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IN THIS ISSUE:

NEWS
INSIDE TRACK
INTERVIEW
SPECIAL REPORT
THE REEL THING
TWO ON THE AISLE
BACKTALK
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
CLASSIFIEDS
SEARCH

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\$500,000 feature in development is an extension of Toth's acclaimed short drama "Cast in Gray"

Life is a Dream Productions is developing its \$500,000 HD feature drama "Gray, White & Black," from acclaimed Yugoslav-born director I. Michael Toth, to shoot here and in Paris this year.



Director I. Michael Toth (left) and producer Christopher Gentry

"Gray, White & Black" is an extension of Toth's 39-minute HD short "Cast in Gray," which screens June 7 at the Midwest Independent Film Festival.

Festival award-winner "Cast in Gray" is an existential drama about a man (Timothy Burke, "Mitchellville"), whose car breaks down in a rainstorm, who offers shelter to a hitchhiker (Stephen Angus, "Homicide: Life on the Street") and his dog, and faces the repercussions.



Stephen Angus (left) and Timothy Burke in "Cast in Gray"

"Gray, White & Black" unfolds forward and backward from "Cast in Gray," revealing the life Burke's character was fleeing and the one to which he arrives.

Toth, who has lived in the U.S. since 1985, has made several features that played the European fest circuit, directed commercials for Fortune 500 companies, and made documentaries including the PBS-broadcast "Sculptures: Pieces of My

Dreams," the internationally distributed "Freemasons," and ITVA award winner "Unseen Journey." He also directed the TV series "Man and Time," syndicated across Europe.

Christopher Gentry, a commercial and investment banker, is producing through Life is a Dream Productions, which he launched with Toth.

Gentry met Toth when "On the Open Road," the play by Toth's fellow Yugoslav, Oscar winner Steve Tesich ("Breaking Away"), premiered at the Goodman Theatre in 1995. Toth and Tesich were at work on a screen adaptation, but the project stalled when Tesich died of a heart attack in

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Australia in 1996.

Toth approached Gentry in 2000 with a draft of the "Grey, White & Black" screenplay. "It was a great script," Gentry recalled. "I could see this was a guy I wanted to work with. I decided to commit to full-time feature filmmaking," Gentry said.

"We needed a couple good solid projects in development so once we got the first one up and going, we could be in a position to move quickly onto the next one. Michael not having an English-language feature under his belt, we needed to get something on film to demonstrate the narrative," he continued. "We did 'Cast in Gray' to take that step."

Principal photography will be in Chicago, with additional shooting in Paris.



London-based Irena Micijevic-Rodic, Novi Sad Film Festival best actress winner for "Magic," plays dual roles in the feature, as does Angus. Members of the Tuta Theatre Company will also perform in the film.

Blue Note recording artist, jazz singer and pianist Patricia Barber, is composer.



DP is Sasha Rendulic (Sundance selection "Mr. P's Dancing Sushi Bar"). Production designer, Bata Radavanovic ("Out of Africa").

Life is a Dream has three more films in various development stages, including "A Starry Night Above Me," the adaptation of Tesich's play, an action-adventure story about a pair of mismatched rogues fleeing the Liberian civil war.



Also on the slate: "Two Hats," about a Yugoslav war refugee starting a new life in the U.S., with Dragan Micanovic ("The Engagement"), and Lazar Ristovski and Dragan Mikolic ("Undeground"); "The Man Who Lived in Dreams," a drama with music by Barber, featuring Thomas J. Ryan ("Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind") and Sean Campion ("Stones in His Pockets").

"Cast in Gray" screens at the Midwest Indie, June 7 at 7:30 p.m. at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark.



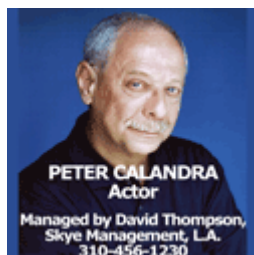
The company is located at 3725 N. Greenview; phone, 773/517-4118; Email, info@lifeisadreamprod.com. See www.lifeisadreamprod.com.

"Cast in Gray" leads June 7 lineup of six HD shorts at Midwest Independent Film Festival

"Cast in Gray" headlines the second Midwest Independent Film Festival, Tuesday, June 7 at Landmark's Century Centre, projected in HD.

Also featured is IFP/Chicago 2004 Production Fund winner "The





Apologies” from writer/director Anthony Collamati (“The Acedia Thing”).

“The Apologies” stars Joe Forbrich (“The Watcher”) who returns 17 years later to apologize to the husband and daughter of a woman he raped. With Melissa Sienick (Project Greenlight finalist “And Then I Woke Up”) and Mick Weber (“Law and Order”).

“The Apologies” premiered at the IFP/Chicago’s 2004 Flyover Zone Film Festival.

Roundup out the June Midwest Indie lineup:

John Cabrera’s comedic short “Crazy Love,” produced in association with speed filmmaking company Instant Films. Stars William Salyers (“Judging Amy,” “Bedazzled”), Laura Schwartzberg, Crystal Keith and Kinsey Packard.

George Eckart’s Flash-animated retiring-gargoyle short “Monster,” featuring the improv talents of Paul Grondy and Peter Grosz.

In the Midwest Indie’s ongoing series of excerpts from D.P. Carlson’s doc “Chicago Filmmakers on the Chicago River,” Carlson presents an interview with Michael Mann (“Collateral,” “Ali” and upcoming remake of his “Miami Vice.”).

The world premiere of director/composer Thomas Lisa’s music video “Greater Than Us.”

Formerly Chicago Community Cinema, the Midwest Indie is held on the first Tuesday of the month as an event dedicated to showcasing emerging directors from the eight-state Midwest region.

Century Landmark Theatre is at 2828 N. Clark. Pre-screening cocktail reception at 6 p.m., screenings begin at 7:30 p.m. Post-screening reception at Monsoon, 2813 N. Broadway. See www.midwestfilm.com.

—*Ed M. Koziarski* , edk@homesickblues.com

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