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FILM / TV NOTES

## Shanghai nights and mai-tai days for HIFF in China

By Michael Tsai  
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Hawai'i International Film Festival executive director Chuck Boller is still beaming over his latest trip to China.

Boller was part of a large Hawai'i contingent that attended the Shanghai Film Festival this month. HIFF and Shanghai renewed their partnership last year after a mutually beneficial four-year pact.

"Chinese films have done really well at HIFF in the past, so everybody knows us there," Boller said. "There was quite an awareness of Hawai'i there."

As it turned out, former Hawai'i resident Eugene Ong is the general manager of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the official hotel of the Shanghai Film Festival. Boller said Ong pulled out all the stops to bring a Hawai'i vibe to the proceedings.

"We had mai tais and blue Hawai'is," Boller said. "The staff wore cut-offs and aloha shirts."

Also attending were Gov. Linda Lingle, and representatives from Disney and the Sundance and Tribeca film festivals.

Boller and company stopped off in Tokyo on the way over and then Seoul on the way back, securing a few cinematic gems (and a few celebrity appearances) for the festival in October.

As part of HIFF's ongoing 25th anniversary celebration, the festival has been offering mini-events, like last week's Summer Saturday triple feature at the Hawaii Theatre.

Next up is the K-Fest, a screening of seven South Korean films, Aug. 19 to 21 at the Doris Duke Theatre at the Honolulu Academy of Arts.

### **Kinetic energy**

Speaking of HIFF, local filmmaker James Sereno is putting the finishing touches on this year's festival trailer.



Boller



Lingle



Sereno



Yamanaka



Lee



Jackman



Grammar



Larioza

Images from the trailer will be used for the festival's other promotional materials, including the always in-demand festival poster.

Sereno won HIFF's Hawaii Film & Videomaker Award last year for his work on "Silent Years," the short-film adaptation of Lois-Ann Yamanaka's "Saturday Night at the Pahala Theater."

Sereno, who co-founded Kinetic Films with partner Yuri Biersach, is working to bring another local author's work to the screen. He's producing a short film based on Cedric Yamanaka's "The Sand Island Drive-In Anthem." Ryan Kawamoto is directing.

### **Pro at con**

Outgoing Academy for Creative Media head Chris Lee will be taking a break from the Australian set of "Superman Returns" to make a special appearance at this month's Comic-Con in San Diego.

Lee, the film's executive producer, will join director Bryan Singer and others in presenting the first official glimpse of the film.

### **Choreographer-man**

Is there a niche market for animal-themed superhero fight choreographers? If so, Wahiawa's Nito Larioza has it cornered.

Larioza, you may recall, lent his capoeira-based fighting style to spice up the otherwise flat Halle Berry vehicle "Catwoman."

Now the former boy-bander is headed to Canada to work on the next installment of "The X-Men." Larioza will be helping choreograph action sequences involving the characters the Beast (Kelsey Grammar) and Wolverine (Hugh Jackman).

Wanna get cut like a superhero? Larioza tells us he's working on his own workout video, as well.

### **The skinny, online**

Anyone interested in the local film industry would do well to check out Mynette Louie's Hawaii Film Office Blog at [hawaiifilmoffice.blogspot.com](http://hawaiifilmoffice.blogspot.com).

Originally started to help keep industry types up to date on tax-credit measures during the last legislative session, Louie's officially unofficial blog of the Hawaii Film Office continues on with insights on the tax-credit issue and Hawai'i-related film news from around the world.

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