

# Media Report



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DC Shorts 2008 ★ The Decision is Yours



- ★ 102 Films in 9 Showcases
- ★ 6 Screenplays performed live
- ★ Over 150 filmmakers from 8 countries
- ★ 1 amazing, creative week!

# DC Shorts Film Festival 2008

## Media Coverage

### Articles

- DC Examiner: Yeas and Nays**, 9/15/08 – Interview with featured filmmaker Rider Strong. [http://www.dcxaminer.com/opinion/blogs/YeasandNays/Media\\_Mix\\_Rider\\_Strong.html](http://www.dcxaminer.com/opinion/blogs/YeasandNays/Media_Mix_Rider_Strong.html)
- The Eagle** (American University), 9/11/08 – “Film Festival Celebrates Fifth Year” by Donny T. Sheldon. Article focuses on short films as a genre as well as the festival itself.
- The Hilltop** (Howard University), 8/28/08 – “DC Short Film Festival Showcases Local Talent” by Aleesa Mann. Highlighting festival and its growing popularity with interviews with Jon Gann and Howard University students.
- Fairfax Times**, 9/6/08 – Article including general festival information in Events section.
- The Georgetown Voice** (Georgetown University), 9/11/08 – “The Shorter the Better” by Scott Munro. Article includes descriptions of the festivals lineup and information including tickets prices and dates. Page 12
- The Hoya** (Georgetown University), 9/11/08 – “D.C.’s International Streets Set the Scene: A Festival for Films Big and Small” by Alex Lee. Article about both the history of the Festival as well as Gann’s career and involvement.
- Washington Jewish Week**: 9/11/08 – “Israeli, Arab Films at DC Shorts Film Festival” Article highlighting the Israeli and Arab themed films being shown at the festival. The films are named and summarized.
- Washington Post**, 8/22/08 – Save the Date section of Style on the Go, C10
- Washington Post**, 9/11/08 – “On Screen Briefly: 100 Mini Films” by Lavanya Ramanathan. Article in Style section page C11
- Washington Post**, 9/14/08 – “Remaking the Scene” by Ann Hornaday. Bio of Jon Gann with interview and accompanying picture. One of the chosen young Washingtonians shaping the D.C. arts scene. Page M17
- Washington Times**, 9/12/08 – “BEYOND: DC Shorts Film Fest at Milestone” by Sonny Bunch. Highlights fifth anniversary of festival with interview with Jon Gann and festival info.

### Listings

- The Boston Globe**, 7/27/08 – “Jesse James Rides Again...and Again” by Meredith Goldstein. Listing in the Destinations/Events area of the Travel section, M2.
- Daily Candy**, 9/18/08 – Listing in Weekend Guide
- Fauquier Times-Democrat**, Reprint of press release in online Events section
- Fredericksburg Free Lance Star**, 9/11/08 – Independent: The First Ever Rappahannock Independent Film Festival is Coming to Fredericksburg” by Ben Sellers. Reference to DC Shorts in relation to the scheduling of the Rappahannock film festival.
- Washington Woman Magazine**, 9/08 – listing in Around Town section of September issue, page 28
- Washingtonian: 9/08**, Jon Gann featured on The Guest List – a monthly roundup of eight people to have dinner with in Washington. Caroline Kennedy and Gwen Ifill were also on the list.
- Washington Post**: Weekend, 8/15/08 – Blurb in Next Up section, WE42
- Washington Post**: Weekend, 8/29/08 – Blurb in Next Up section, WE42
- Washington Post**: Weekend, 9/5/08 – Blurb in In Town section, WE03
- Washington Post**: Sunday Source, 9/7/08 – named as one of the top five can’t miss events of the week, page N05
- Washingtonian**, 9/08 – listing on page 34

## Radio and Television

**Comcast Newsmakers**, Five minute profile with Jon Gann about the DC Shorts. Broadcast on the Comcast Channel From August 25 - September 11, 2008.

