

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 5, 2009

CONTACT: Jasmyne Cannick, (323) 295-1706, publicity@paff.org

MEDIA ADVISORY

**BLAIR UNDERWOOD TO KICK OFF
17TH ANNUAL PAN AFRICAN FILM AND ARTS FESTIVAL**

12 Day Festival Takes Place February 5-16

**Festival to Open with Star Studded Red Carpet Screening of
South African Drama 'Jerusalema'**

WHAT:

17th Annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival Opening Night Gala Featuring a Screening of the Critically Acclaimed South African Drama "JERUSALEMA"

WHO:

Blair Underwood, Los Angeles **Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa**, Los Angeles City Councilman **Herb Wesson**, Los Angeles Councilwoman **Jan Perry**, PAFF Co-Founder **Ja'Net Dubois** ("Good Times"), **Marla Gibbs** ("227"), **South African Consul General Jeanette Ndhlovu**, **Omar Benson Miller**, Director **Ralph Zinman** ("Jerusalema")

CONFIRMED CELEBRITY GUESTS

Sheryl Lee Ralph, **J. Anthony Brown**, **Vanessa Williams** ("Soul Food"), **Erica Hubbard** ("Lincoln Heights"), **Niki Micheaux** ("Lincoln Heights"), **Sherrima Queen** ("All My Children"), **Cory Hardict** ("Grand Torino," "He's Just Not That Into You"), **Barry Shabaka Henley**, **Bentley Kyle Evans** (executive producer/creator of Jamie Foxx Show and Martin Lawrence Show), **Camille Winbush** ("Bernie Mac Show"), **Kellita Smith** ("Bernie Mac Show"), **Claudia Jordan** (Barker Beauty of "Price Is Right), **Jesse Lewis** ("VH1's America's Smartest Model"), **Stephen Bishop** ("Grey's Anatomy"), **Kim Coles** ("10 Items of Less") **Yo Yo** (rapper), **Yvette Nicole Brown** ("Hotel for Dogs"), **CJ Sanders** ("Ray"), **Page Kennedy** ("Weeds"), **Omarosa** ("The Apprentice"), **Norwood Young** ("High Maintenance 90210"), **Cory Patt** ("The Great Debaters"), **James Black** ("The Starter Wife"), **Golden Brooks**, **Coolio** (rapper), **Vic Bullock** (NAACP Image Awards), **Gary Sturgis** ("Daddy's Little Girl"), **Paula Jai Parker** ("Hustle 'n Flow"), **Toccara Jones** ("America's Top Model"), **Black Thomas** ("Step Up 2 the Streets") *The cast of "Baldwin Hills"*: **Moriah Johnson**, **Aysia Rowe**, **Jo Jo Joseph**, **Justin Walker**, **Staci Brown**, **Tyler Bryant**, **Trason Bragg**, **Seiko Hoffman**, **Etienne Maurice**, **Anna Maria Horsford**, **Ernest**

Harden, Jackee, Rolonda Watts, Beverly Todd, Guy Patrice Lumumba, Beth Payne

WHEN:

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Red Carpet – 6 p.m.

Program – 7:30 p.m.

WHERE:

Directors Guild of America

7920 Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles

More Information:

LOS ANGELES, CA - The 17th Annual Pan African Film and Arts Festival (PAFF), America's largest and most prestigious flagship black film and arts festival, will kick off tonight with its star-studded red carpet Opening Night Gala featuring South Africa's critically acclaimed drama "Jerusalema." Hosted by actor, producer, and NAACP Image Award winner, **Blair Underwood** ("The New Adventures of Old Christine," "In Treatment"), PAFF's 2009 Celebrity Host, the PAFF Opening Night Gala will be attended by Black Hollywood's elite and kick off 12 days of independent Black cinema.

With record attendance now topping a quarter of a million attendees over its twelve-day run, the festival has announced a change of venue to accommodate its ever growing audience for its film festival to the Culver Plaza Theatres (9919 Washington Boulevard). The PAFF Art Market, a highly anticipated and celebrated major exhibit of black fine art and quality crafts featuring the work of over 100 different artists and artisans, will remain at the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza (3650 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.). Known for showcasing new films first and recognized as America's *premiere* black film festival, past festival features have included box office and award-winning hits: *Ray*, *Lackawanna Blues*, *Redemption*, *Crazy As Hell*, *Kingdom Come*, *The Brothers*, *Gridlock'd*, *Days of Glory*, and the 2006 Academy Award® winner for Best Foreign Film, *Tsotsi*. For more information and access to PAFF's online box office, please visit www.paff.org.

About the Opening Night Film

Opening this year's festival is the acclaimed South African drama "**Jerusalema**" directed by Ralph Zinman. Part Robin Hood, part Horatio Alger, after cutting his teeth on local carjackings, young Lucky Kunene dreams of bigger scores than his best friend Zakes. Moving to the rough-and-tumble Hillbrow section of Johannesburg, Kunene, whose heroes are Karl Marx, Al Capone and Dale

Carnegie, transforms himself into a real-estate crime boss even as he tries to elude determined white cop Blakkie Swart, vengeful renegade Nazareth Mbolelo and Nigerian drug lord Tony Ngu. "**Jerusalema**" will be featured during PAFF's star-studded red carpet opening night gala Thursday, February 5 at the Director's Guild of America (7 p.m., 7920 Sunset Blvd.).

2009 Honorees

The 17th PAFF will present actress **Marla Gibbs** with its coveted Lifetime Achievement Award. Actor **Omar Benson Miller** ("Miracle at St. Anna") has been selected for the PAFF Canada Lee Award, and California Assembly Speaker **Karen Bass** will be recognized for her commitment of supporting the exhibition of film, art and creative expression with the PAFF Community Service Award. The awards will be handed out as a part of PAFF's opening night festivities at the Director's Guild of America on Thursday, February 5.

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MEDIA, PLEASE NOTE: *A complete interactive pressroom is available online at PAFF.org. For information detailing how to apply for press credentials to cover the 17th Annual PAFF, please click on the "Pressroom" link located on the PAFF.org home page (<http://www.paff.org/pressroom/>) and follow the directions posted.*