert gave the film four stars. He wrote, "It expresses hope in human nature. It is one of the year's best films."

Like **SUPEREVERYTHING***, **KANZEON** is a British film production on Asian culture whose director, **Neil Cantwell**, will be visiting and performing live music at the Houston Cinema Arts Festival. A sublime visual and aural experience, **KANZEON** is an exploration of sound and the role it plays in Japanese Buddhism and Shintoism. The 87-minute film is structured as a series of chapters or incantations, and revolves mainly around three fascinating figures and musicians - Akinobu Tatsumi, a young Buddhist priest who takes care of a temple near Kumamoto City and spends his spare time as a hip-hop DJ, Eri Fujii, a woman who has spent her life mastering an ancient Chinese bamboo wind instrument called a sho, and Noh theatre and kotsuzumi drummer Akihiro Iitomi, who also happens to be a huge fan of jazz.

Attending HCAF 2012 with **KANZEON** is co-director Neil Cantwell, who will conduct a question and answer session following the screening of the movie. Additionally, Cantwell, a musician, author, and Japanese studies scholar, will give a live DJ performance remixing music from the **KANZEON** soundtrack at a special festival event (to be announced).

Another live performance in HCAF 2012 will be a short piano recital by **Lincoln Mayorga** preceding the Texas premiere of his film, **A SUITCASE FULL OF CHOCOLATE – The LIFE OF PIANIST SOFIA COSMA**. Mayorga's documentary recounts the life of Russian-Jewish pianist Sofia Cosma (1914-2011), Mayorga's close friend for more than thirty years. A modest woman of great personal character and the ultimate survivor, Cosma began her brilliant career as a prize winner in the Viennese International Piano Competition of 1933. She was on the brink of a major career when she was forced to flee the Austrian Anschluss because of her Russian-Jewish heritage. Cosma returned to her home in Latvia, but was arrested during Stalin's own brutal pogrom and sent to a Soviet labor camp. For seven years, she not only survived the wretched conditions and arduous work, but she also married a fellow prisoner and had a child. Just as amazing, she returned to the concert stage after being released. Ultimately, Cosma defected from the U.S.S.R. to the U.S. to gain greater freedom to pursue the long-delayed career she wanted and deserved, and even returned triumphantly to Moscow to perform with the Moscow Philharmonic in 1990.

A concert pianist himself, Mayorga will add to the documentary by playing several works key to Cosma's career, including selections by Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Brahms. Mayorga, a former staff pianist for Walt Disney Studios, contributed to the soundtracks of such motion pictures as **CHINATOWN**, **PETE'S DRAGON**, **THE COMPETITION**, **THE ROSE**, and **RAGTIME**, to name a few. As pianist, arranger, and conductor, Mayorga made many recordings with such artists as Johnny Mathis, Barbra Streisand, Mel Torme, Phil Ochs, Frank Zappa, and Quincy Jones.

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A SUITCASE FULL OF CHOCOLATE will screen at the **Museum of Fine Arts Houston Brown Auditorium on Thursday, November 8 (time TBA)**.

The fourth annual Houston Cinema Arts Festival is scheduled to take place from Nov. 7 – 11, 2012. Houston Cinema Arts Festival, a major program of Houston Cinema Arts Society (HCAS), capitalizes on the city's status as an international art city, collaborating with many of Houston's museums, art centers, theaters, and cultural institutions. Works are shown not only in traditional theatrical venues but also via interactive video installations, live music and film performances, and outdoor projections. Past festivals have featured guests such as **Isabella Rossellini, Tilda Swinton, John Turturro, Richard Linklater, Ethan Hawke, Alex Gibney, and Shirley MacLaine**. The 2011 festival drew tens of thousands of film enthusiasts and art lovers spread among over 40 screenings and events.

In addition to the films and live performances announced here, HCAF 2012 will announce its exciting roster of premieres, guest artists, and multimedia installations in the coming weeks, culminating with an unveiling of the complete program, including major new releases and special guests, on Oct. 23, 2012 at Hotel ICON, located in Downtown Houston. Passes for single and multiple days are available on the Houston Cinema Arts Society website at <http://cinemartsociety.org>. The full program schedule and individual tickets to the 2012 Houston Cinema Arts Festival will be available on the HCAS website on Oct. 24.

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ABOUT HOUSTON CINEMA ARTS SOCIETY (HCAS)

Houston Cinema Arts Society is a non-profit organization created in 2008. With the support of former Houston Mayor Bill White and the leadership of Franci Crane, HCAS organized and hosted the 2009, 2010 and 2011 Houston Cinema Arts Festival (HCAF), a groundbreaking and innovative arts festival featuring films and new media by and about artists in the visual, performing, and literary arts. The festival celebrates the vitality and diversity of the arts in Houston with the objective of enriching the city's film and arts community. HCAS is funded in part by the Crane Foundation, Levantine Entertainment, Houston First Corporation, The Brown Foundation, Inc., the Houston Film Commission and Houston Arts Alliance through the City of Houston. This project is also supported in part by an award from the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The fourth annual Houston Cinema Arts Festival will be held Nov. 7-11, 2012. For more information, please visit HCAS at www.cinemartsociety.org.