**WAMU 88.5 FM**, 9/10/08 – “Art Beat” 30 second interview with Jon Gann during News section.  
<http://wamu.org/news/08/09/10.php>

**WUSA 9**, 9/12/08 – Interview with Jon Gann during the “At the Movies” segment of the news

## Web sites/Blogs

**Bill’s Movie News and Reviews**, 9/15/08 – listing of the films being shown at the fourth showcase of the festival. <http://billsmoviereviews.blogspot.com/2008/09/dc-shorts-showcase-4-for-adults.html>

**BizBash Washington**, 9/10/08 – Article by Wendy Wollenberg highlighting festival’s fifth anniversary. <http://www.bizbash.com/washington/content/editorial/e12546.php>

**DC City Blog**, 9/11/08 – Listing with festival information. <http://www.dccityblog.com/2008-dc-shorts-film-festival>

**DCFab!**, 9/12/08 – listing, <http://dcfab.blogspot.com/2008/09/dc-shorts-film-festival.html>

**DCist**, 9/11/08 – blurb [http://dcist.com/2008/09/11/about\\_tonight\\_229.php](http://dcist.com/2008/09/11/about_tonight_229.php)

**DC This Week**, 9/12/08 – Listing with festival information <http://dcthisweek.blogspot.com/2008/09/dc-shorts-film-festival-playing-now.html>

**DC Traveler**, 9/10/08 – Article highlighting the festival. <http://www.thedctraveler.com/time-to-vote-dcs-shorts-film-festival>

**Eidolon Films Blog**, 9/12/08 – “The Short Subject Gets the Spotlight at Upcoming Film Festival” by Tessa Moran. Article focusing on the films and content of the festival with quotes from Jon Gann.

**Glenn’s List**, 9/9/08 – “Sept. 10 and beyond...” – Mention in listings of events for the week. <http://glennslist.wordpress.com/2008/09/09/sept-10-and-beyond/>

**Greg’s List – DC**, 9/17/08 – Listing <http://gregslistdc.com/event/2008/best-dc-shorts-film-festival-landmark-e-street-theater>

**Karen’s Washington, DC Travel Blog**, 8/26/08 - Blurb by Karen Hart <http://godc.about.com/b/2008/08/26/dc-shorts-film-festival-september-11-18-2008.htm>

**Juli B E-Newsletter**, 9/9/08 – Listed as part of top picks for September. [http://julib.com/washingtondc/septemberpicks090908DC\\_email.html](http://julib.com/washingtondc/septemberpicks090908DC_email.html)

**Kiyong’s Portfolio Blog**, 9/24/08 – List of some of the favorite films viewed at the festival by blogger Kiyong. <http://kiyong.wordpress.com/2008/09/24/dc-shorts-2008>

**Listopad: Style and Culture in Washington, DC**, 9/8/08 – “Get to It: Thursday” (listing) [http://listopadshop.blogspot.com/2008/09/get-to-it\\_08.html](http://listopadshop.blogspot.com/2008/09/get-to-it_08.html)

**MetroBlogs: DC**, 9/9/08 – Festival information mentioned as part of 2008 Arts on Foot Day. <http://dc.metblogs.com/2008/09/09/2008-arts-on-foot/>

**MetroMix (Channel 9 blog)**, 9/10/08 – blurb with festival information <http://dc.metromix.com/movies/movie/d-c-shorts-film-northwest/595842/content>

**On the Red Line blog**, 8/20/08 – listing <http://jcnemecek.com/grosvenor/?p=246>

**Penn Quarter Living blog**, 9/10/08 – listing, <http://pqliving.com/?p=2084>

**Racialicious Blog**, 9/19/08 – Article about Irish Twins, a featured film at the festival. <http://www.racialicious.com/2008/09/19/film-festival-pick-irish-twins/>

**Real Estate Blog**, 9/4/08 – “Jazzy Events in and around Alexandria” Article listing the festival as one of September’s must-see events written by real estate agent Tamara Inzunza. <http://activerain.com/blogview/674924/Jazzy-Events-In-And>

**RobRaffety.com**, 9/11/08 – Featured filmmaker Rob Raffety promoting the festival on his blog. <http://robraffety.com/?p=451>

**Short Film News**, 9/8/08 – listing and description of festival <http://en.shortfilmnews.com/shownews.asp?id=-2042059502>

**The Short Films Blog**, 9/5/08 – write-up of The Tapes of My Father, a featured film at the Festival <http://shortfilmsblog.blogspot.com/2008/09/tapes-of-my-father.html>

**The Short Films Blog**, 9/17/08 – write up of Speed Dating, a featured film at the festival <http://shortfilmsblog.blogspot.com/2008/09/speed-dating.html>

**The Short Films Blog**, 9/19/08 – write up of One of the Last, a featured film at the festival. <http://shortfilmsblog.blogspot.com/2008/09/uno-degli-ultimi.html>

**Scared Mouse Trappings Blog**, 9/16/08 – post reviewing the festival and listing blogger's personal highlights. <http://www.scaredmouse.com/blog/2008/09/dc-done-right.html>

