

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



**27<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PAN AFRICAN FILM AND ARTS FESTIVAL TO SCREEN ARETHA FRANKLIN'S *AMAZING GRACE* CONCERT AT DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA ON OPENING NIGHT FEBRUARY 7**

**America's Largest Black Film Festival To Exhibit Over 170 Black Films and 100 Fine Artists From February 7 Through February 18 at the Cinemark Rave 15 Theatres and Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza in Los Angeles**

***Festival Reflects on 27-Year Journey of Storytelling With 'AmPAFFify' Campaign***



**Photo Courtesy of Amazing Grace LLC  
(Click the image to download high res)**

**January 15, 2019 (Los Angeles, CA)** -- The [Pan African Film & Arts Festival](#) announced that it will celebrate its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Opening Night with a screening of Aretha Franklin's cherished *Amazing Grace* concert documentary at the Directors Guild of America. The festival, which presents an impressive slate of over 170 new Black films from the US and around the world and exhibits more than 100 fine artists and unique craftspeople, starts on Thursday, February 7 through Monday, February 18 at the [Cinemark Rave 15 Theatres](#) (3650 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd) and the adjacent [Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza](#) in Los Angeles, California. Aretha Franklin's spine-tingling and uplifting *Amazing Grace*, produced by Alan Elliott, was originally directed by Sydney Pollack in 1972 at New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in

Los Angeles, California. The film, a rare gem in the crown of the late musical genius, has not been seen before now due to technical and rights issues.

**“It’s such a blessing to open the festival this year with *Amazing Grace*,”** expressed PAFF Co-Founder and Actor Danny Glover. **“Aretha Franklin is a rare treasure. To be graced with this film is an honor and a testament to the perseverance and long-standing prominence of the festival’s impact.”**

Over the past 26 years, The [Pan African Film & Arts Festival](#) has sought to increase cultural awareness and bridge diverse communities from the African diaspora by providing a creative safe space for the development and expression of the Black narrative through film, poetry, art and music. This year, PAFF will **“amPAFFify”** amplify and ignite the Pan-African experience through next generation storytelling.

**“27 years ago, we made a political, cultural, social and intellectual decision to get involved in film festivals as it became clear that a platform to showcase Black films was needed,”** shared Ayuko Babu, Executive Director and Co-Founder of PAFF. **“It’s been a privilege to be a platform for many filmmakers and talent to share their unique stories through the lens of their own experiences, visions and creative artistry. The on-going challenge is... who’s story gets told on the small screen and big screen? The Pan African Film Festival is a way of showing distributors the stories that matter to people of color.”**

**PAFF’s** legacy is evidenced by the success of storytellers and talent who’ve contributed works to the festival such as Will Packer, Kevin Hart, Jamie Foxx, Ryan Coogler, Berry Jenkins, Taraji P. Henson, Ava Duvernay, and countless others. The program’s platform exists proudly as a conduit for the careers of thousands of talented actors, directors, producers and executives; many of which have gone on to win the industry’s top honors including the Golden Globes, Emmy’s and Oscars. As an official Oscar-qualifying festival, many of PAFF’s short and live-action films will be up for consideration for an Academy Award.

To further **“amPAFFify”** PAFF’s proud history, the organization recently launched an **“#IAMPAFF” Meme Generator**, designed to allow festival supporters to share their own stories on social media. **Festival supporters can join in the fun by creating a meme to tell their story at [paff.org/iampaff](http://paff.org/iampaff).**

This year’s program features a robust schedule including the Filmmakers Brunch, ARTFest, PAFF Institute Panels, StudentFest, LOL Comedy Series, Children’s Fest, SpokenWord Fest, Seniors’ Connection and much more. Individual screening tickets and all festival passes can be purchased at [paff.org/tickets](http://paff.org/tickets). Group sales discounts are also available. For more information, visit the PAFF website at [paff.org](http://paff.org) or call 310-337-4737.

## OPENING NIGHT FILM SCREENING

**[AMAZING GRACE](#)** (US)

**Directed By:** Sydney Pollack

**Date:** Thursday, February 7

**Time:** 6PM Red Carpet | 7:30 PM Screening

**Location:** Directors Guild of America, DGA Theater Complex, 7920 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90047

**Synopsis:** In 1972, Aretha Franklin, the undisputed Queen of Soul, brought producer Jerry Wexler, her backup singers, the Reverend James Cleveland, and the legendary Atlantic Records rhythm section to The New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Watts, California, to record a gospel music double-album before an enthusiastic live audience. The album, “Amazing Grace”, went on to become the top-selling gospel record of all time, Aretha Franklin’s most successful album, and one of her most beloved works. Few realized that the sessions that produced the album “Amazing Grace” which are certainly among one of the most exciting musical events ever to take place in a church, had also been filmed. But, due to technical problems and conflicts over rights, the electrifying events had not been seen; until now!

**Stars:** Aretha Franklin, Reverend James Cleveland, Reverend C.L. Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Bernard Purdie, Chuck Rainey, Clara Ward, Mother Ward, Sydney Pollack, Charlie Watts and Mick Jagger.

Preview Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA6IBW3R\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA6IBW3R_M)

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## ABOUT THE PAN AFRICAN FILM & ARTS FESTIVAL

Established in 1992, the Pan African Film & Arts Festival (PAFF) - a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization - has remained dedicated to showcasing a broad spectrum of Black creative works; particularly, those that reinforce positive images and help to advance cultures, races and lifestyles. PAFF also serves as a vehicle to initiate dialogue on the important issues of our time and aides in the promotion of cultural understanding between peoples of African descent.

Now in its 27th year, the 12-day PAFF experience will feature 100+ fine artists and 150+ new films from over 40 countries within five continents and in 26 languages. This annual exhibition of film, art, culture and creative expression is the largest Black film festival and the largest Black History Month celebration in the U.S. PAFF attracts a diverse global audience hailing from the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, Canada, South America and the South Pacific, which translates into over 90K art fest attendees, 40K film enthusiasts and 5000 students, annually.

The 27th Annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival is directed by Hollywood veterans Danny Glover (The Color Purple, Proud Mary), Ja'Net DuBois (Good Times) and Ayuko Babu (Executive Director), and will take place Thursday, February 7 - Monday, February 18 at the Cinemark Rave 15 Theatres/Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza (3650 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd) in Los Angeles, California. For more details and ticket information, visit [www.PAFF.org](http://www.PAFF.org).

*Our Stories | Our Journey | Our Future*

# AMPAFFIED

2019 PAN AFRICAN FILM AND ARTS FESTIVAL

**February 7 - 18, 2019 | Los Angeles, CA**  
 Cinemark 15 BHC | Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza

THE 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**PAN AFRICAN**  
 FILM+ ARTS FESTIVAL

For more information or tickets visit [www.paff.org](http://www.paff.org)

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