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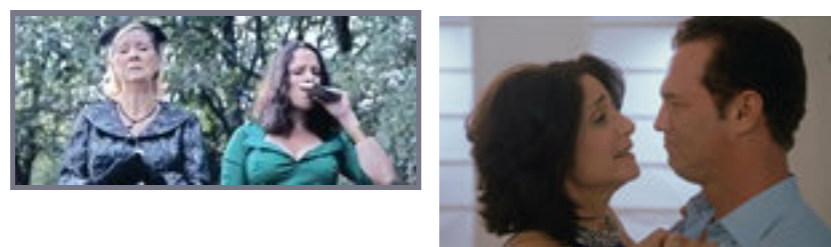
## 'Little' films in the spotlight

Forty years with the Asbury Short Film Concert

Posted April 5, 2023



Six Foot Scoundrel  
COURTESY ASBURY SHORTS



### WHERE & WHEN

- Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.
  - All seats \$15
  - Madison Theatre, Molloy University, 1000 Hempstead Ave., Rockville Centre.
- For tickets, visit [MadisonTheatreNY.org](http://MadisonTheatreNY.org), or call the box office at (516) 323-4444

By **Karen Bloom**

Roll out that red carpet. After a three-year pandemic-imposed hiatus, those “small” films are back on the local stage, as presented by the Asbury Short Film Concert.

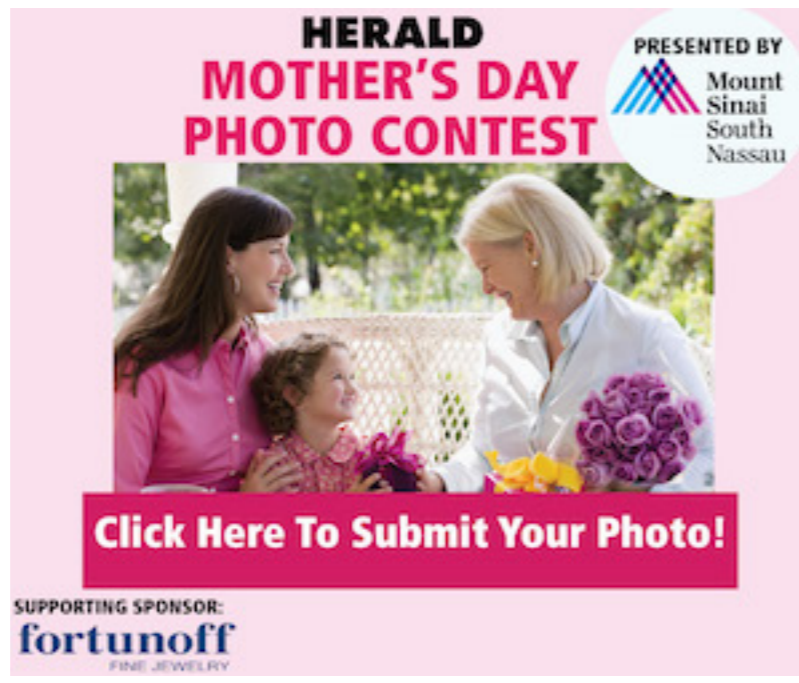
If you’re looking for that tentpole blockbuster, then Hollywood’s got you covered. But for those who crave films with a bit more heart and soul that strike an emotional chord, Asbury’s “concert” is for you. This national touring

showcase makes it way to the Madison Theatre on the Molloy University campus on Friday, April 21.

With a diverse, yet focused lineup — in many cases featuring up-and-coming filmmakers — the audience gets a look at smaller efforts you generally won’t find on the big screen.

And, yes, think “concert,” not festival.

“We present the best in comedy, drama, animation and the occasional documentary,” says Doug LeClaire, Asbury Shorts’ founder and director. “We call it a concert rather than a festival because there are no awards, no Q&A or panel discussions. It’s all about entertainment value for the audience.”



As in previous years, Asbury Shorts offers up an eclectic mix of films, what LeClaire describes as a “potpourri of the short film world.”

LeClaire, who’s been involved in commercial and film production for more than two decades, has been passionate about short films since his student days at New York Institute of Technology.

“Our No. 1 priority is the enjoyment of our audience,” he says. “We’re proud to provide an outlet for the filmmakers’s product. For us, it is all about the theatrical experience, showing these films to an audience. We give them the opportunity to experience great films on a big screen the way they were meant to be seen.”

He and his team cull these films from the film festival circuit — including the prestigious South by Southwest, Sundance, Toronto International Film Festival, and Tribeca Festival, among others.

“To get an award at one of these festivals is just as good as an Oscar nomination,” LeClaire says. “These young filmmakers are so happy to get that wreath. They collect them the way we would collect baseball cards back in the day.”

Think of this show as your personal film festival experience. As LeClaire puts it: “We’re bringing these films to folks who can’t get to film festivals.”

His formula certainly has resonated with its audience. Asbury Shorts is celebrating its 40th anniversary season with an ever-growing national presence.

“We certainly have demonstrated that we are entertaining and blessed to have fans that keep coming back,” LeClaire says, while also reaching out to new audiences.

The two-hour show moves along briskly. Up to a dozen films are on the program, ranging from the shortest of shorts at three minutes, to 20 minutes.

“A good short film is to the point, fast paced and most important of all is the ending,” LeClaire says. “It must make sense.”

And these films sure do stick that ending. Among the highlights, LeClaire points to “Six Foot Scoundrel,” a brief comedy about two women who suspect foul play regarding a man’s death. “A widow is mourning her deceased husband, but there’s more going on than you might think. It moves along very quickly, but there’s a great payoff at the end.”

Another standout is “The Waiting Room,” produced, directed and written by former Nassau County film commissioner Debra Markowitz. The multiple festival award-winning 12-minute dramatic comedy reunites a woman and her ex-husband in heaven.

“It’s a performance piece with smart dialogue,” LeClaire notes. “The ensemble cast does a great job.”

As for the rest, well, you’ll have to attend and see for yourself. LeClaire doesn’t like to reveal too much, promising some “unannounced surprises” in celebration of Asbury’s 40th anniversary.

This is the Madison Theatre’s 10th year hosting Asbury, and LeClaire is grateful to have finally returned to what he considers their Long Island home.

“We’re very heartened by the audience at Madison,” he says. “It’s been a terrific relationship and we welcome everyone back after the hiatus, in true Asbury style. To celebrate our 40 years on Long Island means a lot. It’s where the show was born, and so to be here is extra special to us.”



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