**The Scene (Channel 4 blog)**, 9/10/08 – "Catch the Shorts!" by Paige Fullmer. Article with festival information. <http://www.nbc4.com/dcscene/17430065/detail.html>

**This is Not a Joke Film Blog**, 9/17/08 – Bloggers review of this year's festival. <http://seriouslythisisnotajoke.blogspot.com/2008/09/dc-shorts-showcase-3.html>

**TMZ.com**, 9/15/08 – Video featuring filmmaker and actor Rider Strong during his time at the festival. [http://www.tMZ.com/tmz\\_main\\_video?titleid=1790936260](http://www.tMZ.com/tmz_main_video?titleid=1790936260)

**Washingtonian Magazine Capitol Comment Blog**, 9/4/08 - "Washingtonian Favorites" by Alejandro Salinas. Weekly interview with "noteworthy Washingtonians": <http://www.washingtonian.com/blogarticles/people/capitalcomment/9162.html>

**Washingtonian Magazine Capitol Comment Blog**, 9/11/08 – "The Morning Buzz" Mentions DC Shorts as part of their weekend picks and links to the Weekend picks page. <http://www.washingtonian.com/blogarticles/9308.html>

**Washingtonian Magazine After Hours Blog**, 9/11/08 – Article discussing some of the individual films as well as general festival information. <http://www.washingtonian.com/blogarticles/artsfun/afterhours/9298.html>

**Washingtonian Magazine After Hours Blog**, 9/24/08 – article by Bekah Grant listing alternative film opportunities inspired by the popularity of the DC Shorts festival. <http://www.washingtonian.com/blogarticles/artsfun/afterhours/9435.html>

**Washingtonian Where and When E-Newsletter**, 9/8/08 – Blurb with links to festival website and website listing.

**Wheretraveler.com**, 9/4/08 - "Fest Bets" <http://washingtondc.wheretraveler.com/node/71350>

# The Washington Post

## Excerpts from various articles

### On-Screen Briefly: 100 Mini-Films

By Lavanya Ramanathan

Thursday, September 11, 2008; Page C11

It's Day One for the DC Shorts Film Festival, and over the next week more than 100 mini-movies from all over the world will be screened, parties will be thrown, filmmakers will be feted, screenplays will even be tested live.

The festival is broken down into "showcases," each featuring about 10 movies ranging from one to 20 minutes in length. Generally, the screenings aren't themed, but if you're looking for children's films, the festival hosts one free screening as part of the Arts on Foot festival on Saturday.

And if you're looking for films with a decidedly adult bent, well, they've got those, too.

Showcase 4 features a pack of movies that are definitely for mature eyes only. Sure, Carrie Fisher offers bluer material in her one-woman show at the Lincoln Theatre than these movies do, but there is violence, nudity, drug use and sex. Accordingly, these movies are screened late: Showcase 4 is Saturday at midnight and repeated Monday at 9:30 p.m.

What will you see, exactly?

Well, lots of voice-overs -- though the filmmakers get just a few minutes to tell their stories and try to wrap them up neatly (many films opt for not-so-neat endings, however). The movies include "The Art of Stalking," a well-made mini-feature about a stalker whose gig is undermined when another stalker moves in on his mark. "A Letter to Colleen" is a nearly eight-minute animated film that bookish types might recognize as taking its cues from the Brett Easton Ellis School for the Cynical. "The List" is a brief, brutal little story about an interrogation; "The Professional Interview" follows a fresh-faced newbie to the business world, who just might be aiming for a job at the wrong company. Only "Ring-Around-a-Rosie," a mildly contrived piece that reads more like a music video than a short film, hits a wrong note. But thankfully, at only 10 minutes, it's over quickly.

The DC Shorts Film Festival continues tonight through Sept. 18. Tonight's opening showcase, at 7 p.m. at the Landmark, will be followed by a rooftop opening soiree at Carroll Square. Showcase 4 is screened Saturday at midnight and Monday at 9:30 p.m., also at the Landmark. \$12 per screening; the family-film showcase and screenplay competition are free (see Web site for ticket details); VIP passes, \$125. Advance purchase is highly recommended.

### Sunday Source: Our Picks

Sunday, September 7, 2008; Page N05

More than 100 short films from eight countries will be screened at this fifth annual event. Keep an eye out for "Capture Claus," in which a young boy tries to prove the existence of Santa Claus by tying him up in his home. There's also "The Bad News Bearer," about a man who delivers bad news so others don't have to. With most of the films clocking in at under 10 minutes, the best part is that if you like what you've seen, you'll want more; if not, well, you haven't wasted that much time.

