



The
Chicago
International
Film Festival

56th Chicago International Film Festival
October 14-25, 2020

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**WORLD PREMIERE OF *BELUSHI* TO OPEN THE 56TH CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, USHERING IN FIVE NIGHTS OF
LIVE PRIME-TIME DRIVE-IN SCREENINGS**

THE FESTIVAL'S HYBRID FORMAT EXPANDS ACCESS TO NATIONAL AUDIENCES
FOR THE FIRST TIME, OCTOBER 14-25, 2020

Chicago, IL (September 9, 2020) – Artistic Director **Mimi Plauché** announces the hybrid format, with both virtual and drive-in screenings, for the **56th Chicago International Film Festival**, to take place ***Wednesday, October 14 - Sunday, October 25, 2020*** with a full slate of more than 50 feature films and nine short film programs. The Opening Night film will be the World Premiere of the SHOWTIME® Documentary Films feature documentary ***Belushi***, chronicling the celebrated career and untimely death of native son and The Second City alumnus John Belushi, ***Wednesday, October 14, 7pm ET at Pilsen's ChiTown Movies drive-in theater, 2343 South Throop Street.***

"*Belushi* is a perceptive and engaging portrait that captures both the genius and the complexity of beloved Chicago icon John Belushi," said Plauché. "It is the perfect film to open the Festival, a celebration of great and moving cinema as well as of our city's cultural richness, and an event, whether in person or online, that will bring our community together again this October."

Concurrent with the live drive-in screening, a virtual screening of ***Belushi*** will also be available to stream on October 14. *Tickets to Belushi go on sale to Cinema/Chicago members on Wednesday, September 23; general public tickets go on sale Monday, September 28 at chicagofilmfestival.com/festival/tickets.*

The Chicago International Film Festival embraces the current moment with its 2020 edition, retaining its signature screening slate of international features and shorts in and out of competition, along with celebrity and director Q&As and special events. Virtual screenings and events will be ticketed, and, for the first time in 2020, many will be accessible to national audiences via the Festival's streaming platform. Virtual movies, not currently available on commercial streaming services, will be streamed by the Festival and viewable from the safety and comfort of the home via the Festival's streaming site, and apps for Roku and Apple TV.

With the 2020 tagline “Film Can Take You There” the 2020 Festival, created by award-winning advertising agency Ogilvy, celebrates cinema’s power to transport audiences anywhere they want to go, be it a far-flung land or a state of mind. The virtual festival experience brings film lovers together, defying boundaries, restrictions and quarantines.

"This year’s tagline perfectly embodies the spirit of the 56th edition of our Festival. This October, we’re bringing together a community of film lovers – in Chicago, from across the Midwest, and around the country – to experience international and independent cinema together, even while apart," says Chicago International Film Festival Managing Director **Vivian Teng**. “The shared Festival experience not only connects us to one another but also to the greater world, as the films will take audiences anywhere they want to go, whether it be geographically or emotionally.”

On **Tuesday, September 22, 10a.m. CT** Cinema/Chicago will host its first virtual press conference to formally announce the 56th Chicago International Film Festival’s lineup of competition films, tributes, special programs and virtual and drive-in events from October 14-25. Artistic Director **Mimi Plauché**, Managing Director **Vivian Teng**, the Festival programming team and guest filmmakers will speak at the conference. Press interested in registering for the event can contact publicity@chicagofilmfestival.com before September 18.

The 56th Chicago International Film Festival, North America’s longest-running competitive film festival, comprises more than 50 features and 50 short films in 2020. The full Festival schedule will be announced on Tuesday, September 22.

Festival Passes – offering access to 10 or 20 virtual screenings – are available now to the general public at chicagofilmfestival.com/festival/tickets. Single tickets go on sale September 23-27 for Cinema/Chicago members and September 28 for the general public.

About *Belushi*

A feature documentary from award-winning filmmaker **R.J. Cutler** about the too-short life of **John Belushi**, the once-in-a-generation talent who captured the hearts and funny-bones of audiences worldwide. Told using previously unheard audiotapes, this film examines Belushi’s extraordinary life in the words of his collaborators, friends, and family, including Dan Aykroyd, Jim Belushi, Penny Marshall, Lorne Michaels, Carrie Fisher, Chevy Chase, Harold Ramis, Jane Curtin, Ivan Reitman and his high school sweetheart and later wife Judy Belushi. From his early years growing up in Wheaton, Illinois, John Belushi showed an extraordinary talent for comedy and music. It was a visit to The Second City theater in Chicago where he discovered his true calling, and from that moment John became an unstoppable and pioneering force in the comedy world. From National Lampoon’s *Lemmings* and *Radio Hour* to one of the founding cast members on *Saturday Night Live*, his insatiable drive kept the candle burning at both ends. John simultaneously appeared on *SNL* each Saturday night while filming *Animal House* and forming a band, *The Blues Brothers*. The result: by age 30 Belushi was on the #1 television show, had the #1 comedy in movie history and the #1 record album in the world. But as John’s fame grew, so did his demons, and not even Judy could save him from the drug use that would eventually take his life. This film captures the complicated and singular essence of a beloved American icon who changed culture and comedy forever. *Belushi*, a SHOWTIME Documentary Films production, will premiere on SHOWTIME on November 22, 2020.

About the Chicago International Film Festival

Celebrating its 56th edition October 14-25, 2020, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival. Showcasing the best in international and independent films from around the world, the 56th edition will be virtual and present more than 50 feature films and nine short film programs from around the world, bringing audiences together through virtual screenings, one-night-only live events, virtual tribute events with directors and actors, as well as movie club-style gatherings for audiences. From dramas and thrillers to documentaries and comedies, the Festival presents a vast diversity of offerings, including numerous competitive categories and several highlight programs such as Black Perspectives, Cinemas of the Americas, International Comedy, Women in Cinema, Out-Look, After Dark and the City & State program (showcasing films made in Chicago and throughout Illinois.)

Festival Sponsors and Partners

The 56th Chicago International Film Festival's sponsors include Festival Sponsors: William Blair; Official Agency: Ogilvy; Festival Supporters: National Endowment for the Arts, Illinois Arts Council Agency, Illinois Film Office, Chicago Film Office, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; Media Partners: WBBM, CHIRP; This project is partially supported by a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events

About Cinema/Chicago

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a year-round nonprofit arts and education organization dedicated to fostering better communication between people of diverse cultures through the art of film and the moving image. Cinema/Chicago's programs include the [Chicago International Film Festival](#), [Summer Screenings Program](#), [CineYouth Festival](#), and year-round [Education Program](#). For more information, please visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#).

More information can be found at <https://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/>.

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