

# Toronto **After Dark** Film Festival

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## **TORONTO AFTER DARK FILM FESTIVAL WRAPS SUCCESSFUL FIRST ANNUAL EVENT**

*Inaugural festival of thrills a huge success with packed screenings, masterclass and zombie walk!*

Toronto, Canada, October 27, 2006 – TORONTO AFTER DARK FILM FESTIVAL proudly concluded its first annual celebration of thrilling international cinema earlier this week. Between Friday, October 20 and Tuesday October 24, the festival played host to an exhilarating showcase of **horror, sci-fi and fantasy** cinema from around the world. The inaugural event featured 13 electrifying feature film premieres from seven countries, 15 locally produced short films, a masterclass with cult film icon Lloyd Kaufman, a zombie walk through downtown Toronto, and two gala parties. The massive crowds flocking to the first festival surpassed all expectations of organizers with **3,200 attendees** over five nights. “We always thought there was an audience for an exciting film festival like ours in Canada’s biggest city” says Festival Director and Founder **Adam Lopez**, “but we never thought we’d enjoy so much support from film fans in our launch year. It’s been an overwhelming success.” Complete details about this year’s Toronto After Dark Film Festival is available at the official festival website <http://www.torontoafterdark.com/>

### ***Crowded Feature Premieres***

The inaugural festival opened with a packed gala screening for the Canadian Premiere of the dark and funny superhero feature **SPECIAL** starring Michael Rapaport. The film was introduced by locally raised Director Hal Haberman and followed by a gala reception at the Mod Club that featured fire breathing, projections of cult classic films, and four dueling DJ’s. Other exceedingly popular premieres included Japanese fantasy epic **SHINOBI**, the Canadian premiere of **RETRIBUTION**, the latest suspense thriller from the godfather of modern Japanese horror, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Hong Kong’s **RE-CYCLE** from the acclaimed Pang Brothers (**BANGKOK DANGEROUS**, **THE EYE**), and teenage zombie comedy, **NIGHT OF LIVING DORKS** from Germany which served as a fitting crowd-pleasing finale to the 2006 **Toronto Zombie Walk** in which over 500 zombie fans participated. The Festival closed with the packed gala screening and Toronto premiere of the groundbreaking new horror film **BEHIND THE MASK: THE RISE OF LESLIE VERNON**. The film, which was introduced by Director Scott Glosserman, stands out as an innovative fusion of faux documentary, comedy and horror featuring Robert Englund (Freddy Krueger from **NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET**).

### ***Award Winners Announced***

Toronto After Dark Film Festival also handed out two awards for feature films its inaugural year, both of which were announced today. The first place winner of the **Audience Choice Award For Best Feature Film**, as voted by film fans was **BEHIND THE MASK: THE RISE OF LESLIE VERNON**, the directorial debut of Scott Glosserman. Programming Director **Todd Brown** adds, “We really believe he’s one of the bright young stars of the film world, and we’re ecstatic that our audience felt the same way.” Runners-up were **SPECIAL** in second Place, and **SHINOBI** in third Place, with an honourable mention to close fourth place finisher **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DORKS**. A special award for **MOST INNOVATIVE FEATURE FILM** was added by festival organizers and bestowed upon the wildly entertaining yet impossible to describe Japanese genre blender **FUNKY FOREST: THE FIRST CONTACT**, which left audience members both stunned and delirious in their seats. “There has never been another film quite like this. For its

sheer inventiveness, sense of wonder, and surreal humour” remarks Brown, “we’re creating an award just to give to it.”

### ***Midnight Mayhem!***

Other key Festival screenings included two genre-defying **screenings at midnight** including the International Premiere of the hilarious and bloody post-apocalyptic road movie BEACH PARTY AT THE THRESHOLD OF HELL. Writer/Director/Actor Kevin Wheatley introduced the film which features numerous celebrity cameos including Daniel Baldwin and Jane Seymour. The second midnight screening was the Toronto Premiere of MAD COWGIRL, a modern day cult classic featuring sex, religion, kung-fu, psycho killing, infectious beef and Walter Koenig from STAR TREK. Toronto After Dark also hosted cult filmmaker icon LLOYD KAUFMAN’s informative and hilarious MAKE YOUR OWN DAMN MOVIE! MASTERCLASS in front of a packed crowd of aspiring guerilla filmmakers and adoring film fans at the University of Toronto campus. Lloyd was also kind enough to assist the festival with a fun midnight prize raffle contest where prizes included pieces of meat, wholly appropriate given the subject matter of the following screening of MAD COWGIRL.

### ***Stunning Short Films***

Playing in front of all the feature films were a series of stunning locally produced sci-fi, horror, and fantasy short films. Collectively dubbed the **Canada After Dark Program**, the 15 shorts were curated from over 100 submissions nationwide, and were widely applauded by audiences. “It was a joy to showcase to an unsuspecting audience so many outrageously talented up and coming Canadian filmmakers who can hold their own with international features,” comments Festival Director **Adam Lopez**. “Not only did we give the fans extra entertainment before the feature films, we also helped emerging local talent with some much-needed extra exposure.” The **After Dark Jury Award For Best Short Film** as determined by a panel of local horror and fantasy filmmakers was awarded to the fantasy-horror animation FANTASY BEYOND, with runners-up TROLL CONCERTO (second place), and WAT A WONDERFUL DAY (third place), and honourable mentions to HEADSHOT, THE GRANDFATHER PARADOX and FUDDLEBEE.

### ***Festival Exclusives***

Before select features, Toronto After Dark also surprised audiences with a number of exclusive first time theatrical presentations of trailers, clips and scenes including: a preview of GENIUS PARTY a stunning new animated feature from the production house behind the ANIMATRIX, a ten minute reel from DEAD DAUGHTERS, a terrifying new film from Russia’s up and coming master of horror Pavel Ruminov, a promotional clip from TABUNFIRE the latest Thai actioner from Dan Chupong and Panna Rittikrai (ONG BAK), and the first five minutes of the forthcoming new horror comedy POULTRYGEIST: NIGHT OF THE CHICKEN DEAD, introduced on stage by director Lloyd Kaufman himself.

### ***Extensive Support***

The success of the first annual Toronto After Dark Film Festival would not have been possible without the generous support of the Festival’s many sponsors and supporters including major media sponsors **SPACE: The Imagination Station**, **NOW Magazine**, **Rue Morgue Magazine**, **24 Hours** and major partners **Extreme Group** and **Daniloff Productions**, and the efforts of more than 40 volunteers, attending guests, participating filmmakers, and Toronto’s incredibly supportive film-loving community.

**The first annual Toronto After Dark Film Festival**, celebrating innovative new horror, sci-fi and fantasy cinema ran October 20-24, 2006, at the Bloor Cinema, Toronto, Canada. Following its overwhelming success, the Festival will return in **October 2007**, dates to be announced shortly. **PRESS INFO:** Complete festival info, including downloadable press kit, high-resolution stills, and trailers available at [www.torontoafterdark.com/press](http://www.torontoafterdark.com/press) For additional queries, e-mail [press@torontoafterdark.com](mailto:press@torontoafterdark.com)