

VAUGHAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL SUCCESSFULLY WRAPS ITS FIRST EDITION OF INSPIRING FUTURE FILMMAKERS: WEBINAR SPEAKER SERIES

VAUGHAN, ON (November 24, 2020) – Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF), in partnership with **Nia Centre for the Arts** and with support from the **Canadian Red Cross**, successfully wrapped its first-ever edition of **Inspiring Future Filmmakers: Webinar Speaker Series** this past weekend. Over the last three Saturdays, this virtual seminar series featured three industry professionals sharing their expertise with high school film students across the GTA. Viewers received insider tips into navigating the world of film creation, exploring the topics of sound design, acting and storytelling through animation.

The first webinar was led by Animator and Director of the School of Art at CSULB **Aubry Mintz**, where he discussed the complex journey of bringing an animated story to life, from pre-production to final design. Canadian actress **Kim Roberts** shared her industry knowledge in the second webinar, revealing the steps she took to break through into the acting world. For the last webinar, Sound Supervisor and President of Motion Pictures Sound Editors (MPSE) **Mark Lanza** delved into the power of sound design and the art of crafting sound to tell a story.

The students were overwhelmingly pleased with how informative and engaging the webinars were. A student from **Middlefield Collegiate Institute** who attended the final webinar was especially impressed and shared his thoughts with VFF:

“Mark Lanza was a very interesting speaker and taught me a lot about sound design and the film industry. I liked the content that he showed us and enjoyed seeing the behind-the-scenes software aspect of it because, when you see the finished product, you don't really consider these things. [...] Another thing that I really liked that Mark said was, ‘You got the job because of who you know, you kept the job because of what you know.’ I feel like, for some reason, what he said was really powerful because it encourages you to stay on your feet. Always aim to be the best and try to network to increase your opportunities.”

VFF has always strived to foster and support local talent through educational initiatives such as offering these engaging workshops and providing scholarships to students. The non-profit organization was pleased to be able to extend these emerging artists the chance to continue their industry education through this speaker series, even despite the global pandemic.

“Due to current circumstances, we've had to adapt in order to further support our future filmmakers”, said **Julia Agris**, VFF's Manager of Education. “Thanks to the Canadian Red Cross and this partnership with The Nia Centre, we have been able to host these webinars and create this unique and invaluable experience for students. I hope to see this series grow so that we can help increase awareness of the countless lesser-known jobs in the industry to present more choices to students who need this additional guidance.”

Aubry Mintz Bio

Aubry has studied Classical Animation at Sheridan College and from there has worked in the US, Canada, and India on various film, tv, and Internet productions. His most renowned projects have been The Mummy and Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within. Additionally, many short films that he has produced have been officially selected at different festivals. He has taught animation workshops at several studios like Disney Feature Animation and DreamWorks Animation. Currently, Aubry is a full-time professor and director at California State University, Long Beach.

Kim Roberts Bio

Kim is a Canadian actress with over 200 film, television, and theatre credits to her name. She is best known for her roles in The Handmaid's Tale, Schitt's Creek, and Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs. She was the first Black woman to have a speaking role in a nationally televised Canadian commercial and has since co-founded a prominent Black theatre company, named Obsidian Theater. Kim continues to act and be a mentor to emerging actors of colour.

Mark Lanza Bio

Mark has been crafting sound for top movies and television for years. His first job in the industry was working for Oliver Stone. Some of his credits include Independence Day, True Lies, Natural Born Killers, JFK (for which he won a BAFTA), Homeland, Empire, and Electric Dreams. He has over 30 Golden Reel nominations to his name. Mark is currently working at Sony Pictures where he creates sound for TV's top network and streaming shows. He is also the president of the Motion Picture Sound Editors.

About VFF

Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF) is a not-for-profit organization that brings the public film screenings of Canadian and International cinema, vibrant social events, and a lavish awards show complete with a prestigious Golden Reel Award. VFF also supports and furthers arts education with various scholarships and bursaries granted to young filmmakers, art students, and educational institutions within Vaughan. Throughout the past eight years, VFF has remained true to its objective to satisfy the cultural appetite of this growing community while offering an art forum befitting our world-class city.

About Nia Centre

Nia Centre for the Arts is a Toronto-based charitable organization that supports, showcases and promotes an appreciation of arts from across the Afro-Diaspora. Nia Centre is committed to supporting artists working across disciplines and ranging in experience levels. They strive to build the creative capacities and support the development of a healthy identity in Black youth.

About Canadian Red Cross

Here in Canada and overseas, the Red Cross stands ready to help people before, during and after a disaster. As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – which is made up of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and 192 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies – the Canadian Red Cross is dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and throughout the world.

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