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Record crowds enjoy a hot weekend at the 2015 Gimli Film Festival

(Winnipeg, Manitoba; July 26, 2015) – The 15th Annual Gimli Film Festival was a memorable five-day Festival.

The rain showers on Thursday did not dampen the spirits of film goers as indoor attendance hit an all-time high of 3853 throughout the Festival. Hot, humid weather dominated the last three days of this year's Festival, causing the total beach attendance at the RBC Sunset Screenings to swell to over 5,000 people. When a rain storm hit the beach halfway through Sunday's film, *Dr. Strangelove*, it resulted in a record breaking tear down. In total, over 9,400 attended this year's dynamic lineup of films and events.

Most Talked-About Films at the Festival

A number of indoor films attracted very large crowds.

- *Amy*, is a sad, riveting, and brutally honest film about the life of Amy Winehouse that examines the complex balance between art and celebrity.
- *Red Army*, a documentary about the USSR hockey team also included an in-depth panel discussion with three NHL hockey players from that era.
- *Monsoon* is Sturla Gunnarrson's visually striking, award-winning documentary about India's weather system.
- *Iris*, the story of 93-year-old fashion diva Iris Apfel of New York played to rave reviews for three packed screenings... we are now looking for our Gimli maven.

Several other films that stirred up a range of emotional responses at this year's Festival were:

- *Salt of the Earth* – “stunning imagery”, “stirring”
- *It Follows* – “terrifying”, “audience screams”
- *Force Majeure* – “tense”, “difficult to watch”
- *Grandad* – “most laughs”, “Icelandic humour”
- *Ex Machina* – “sexy”, “inventive”

2015 Closing Reception

Approximately 200 people attended Saturday night's Closing Reception at Johnson Hall. The biggest highlight of the evening was the introduction of two new awards which will both be awarded annually at the Gimli Film Festival.

The Alda Award –a word which means ‘wave’ in Icelandic—was generously donated by Janis G Johnson, in celebration of excellence in circumpolar filmmaking. The Alda is representative of the close relationship which has evolved between GFF and the circumpolar world, and the first Alda Award was presented to **Sturla Gunnarrson**, director of the documentary “*Monsoon*” and long-time supporter of GFF.

The Jack Clements “*Livin’ the Dream*” Lifetime Achievement Award was the second inaugural award

introduced on Saturday, in recognition of Clements' contribution to the rich history of film in Manitoba. **Michael Scott** was named the first recipient of the "Livin' the Dream" award, having mentored a generation of exceptional filmmakers who went on to create a thriving Manitoba Film Community.

A key venue for Manitoba filmmakers

One of the ongoing missions of the Gimli Film Festival is the support and growth of local filmmakers.

James McClellan won the Manitoba Film & Music Audience Choice Manitoba Short Film Award for his short film "Period Piece" --a film which poses the question, what kind of world do we want to create? McLellan said, "The Gimli Film Festival is so important in terms of exposure for Manitoba filmmakers. The opportunities we get here are invaluable."

"I'm grateful to have an opportunity to tell an idea that I wanted to go to screen," said **Kevin Tabachnick**, who won this year's RBC \$10,000 Emerging Filmmakers award. "RBC is funding one of the only programs in Manitoba that sets up emerging filmmakers with a basis for a long and successful career. It gives young filmmakers a voice and a goal."

Ben Williams of Winnipeg Film Group, who organized this year's 48 Hour Film Competition commented that filmmakers at this year's Festival seemed elated at the prospect of being involved future festivals. Williams noted, "Everything seemed to be elevated this year: the attendance was elevated, the energy level of the filmmakers and their work was elevated, and the overall fusion of the 48 hour contest with Gimli was just electric!"

A new digital persona for GFF

The florescent pink and cyan branding for the 2015 Gimli Film Festival, with its dramatic "split sun" symbol on a fluid horizon was only the beginning of big digital changes for GFF this year.

A freshly designed website and a newly released App made the user experience for this year's Festival a breeze, allowing for devices of all kinds to access the full film schedule from virtually any location. Digital ticket sales accounted for 50% of this year's total sales (almost doubling from last year's online percentage).

GFF has a [survey online](#) collecting information that will help to make next year's Gimli Film Festival even wider-reaching and more dramatic than ever!

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Visit www.gimlifilm.com for the most up-to-date information on everything about the Festival! Our shiny

new GFF APP is live, powered by Insurance Brokers of Manitoba.

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