

Camera! Lights! Action!

Curtain set to rise on inaugural Vaughan film festival

by Rob Lorusso

You may have noticed a few more people around you talking film the last six months. If you haven't figured out why yet, there's no better time than now to get up to speed. If local filmmakers and festival directors for the Vaughan Film Festival, Antonio Ienco and Mark Pagliaroli, have their way, this year's inaugural event will only be the catalyst for bigger things to come.

The Vaughan Film Festival will showcase international short films and, in essence, art forms of all genres. "Our mandate is to create a platform for creative artists and film makers so they can have the opportunity to let their talent shine," says Pagliaroli.

This year's festival takes place on April 18 and 19, with the first day dedicated to movie screenings inside the Vaughan Cineplex Colossus Theatres. Starting at 6pm, movie lovers can enjoy watching films selected from more than 40 submitted. Submissions have come in from Canada, the USA, Mexico, Germany, the Philippines and Iraq, to name a few.

The second night features The Grand Social, a red carpet affair at Riviera Parque with the highlights being the VFF Awards presentation, an art exhibit and live performances by musicians and dancers. Pagliaroli and Ienco will also present a scholarship to two lucky students, assisting in their post-secondary education in the arts.

Hopes are high for a successful launch to the festival. Over 1,000 people are expected to attend, and the quality of the short films and exposure granted to this year's crop of filmmakers and actors can only do wonders for the quality of films screened next year. It's not unprecedented for a film festival to increase the profile of cities. The VFF could do for Vaughan what Sundance has done for Utah.

The focus is squarely on this year however and the pair, as well as their



Festival directors Mark Pagliaroli, left, and Antonio Ienco

hard working committee has helped invigorate the local arts community. Their Twitter campaign, for example, has seen people like *Entertainment Tonight's* Rick Campinelli and Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua photographed with the VFF's yellow #talkingfilm word hashtag.

The duo know firsthand as filmmakers

(they are the brains behind local film company Reel Film Pictures) how important it is for artists to have a platform for their work and what that can then do for their careers if seen by the right people. Only time will tell which future stars can say they got their big push at the Vaughan Film Festival.

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