

'Reel' people

Film fests feature the best of Latin flicks

By MERCEDES SANCHEZ and SANDRA GUZMAN

LOVERS of Latino films rejoice! With both the Havana Film Festival in New York and the Tribeca Film Festival in town this week, you can gorge on the culture of love, parades, poetry and Fidel Castro without ever leaving the Big Apple.

Boasting the biggest showcase of Latino and Latino themed films, the Tribeca Film Fest will feature the long awaited documentary directed by award-winning actress Rosie Perez, "Yo Soy Boricua, Pa' Que Tu Lo Sepas! (I'm Boricua, Just So You Know!)" (See the sidebar for the Havana Film Fest pics.)

The documentary— parts of it narrated by Emmy winning actor and fellow Boricua Jimmy Smits — is a showcase of Puerto Rican culture and history as seen through the Brooklyn-born and raised Puertorriqueña's eyes.

"The film is not about the Puerto Rican Day Parade, it's about our political history with Spain and the U.S.," says Perez of her project. "I try to show how certain political actions and events affect a people

and a culture."

The actress concedes that she did get to use footage of one of the city's most lively events.

"I booked with the parade, yeah, we are loud and we have every right to be. We endured a lot and fought to be here," she says.

Perez will also participate in one of the most important events of the festival, a panel discussion on the current state of Hispanic females in the entertainment industry. The talk will also be led by two other leading Latina ladies — Dominican Zoe Saldana and Argentinian Mia Maestro.

"The climate for Latinas in the industry is much better than it was 30, 20 and even ten years ago," says the Dominican-raised actress Saldana who has starred in "Guess Who" with Ashton Kutcher and "The Terminal" with Tom Hanks among other films. "But the change," she adds, "has come because we have some fierce women of color making it happen for ourselves."

Despite the progress, Saldana says the biggest challenge is not in Anglo Hollywood but within Latinos in the industry.

"Latino directors and media still have a way to go in showcasing the diversity of colors and multi-faceted community that we are," says the Latina beauty. As an example, she mentioned Latina magazine.



Brainy beauties Rosie Perez and Zoe Saldana (left) are in front and behind the cameras.

WireImage(2)

"It took me eight years for Latina {magazine} to say that I'm Latina," she says commenting on the current issue of the glossy whose cover she graces.

Saldana, will put on the producer's hat for the first time this June when she starts filming "Lucy," the movie version of Jamaica Kincaid's lush coming of age novel in which she is also starring.

Here are our top pics of the TFF offerings:

■ **"Journey to the End of the Night,"** Directed by Eric Eason. This

thriller brings Oscar-nominee Catalina Sandino Moreno in another drug related film, this time in Brazil. Starts Friday, April 28, Tribeca Performing Arts 1. 199 Chambers Street, between Greenwich and West streets. \$12. 9 p.m.

■ **"Razing New York: The Disappearance of Affordable Housing,"** Various directors including Anthony Marrero and Lenah Perez. This gem is all about gentrification in the City.

Saturday, April 29. AMC Loews 34th Street 13. 312 West 34th Street, between Eighth and Ninth avenues. \$ 12. 5:15 p.m.

■ **"Burning Patience,"** Directed by Antonio Skarmeta. Chilean writer brings his novel "El Cartero de Neruda," to film. Sunday, April 30. Tribeca Cinemas 2. 54 Varick Street, below Canal at Laight Street. \$12. 9:30 p.m.

■ **"Yo Soy Boricua, Pa' Que Tu Lo Sepas!"** Directed by, Rosie Perez and Liz Garbus. Starts April 28. Pace University Schimmel Center. 1 Pace Plaza, Spruce Street, between Park Row and Gold street. \$12. 8:30 p.m.

■ **"Adelante Mujeres: Latinas at the Helm,"** featuring Zoe Saldana, Mia Maestro and Rosie Perez. Tribeca Talks Panel Series, Tribeca Performing Arts 2. 199 Chambers Street, between Greenwich and West streets. \$20. 7 p.m.

For more tickets and schedule go to TribecaFilmFestival.org

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Jose R. Peralta

José Peralta is a first-generation Dominican-American, who was first elected to the New York State Assembly at the age of 30. Like so many before them, Peralta's parents came to the United States looking for a better life for their children. His parents worked hard to sustain their family on the wages of entry-level positions, struggling to ensure that their children received a quality education that would provide them with opportunities and would teach them the importance of public service.

Peralta's interest in representing community issues was demonstrated early on by his participation in student government at Queens College, where he became the first Latino Student Body President. He also represented over 200,000 students within the CUNY system as a member of the University Student Senate, bringing student concerns to the forefront and often lobbying state officials on the importance of issues such as: state tuition hikes; student healthcare; the reduction of childcare funding and the lack of services available to students with disabilities.

After graduating from Queens College, Peralta worked with Assemblyman Brian McLaughlin as a community liaison. In this position he continued to develop the skills and knowledge necessary of an effective public servant, including an understanding



of the legislative process. Peralta not only helped constituents in the Flushing area that the assemblyman represented, but he also worked for the Corona, Jackson Heights and Elmhurst communities - spearheading many immigrant causes and community improvements.

Most recently, Peralta served as the Director of the Commission on the Dignity for Immigrants at the New York City Labor Council, representing over 1.5 million union members. The Commission is a partnership between the labor movement and the Archdioceses of New York. Under Peralta's direction, the Commission has championed the mission of creating political empowerment for all immigrants in a variety of

ways, including registering over 20,000 new citizens.

Ten years ago, Jose participated in The Model Senate program that was initiated by CUNY in collaboration with the Puerto Rican and Hispanic Legislative Task Force and is a major part of the annual "Somos El Futuro" Conference celebrated in Albany. This experience undoubtedly also contributed to his passion for public service. Over the last 10 years, more than 700 students have taken part in the program. Each year students are assigned specific districts to represent in the Model Senate, debating current topics from the point of view of their constituents.

The 10th annual Model New York State Senate Session will be celebrated in Albany on Saturday, April 29, with a reunion of outstanding alumni (including Peralta), and honors for those who founded the program. More than 60 students from The City University of New York and the State University of New York will debate the Taylor Law, which prohibits strikes by public employees, in a session in the New York State Senate Chamber at 3 p.m.

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TEMPO On the scene

- **Jade Terrace**
268 W. 47th St., between Broadway and Eighth Avenue
Rooftop After-work Thursdays
Doors open at 5 p.m.
Ladies free all night until 7 p.m., \$5 after. Gents free until 6 p.m., \$10 after. Two-for-one drink specials from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Music by rotating DJs Lucho, Wreck and Ivan.
Dress code: Super-chic and trendy. 21 and over, ID required. Information and guest list: (212) 779-2222.
- **Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement (HACE) Career Conference**
Wednesday, April 26, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.
Dedicated to building Latino careers through leadership and career development and facilitating recruitment by employers. HACE is bringing their successful career conference to the Big Apple again this year by hosting its second career conference.
- **Megaconcierto!**
Friday, April 28, at Madison Square Garden. 8pm
Featuring Gilberto Santa Rosa, Victor Manuelle, Jerry Rivera, N'Klabe, & Wisin y Yandel.
- **LQ**
511 Lexington Ave. at 48th Street.
Latin Hip Saturdays
Music by DJ Derrick Spaulding and rotating celebrity DJs.
Hip-hop, reggaeton, classics, Latin and R&B.
Doors open at 10 p.m.
21 and over, ID required.
Information: www.nocche-vip.com.

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TEMPO
On sale Wednesday, May 10th