



**Academy of Visual and Performing Arts
At Culver City High School**

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AVPA STARTS THE YEAR STRONG

For immediate release:

Culver City, CA – September 24, 2009: On Saturday, September 19, 2009, 15 students from Culver City High School's (CCHS) Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) Film Department met at the Big Bear Lake International Film Festival, where they won top prize in the High School Film category. The student film, "The Harry Hastings Method," was directed by 2009 graduate Josh Blake and produced by current Culver City High School senior, Duncan Ballantine, who was also the film's cinematographer. The film was created during the 2008-2009 school year and premiered at Culver City High School's AVPA Frost Film Festival last year.



At this year's Big Bear Film Festival, students attended a Q&A with world-class cinematographer Philippe Rousselot, whose many credits include Planet of the Apes, A River Runs Through It, Dangerous Liaisons, The Great Debaters, and many others. One of the points Rousselot made in response to student questions was that, more important than the reputation of the film school students attend, is that young filmmakers find a group of compatible friends to work with in making movies. The act of creating, and trusting and respecting one's colleagues in the process, is the most important learning tool for young filmmakers.

"The Harry Hastings Method" will screen on Wednesday, October 7 at the Backlot Film Festival at Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 4117 Overland Avenue, here in Culver City. The festival runs from Wednesday, October 7 through Saturday, October 10 with film screenings including features, shorts, fiction, documentaries, films in progress and student films. Each night the Backlot Film Festival is donating a portion of ticket sales to a different organization. The AVPA Foundation will be the recipient of a \$5 donation for every ticket sold for the Saturday night VIP Reception/Gala Awards Ceremony honoring Mickey Rooney and a portion of each 4 Days Festival Pass sold. Program and ticket information is available online at www.backlotfilmfestival.com, just click on Program, or call 310-204-6920.

The AVPA Chamber Singers, directed by Lisa Michel, and vocal soloists are scheduled to perform Saturday night, October 10, at the Gala Reception and Awards. They will perform songs written or featured in the hit movies produced by legendary Hollywood producer and lyricist Arthur Freed (the Backlot student film award is named for him). These include "Singin' in the Rain," performed just last spring by the AVPA, directed by AVPA Co-Director and Music Director Dr. Tony Spano. From films Mr. Freed produced, the Chamber Singers and soloists will perform "The Trolley Song" from *Meet Me in St. Louis*, "On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe" from *The Harvey Girls*, and "How About You?" from *Babes on Broadway*, which starred Hollywood legend, and Backlot Film Festival Thomas Ince Award recipient, Mickey Rooney.

About the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts

The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) at Culver City High School has been inspiring and empowering students to build a compassionate, creative community through innovative and challenging arts education since 1996. AVPA enjoys tremendous support from Sony Pictures Entertainment and other area businesses as well as from the Culver City community. For more information about the Academy, go to <http://avpa.org> or contact Tony Spano at 310-842-4200 x6094 or Kristine Hatanaka at 310-842-4200 x6001.

Photo caption:

AVPA Film students, AVPA Film Director Alexis Butler and parents at Big Bear Film Festival

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