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Writer/Contact: **Diane Murray**, 706/542-5038, [murrayd@uga.edu](mailto:murrayd@uga.edu)

## **Robert Osborne announces special guests for 2009 film festival**

Athens, Ga. – Actors Talia Coppola Shire, Fred Willard and Michael Hitchcock will join director Guy Hamilton, film restoration expert James C. Katz, film noir specialist Alan Rode and Turner Classic Movies' vice president Tom Brown as special guests at Robert Osborne's Classic Film Festival, March 19-22, at the Classic Center in Athens.

“Our guests this year include two Academy Award winners, as well as other amazing industry veterans,” said Osborne, host of Turner Classic Movies and columnist for *The Hollywood Reporter*. “We are honored to welcome them all to Athens.”

Talia Coppola Shire's career includes acting, producing and directing credits. She has appeared in a variety of films since the late 1960's including the *Rocky* and *Godfather* series. She had a starring role in *The Godfather* which will be shown at the festival on Saturday, March 21.

Fred Willard will join the festival this year as co-host and festival guest for the screening of *Funny Girl* which will be shown Friday evening, March 20. Willard is known for his improvisational comedy skills and his roles in the Christopher Guest mockumentary films *This is Spinal Tap*, *Waiting for Guffman*, *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind* and the latest Guest film, *For Your Consideration* which will be shown at the festival on March 21. He also received three Emmy nominations for his recurring role on the TV series in *Everybody Loves Raymond*.

Michael Hitchcock has appeared in the four most popular Christopher Guest directed films, *Waiting for Guffman*, *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind* and this year's film festival pick, *For Your Consideration*. In addition to his film and television work as an actor, he has served as a producer and writer for MADTV.

Director Guy Hamilton was at the helm of four James Bond films, *Goldfinger*, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *Live and Let Die* and *the Man with the Golden Gun*. Hamilton's first Bond film, *Goldfinger*, is the film festival's opening film screening on Thursday, March 19.

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*E.T.* star Dee Wallace will greet the festival audience through a specially taped interview for the festival's closing film on Sunday, March 22. Wallace starred as Elliot's mother in the Steven Spielberg film. She also had key roles in popular cult films *The Hills Have Eyes* and *The Howling* and appeared in *The Stepford Wives*. Wallace has appeared in more than 85 films.

Fans of the festival's free Friday matinee will see a restored version of *Rear Window*. The film screens on Friday, March 20 at 4:30 p.m. Festival guest James C. Katz is the man responsible for the magnificent restoration of the film. Among his film preservation and reconstruction projects are *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Spartacus*, *My Fair Lady*, and Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*.

*Sunset Boulevard*, a film noir classic, directed and co-written by Billy Wilder will screen on Saturday, March 21. Alan Rode, film noir historian and specialist, is set to discuss this highly celebrated film which stars William Holden and Gloria Swanson. A winner of three Academy Awards, this classic is often cited as one of the most noteworthy films of American cinema.

The groundbreaking 1933 film *King Kong* will be screened on Friday, March 20. Turner Classic Movies' Tom Brown will discuss the film and the pioneering special effects using stop motion models and animatronics. Brown oversees all original programming at TCM.

Guests will appear on stage after screenings for a candid discussion with hosts Osborne and Willard and members of the audience. Guests present on Friday morning, March 20, will appear on a panel discussion, "Film Festival Fare - Independent Film-Making and Its Influence on Hollywood" with Osborne. The panel discussion is free, open to all and will take place at 10:30 a.m. at the Classic Center Theater.

The movie lineup for the festival includes *Goldfinger*, *King Kong*, *Rear Window*, *Funny Girl*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *For Your Consideration*, *The Godfather* and *E.T.*

"As 2009 marks the fifth anniversary of the festival we look forward to the audience sharing in our celebration of these classic films with our highly acclaimed and notable guests," said Pamela Kohn, festival director.

For the four day festival, the 2,000-seat Classic Center theater will be transformed into a world-class movie palace with the installation of a motion picture screen and state-of-the-art 35mm projection and sound systems.

"It's an exciting adventure to see these films the way they were meant to be seen," said Osborne. "The big screen gives a different dimension and vitality to these extraordinary films."

All films, with the exception of the Friday matinee showing of *Rear Window*, will require a paid ticket for admission. The matinee will be free and open to the public, but requires tickets that can be picked up at the Classic Center box office.

Festival tickets can be purchased separately or as a package at the Classic Center box office, online at <http://www.classiccenter.com>, or by calling 800/918-6393. Ticket prices are \$10 per individual film or \$60 for a pass to all films and panel discussions. Students and UGA Alumni Association members can purchase individual film tickets for \$8 or a pass to all films and the panel discussion for \$45 with valid identification. Special \$5 tickets for children 12 and under will be available at the box office for Sunday's showing of *E.T.*

Robert Osborne's Classic Film Festival is an annual nonprofit event of the UGA Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. Nate Kohn, professor of telecommunication at Grady, serves as executive producer of the festival.

For more information, see [www.robertosbornefilmfestival.com](http://www.robertosbornefilmfestival.com). Note that the guest list is subject to change.

Established in 1915, the UGA Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication offers seven undergraduate majors including advertising, broadcast news, magazines, newspapers, public relations, publication management and telecommunication arts. The college offers two graduate degrees, and is home to WNEG-TV, the Knight Chair in Health and Medical Journalism and the Peabody Awards, internationally recognized as one of the most prestigious prizes for excellence in electronic media. For more information, see [www.grady.uga.edu](http://www.grady.uga.edu).

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