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**18<sup>th</sup> HAVANA FILM FESTIVAL NEW YORK March 30 - April 7, 2017**  
**Celebrates the Diverse Voices of Cuban and Latin American Cinema**

**HFFNY Pays Tribute to Masters Juan Padrón and Eliseo Subiela**

**Twelve Films Competing for the Havana Star Prize**

**NEW YORK, MARCH, 13, 2017** -The 18<sup>th</sup> Havana Film Festival New York (HFFNY) showcases the diversity of Latino voices and stories in a program that includes over 35 films. This year, HFFNY pays homage to one of Cuba's foremost forces in animation and storytelling, Juan Padrón, and the late Argentine director Eliseo Subiela. The festival continues its tradition of presenting the history of Cuban rhythms with a cinematic retrospective on the music, religion and dance of the island. Plus, our audience can look forward to screenings of critically acclaimed films, many in their World, US and NY debut accompanied by panel discussions, Q&A sessions, and other special events hosted by leading figures in Latino cinema.

The Havana Film Festival New York, a project of The American Friends of the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba (AFLFC) takes place **March 30 – April 7, 2017** and includes films from Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama, Spain, United States and Venezuela.

*“Our 18<sup>th</sup> festival reinforces the mission of AFLFC by continuing to build cultural bridges between the U.S. and Cuba through art projects,”* says Carole Rosenberg, President of AFLFC. *“It is a honor to have such an outstanding line-up of Cuban and Latin American films and filmmakers here to share their cinematic stories with our audience.”*

Our ever-popular kick-off event **First Fridays!** with **The Bronx Museum of the Arts** will take place at **Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, March 24 at 6pm**. The program, free and open to the public, begins with a reception, followed by the screening of Pavel Giroud and JuanMa Villar's ***Playing Lecuona***, a documentary about celebrity Cuban composer and pianist Ernesto Lecuona. The film explores Lecuona's musical impact in an exceptionally inventive way- through the lenses of three contemporary megastars: Chucho Valdés, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and Michel Camilo. Following the movie, a musical performance by **Contino y Los Habaneros**, named by NPR/WNYC as Manhattan's best band in 2015, with music by DJ ASHO.

*“This year, HFFNY takes to the streets! Our main slate of screenings takes place at some of New York's most important venues. Our line-up features stories notable in their honesty, told with an urgency that leaves one with an emotional imprint,”* says HFFNY Artistic Director Diana Vargas.

HFFNY will be in Manhattan at the **DGA Theater** (March 30 & April 7), **SVA Theatre** (March 31-April 2), **New York Film Academy** (April 3-4), **The Clemente Soto Velez Culture & Educational Center** (April 3, 5, & 6), and **AMC Loews 34<sup>th</sup> Street** (April 5-6). Screenings in Queens take place at the **Museum of the Moving Image** (March 31-April 1). All foreign language films are subtitled in English.

**Thursday, March 30, starting at 5:30pm**, the Directors Guild of America Theater (DGA) once again hosts HFFNY Opening Night & Red Carpet for its 18<sup>th</sup> edition with the New York premiere of ***Esteban***, the story of a young boy who, with no resources but his raw talent, pursues his dream of becoming a pianist. The film, featuring original music by Afro-Latin jazz superstar Chucho Valdés, has won the hearts of audiences and critics alike on the festival circuit. **Chucho Valdés will be present.**

**Friday, April 7**, the 18<sup>th</sup> HFFNY closes with the NY premiere of Canadian Ron Chapman's musical documentary *The Forbidden Shore*, a cinematic portrait of Cuba's people, culture, politics experienced as never before through the incredible diversity of its music. Over the course of its 40+ performances and interviews by the island's top artists, a musical history emerges, a stunning chronicle of the pulse, rhythm and the very heartbeat of this nation.

**Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup> 3:00pm** at the SVA Theatre, HFFNY presents the NY premiere of *Salsipuedes*. Originally designed as a TV series inspired by the work of the great Panamanian singer Rubén Blades, the film was Panama's official entry to this year's Academy Awards. At **5:00pm** the program continues with a Uruguayan: *El Candidato/The Candidate*, director Daniel Hendler delivers a darkly comic tale of a campaign run in an effort to get voiceless millionaire Martin Marchand (Diego de Paula) elected to office. At **7:15pm**, José María Cabral, widely considered one of the Dominican Republic's top directors, will present his newest film *Carpinteros/ Woodpeckers*, the first from that country to enter the world competition at the Sundance Film Festival. Cabral will be present for a Q&A following the screening. The last screening of the day is the U.S. premiere of *Ya no es antes / Not Like Before at 9:30pm* stars the darling on-screen couple Isabel Santos and Luis Alberto García, in this tropical romance directed by Lester Hamlet.

HFFNY will begin their screenings at the **Museum of the Moving Image in Queens on Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00pm** with the 1986 groundbreaking film *Hombre mirando al Sudeste / Man Facing Southeast* as part of the tribute to one of our most cherished Latin American filmmakers, Argentinean director **Eliseo Subiela**, who passed away last December.

**Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>** HFFNY starts the day at SVA Theatre **12:30pm** with an important selection of films from the **Universidad del Cine de Buenos Aires**, a school that has played a central role in creating and supporting the new generation of Argentine filmmakers, followed by a Q&A with co-founders María Marta Antin and Mario Santos. This program is free and open to the public. At **3:00pm** the NY premiere of *El buen cristiano / The Good Christian*, an eye-opening documentary offers a new perspective on the intervening roles of God, church, and state in the genocide of Guatemala's Ixchil people in the early 80s and the trials taking place today. Director Izabel Acevedo will be present for a Q&A. At **5:20pm**, HFFNY screens an encore of its Opening Night film, *Esteban*. Continuing at **7:35pm**, is the NY premiere of *Jeffrey* plus a Q&A with the director. Described as "a true collaboration between subject and storyteller," *Jeffrey* occupies a space between documentary and fiction, telling the story of a 12-year-old boy from the streets of Santo Domingo who dreams of hip-hop/reggaeton stardom. At **9:15pm** HFFNY screens the US premiere of *El soborno del cielo*, a black comedy about religious intransigence by prolific Colombian director Lisandro Duque, who will join us after for a Q&A with actor Germán Jaramillo.

At the **Museum of the Moving Image**, we start **Saturday, April 1 at 2:15pm** with the NY premiere of *El Amparo*, a film based on the true story covering the unsettling deaths faced by the fishing village of El Amparo, Venezuela. Then, at **4:30pm**, is the US premiere of *Fátima o el Parque de la Fraternidad / Fátima*, based on the story of the same name by the prestigious Cuban writer Miguel Barnet. Barnet will be present for Q&A. HFFNY follows with the NY premiere of Cuban maestro Fernando Pérez's latest film *Últimos días en La Habana / Last Days in Havana* at **7:00pm** including a Q&A with actor Patricio Wood. Pérez took home the *Special Jury* award at the *International Festival of New Latin American Cinema* in Havana last December.

**Sunday, April 2** beginning at **12:30pm** at the **SVA Theatre**, HFFNY pays **tribute to the International School of Film and Television in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba (EICTV)** celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with a selection of shorts from some of its most distinguished alumni followed by a Q&A with EICTV's new director Susana Molina. At **2:45pm**, the NY premiere, *Salsipuedes*. At **4:45pm** we have a Chilean comedy, *Vida de Familia/ Family Life*, the collaboration between Chilean directors Alicia Scherson and

Cristián Jiménez, an adaptation by writer Alejandro Zambra of his own story. At **7:00pm** the NY premiere of *Últimos días en La Habana / Last Days in Havana*. The weekend ends at **9:00pm**, with the US premiere of the Ecuadorian drama *Translúcido / Translucid*, a transmedia experience that pushes viewers to ask themselves what they would do if given only one more day to live. Director Leo Zelig and actor Roberto Manrique join us after the screening for a Q&A.

**Monday, April 3** HFFNY is at the **New York Film Academy**. At **4:30pm** there's a special program on Cuban music, *Historias de la música cubana/Stories of Cuban Music*, featuring the U.S. premieres of two documentaries: Rebeca Chávez's *Decir con feeling* and Patricia Ramos' *Ampárame! La Religiosidad en la música cubana*, preceded by an introduction by the Director of the Cuban Film Archives Luciano Castillo. At **6:45pm** HFFNY remembers the late Argentine director Eliseo Subiela with a screening of *El lado oscuro del corazón/The Dark Side of the Heart*, a masterpiece of poetry and magical realism in which a narcissistic poet trades words for food and falls for a prostitute who can fly. At **9:00pm**, HFFNY screens the NY premiere of Enrique (Kiki) Álvarez's newest docu-fiction hybrid *Sharing Stella*, an evocative meditation on changing relations between the US and Cuba as experienced by Cuban actors prepping for a performance of "A Streetcar Named Desire." The film will be preceded by Claudia Muñiz Pérez's short film, *Con sana alegría/With Wholesome Joy*. Both Álvarez and Muñiz lead a Q&A following the screenings.

**Tuesday, April 4**, at the **New York Film Academy**, beginning at **3:00pm**, the presentation of *Ya no es antes / Not Like Before*. At **5:00pm**, the NY premiere of *El Techo / On the Roof*, a fresh Cuban film about three kids trying to find themselves and their futures on the rooftops of today's Havana. Director Patricia Ramos will be present for a Q&A to follow. At **7:15pm** we pay tribute to guest of honor **Juan Padrón** and screen his cult classic film *Vampiros en La Habana/Vampires in Havana*, who joins us after for a Q&A. At **8:45pm**, *Vida de Familia/ Family Life*.

