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More than a third of the films at Cucalorus have N.C. ties

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When the Cucalorus Film Festival begins Wednesday, acclaimed independent films from 17 countries will be at the fingertips of festivalgoers ready to hop from screening to screening. Still, with their sights set on bringing world cinema to screens across town, festival director Dan Brawley and his team at Cucalorus aren't ones to forget about the homegrown productions cultivated in Wilmington and across the state.



James Kyson plays Taylor and Lisa Goldstein Kirsch is Autumn in UNCW prof Terry Linehan's film "Don't Know Yet." Courtesy photo

"We really focus on supporting emerging and local artists," Brawley said. "It is a balancing act between supporting regional artists and putting on a significant showcase of international cinema."

This year, of the 207 films Cucalorus will screen, the festival will host 17 feature films and documentaries, 49 short films and 10 music videos that hold connections to the Tar Heel State.

One prominent screening with Port City ties is "Don't Know Yet," the feature-film directorial debut from University of North Carolina Wilmington film professor Terry Linehan. "Don't Know Yet," which was chosen as an early selection of the festival in September, will be shown at 4:15 p.m. Thursday.

Linehan, who has previously directed short films, describes "Don't Know Yet" as a "feel-good road movie about a heartbroken man ('Heroes' alum James Kyson) who goes on a road trip with no destination in mind and allows the hitchhikers he picks up to choose his direction. It is a love letter to North Carolina."

Filming took place last summer for 17 days in Wilmington and five days in the North Carolina mountains, using a crew of current and former UNCW film students and with the support of several of Linehan's fellow faculty members.

Wilmington-based actors in the movie include David Andrews ("Fair Game," "The Conspirator"), Bill Ladd, Shane Callahan, Tammy Arnold, Nate Panning, Amber Sheets, Cullen Moss and Don Baker.

Last month, "Don't Know Yet" had its world premiere at the New York City Independent Film Festival, where Linehan said he was pleased to see family and friends of the cast and crew fill up a little theater right off Times Square.

But it is at Cucalorus, Linehan said, that he believes his film will have its greatest impact.

"Wilmington is the most important place to screen the film because this is where the idea originated," Linehan said. "The crew of UNCW film students are here and almost all the actors are local actors. So being able to show it here, where all they have to do

is walk downtown to watch the film in a comfy theater, is a big thank you to them."

Here are some films with local connections joining "Don't Know Yet" at Cucalorus.

'A Short History of Decay' Starring former Wilmington resident and fan-favorite Linda Lavin, this dark comedy was filmed locally last fall and made its debut at the Hamptons International Film Festival just a few weeks ago. It follows a young writer (Bryan Greenberg) who returns home to care for his ailing parents. 7:15 p.m. Nov. 14 at Thalian Hall

'Building a Better Wilmington: Giving and Volunteering in the Port City' Produced by UNCW undergraduate and graduate students, this short film focuses on how citizens from all walks of life aim to better the local community through volunteering. Part of the Bog Bean Shorts block 1:30 p.m. Nov. 17 at City Stage

'Brew Your Own' This charming short follows amateur home brewer Zach Boylston as he explores the craft beer movement in Wilmington. Part of the Okavango Shorts block showing 10:15 a.m. Nov. 14 Sunday at Jengo's Playhouse

'Irene' Director and UNCW professor Maurice M. Martinez has become a staple in the local film community with his documentaries "Colored White Boy" and "The Piano Entertainer: Stompin' Grenoldo Frazier," about the local musician. At Cucalorus, he will screen footage from his "work-in-progress" film "Irene," about an impoverished African-American woman in rural Pender County. 11 a.m. Nov. 17 Jengo's Playhouse

'Change' Ever wonder what happens to the money that passes through your hands? This short film, co-directed by local theater actor Jason Hatfield, follows the journeys of a quarter through different situations. Part of the Pennywort Shorts block, 10:30 a.m. Nov. 16 at City Stage

'How to Sharpen Pencils' Following through on its literal title, this short from UNCW alum and frequent Cucalorus entrant Kenneth Price follows the world's leading pencil sharpener as he talks us through the process of sharpening those dull pencils by hand. Part of the Okavango Shorts block, 10:45 a.m. Nov. 14 at Jengo's Playhouse

'Finders, Keepers, Losers ...' Co-director LJ Woodard of Wilmington's Performance Club children's theater is in the festival with a charming short about a group of kids who find a trillion dollar bill on the last day of school and the futures they dream up for themselves. Part of the Pennywort Shorts block, 10:30 a.m. Nov. 16 at City Stage

'Payback' When twins disappear during summer school, two students set out to find them in this short film from Michael Rosander, a professional magician and actor from Wilmington. Part of the Pennywort Shorts block, 10:30 a.m. Nov. 16 at City Stage

'Loves Her Gun' An award-winner at the Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival in Birmingham, Ala., earlier this year, this film follows a woman (played by New Hanover High School alum Trieste Kelly Dunn) who becomes consumed with gun rights in an effort to protect herself after being attacked. 4 p.m. Nov. 17 at City Stage

'Profiles in Literacy' A look at four Wilmington citizens who, with the help of the Cape Fear Literacy Council, learn to overcome their illiteracy and live better lives. Part of the Bog Bean Shorts block, 1:30 p.m. Nov. 17 at TheatreNOW)

'The Heroes of Arvine Place' Wilmington actor Cullen Moss stars in this feature (shot in Florida) about a struggling children's book author. Directed by former Wilmington resident Damien Lahey ('Cocaine Angel'), and featuring a cameo by another former local, Robert Longstreet ('Take Shelter,' 'Pineapple Express'). 1:30 Nov. 16 at City

Stage

'Skinny Joe' Former Wilmington resident Julia Tasker's short is about a woman in Depression-era Mississippi looking for an Indian medicine man who she hopes can treat her mother's epilepsy. Part of the Okefenokee Shorts block, 7:30 p.m. Nov. 15 at Jengo's Playhouse

'The Surgeon General: On Drugs' Local comedian Johnny Gray imagines the Surgeon General sharing cigarettes and cough syrup with a random young woman. Part of the Atchafalaya Shorts block, 10 p.m. Nov. 16 at Thalian Hall

'Bound by Sea' Local surf legend Jack Viorel stands at the center of this world-premiere documentary, which looks at his charitable contributions and journey to finding stability in his own home. 10 a.m. Nov. 16 at Thalian Hall

Music videos by bands with local connections will be shown during the Visual/Sound/Walls exhibition. Rapper Fuzz Jaxx will screen his video for "Lyrics on Arrival," directed by Thomas "Jones" Wortham, and roots rockers Onward, Soldiers will debut their video for "Nighttime Sky," directed by Mohit Jaswal. Former Wilmington band The Love Language will screen a video for "Calm Down," directed by Jonny Gillette, and Kenneth Price is back with a video for "Call It Home" from electronic soul duo The Foreign Exchange, whose lead music maker, Nicolay, lives in Wilmington. 7:45 p.m. Nov. 16 at Ziggy's by the Sea

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