**Wednesday, April 5** HFFNY screens its main program at the **AMC Loews 34<sup>th</sup> Street**, beginning at **1:00pm** with *El buen cristiano/The Good Christian* followed by Q&A with the director. At **3:00pm**, *El Amparo*; **5:00pm**, *Carpinteros/Woodpeckers*, and at **7:00pm** *El Candidato/The Candidate*. At **9:15pm**, the US premiere of *Fátima o el parque de la fraternidad / Fátima*, followed by a Q&A with director Jorge Perugorría and actor Carlos Enrique Almirante.

**Thursday, April 6** HFFNY returns to the **AMC Loews 34<sup>th</sup> Street**, beginning at **1:00pm** with *Jeffrey*; continuing at **3:00pm** with *Sharing Stella and Con sana alegría/With Wholesome Joy*; **5:00pm**, *Playing Lecuona*; **7:20pm** with *El techo/On the Roof* and **9:20pm** with *Translúcido/Translucid*.

### Special Events

HFFNY honors **Juan Padrón**, the father of Cuban feature film animation. To celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, the festival screens three of his most beloved films and partners with **The Clemente** to exhibit a collection of drawings and paintings he created over the course of his illustrious career. On **Monday, April 3 at 6:30pm** at **The Clemente** there will be a reception and art exhibition opening "**Juan Padrón: Havana to New York**." In conjunction with the exhibition, HFFNY will screen Padrón's cult classic *Vampiros en La Habana/Vampires in Havana* at the **New York Film Academy** at **7:15pm** on **Tuesday, April 4**. Its sexy sequel, *Más vampiros en La Habana/More Vampires in Havana* at **The Clemente** at **7:00pm** on **Wednesday, April 5**, and kid-friendly *Elpidio Valdés* at **The Clemente** at **6:30pm** on **Thursday, April 6**. All presentations at **The Clemente** are free and open to the public.

Compelled by the untimely death of one of our most beloved directors, **Eliseo Subiela**, HFFNY screens two of his cinematic masterpieces: *Hombre mirando al sudeste/Man Facing Southeast* at **7:00pm** at the **Museum of the Moving Image** on **Friday, March 31** and *El Lado oscuro del corazón/The Dark Side of the Heart* at **6:45pm** at the **New York Film Academy** on **Monday, April 3**.

HFFNY Venues:

- **Bronx Museum First Friday HFFNY Kick-Off at Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture:** March 24, 2017
- **DGA Theater:** March 30 & April 7, 2017
- **Museum of the Moving Image:** March 31 to April 1, 2017
- **SVA Theatre:** March 31 to April 2, 2017
- **The NY Film Academy:** April 3 & 4, 2017
- **Art exhibition opening & screenings at The Clemente:** April 3, 5, 6, 2017
- **AMC Loews at 34th St:** April 5 & 6, 2017

The presenting sponsor of the 18<sup>th</sup> HFFNY is NBC/Telemundo 47. Additional sponsorship is provided by El Diario La Prensa, Cuba Travel Network, Roger Smith Hotel, Habanero Films, AMC Independent, New York Film Academy, The Clemente Soto Velez Cultural and Educational Center, Aguijón Films, DGCine, Funglode, Horns to Havana, Ron Barceló, Lipariri Photography, OnCuba, EnRola TV, QueensLatino.com, Playa Betty's, Cinefuegos, Matiz Latin Cuisine, Publimax, and Giovanni Quinche. HFFNY is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Honorable Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York State legislators and supported, in part, by public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs in collaboration with the City Council.

**About The American Friends of the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba (AFLFC)**

AFLFC is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Since 2000, we have been working with our partner, the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba (LFC), a non-governmental, autonomous, non-profit art and cultural institution in Havana, founded in 1995. Together we have been building cultural bridges between the U.S. and Cuba through art programs that include visual and performing arts, educational and cultural exchange, professional development opportunities for artists, art professionals and students, and the annual Havana Film Festival NY. We inspire artists, assist researchers, disseminate art information, provide instruction on new technology and software, excite audiences and facilitate communication between the art communities in both countries. We offer unique cultural travel programs to the island that expose American travelers to Cuba's cultural riches while generating meaningful personal connections.

**About the Havana Film Festival New York (HFFNY)**

AFLFC's flagship project, HFFNY, collaborates with *Havana's International Festival of New Latin American Cinema* to introduce its audience to prominent and emerging filmmakers by showcasing the latest award-winning films and classics from and about Cuba, Latin America, the Caribbean and Latinos in the U.S. HFFNY seeks to cultivate audience-artist dialogue through panel discussions designed to give a behind-the-scenes look at an industry that continues to gain global recognition. The festival program offers directors, actors, and producers an opportunity to exchange ideas, enriches and expands the vision of Latino culture, and provides a multi-cultural experience for a diverse audience.

For interviews with HFFNY's directors, guests and for high-resolution images, please contact HFFNY Melany Walter or Isamar Checo at [press@hffny.com](mailto:press@hffny.com) / 212.687.2146

**Detailed information about all festival programs available at [www.hffny.com](http://www.hffny.com)**

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