### Remaking The Scene

By Ann Hornaday

Sunday, September 14, 2008; Page M16

Washington, D.C. has probably always had a film scene. It just took Jon Gann to notice.

Gann grew up in Silver Spring, graduated from the University of Delaware and had founded his own graphic design firm when he decided to go to film school in 1998. One of his short films made its way to festivals; inspired by that experience, in 2003 he founded the DC Shorts Film Festival (now underway). The next year he formed the DC Film Salon, a quarterly filmmaker confab at Bar Louie. His latest creation is the DC Film Alliance, an umbrella organization that lets film and TV professionals share information about navigating local production.

Gann still produces a film a year (look out for "I Shaved for This!?", an omnibus about contemporary dating). But his heart lies in helping filmmakers help themselves. "I get the greatest thrill when someone says, 'You gave me the resources I needed to get something done in this town,'" he notes. "If you can't share it, what's the point of having the information?"

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## Film Festival Celebrated 5th Year

### D.C. Shorts Hosts Festival of Short Films

By Donny Sheldon on 9/11/08

SHORT CUTS - From Sept. 11 to 18, the Landmark E Street Theater will host the fifth annual D.C. Shorts Film Festival, which features an array of work from around the world.

The D.C. Shorts Film Festival, which *MovieMaker Magazine* recently called "one of the nation's leading short film festivals," has become a premier venue for local and national filmmakers alike.

The festival, which is into its fifth year, showcases a broad scope of genres, from animation and experimental work to documentaries and musical trailers. This year, the festival will show more than 100 films from eight different countries between Sept. 11 and 18, with screenings held at the Landmark E Street Cinema.

Jeffrey Middents, a College of Arts and Sciences professor who's currently teaching a film topic course on short films this semester, said he regards the genre as a relatively new phenomenon.

"The short seems to have a complex, hidden role today. For one thing, it is often seen as a 'calling card' for aspiring filmmakers to prove that they have the chops to make a feature film. That said, the rise of YouTube, FunnyOrDie.com and other Web sites have finally demonstrated that the Internet has become a viable venue to watch shorts," he said. "I've often found that shorts can afford to take risks that features can't, which makes them the vehicle at the forefront for innovative, vibrant filmmaking and storytelling."

Middents' class will run a blog over the course of the semester, [shortfilmsblog.blogspot.com](http://shortfilmsblog.blogspot.com) and will be covering the entire week of the D.C. Shorts Film Festival.

One of this year's featured shorts is "The Confession," the story of a young man who goes to church to confess his sins. Unfortunately the priest seems to prefer gossiping over bestowing forgiveness. Other films include "The Inquisitive Snail," an animated piece about a snail sent to spy on a remote town; "The List," a gritty drama chronicling a young woman's experience being interrogated by the CIA for espionage; and "Nasuh," an experimental, animated short about a bathhouse employee who encounters a spiritual revelation.

This year, in the festival's second annual screenplay competition, festival patrons will be able to watch actors and screenwriters perform six chosen scripts live. At the end of the program, viewers are asked to vote for their favorite script, which will receive a \$1,000 grant to be produced and another \$1,000 upon the film's completion.

The competition winner will see their film screened at the 2009 D.C. Shorts Film Festival. You can attend the

competition for free, but seating comes on a first-come, first-served basis. The competition, held at the U.S. Navy Memorial/Burke Theater, begins at 7 p.m. Saturday. Festival staff encourages patrons to arrive half an hour early.

D.C. Shorts Film Festival Director Jon Gann said there is a cheaper alternative to purchasing full-price tickets.

"If you come to a screening that is sold out - and most will - you can buy up to two tickets for a mid-week screening (Sunday - Wednesday) for half price," he said in an e-mail.

The D.C. Shorts Film Festival is different from its festival contemporaries, as it's the area's only festival dedicated solely to short films. Gann said there was another difference as well.

"D.C. Shorts is really about filmmakers. Most festivals are about money and buzz. We are about making connections," Gann said. "We are able to bring amazing films from across the globe to D.C. audiences."

Friday, September 11, 2008

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## Excerpts from various blog postings

After Hours Blog

### **The Lookout: DC Shorts Film Festival**

By Ashley Jacobs

With the DC Shorts Film Festival beginning this week, the question isn't whether to attend the event but which of the 102 competing films to see.

Celebrating its fifth anniversary, DC Shorts will screen each of a record 102 films—chosen from 650 submissions—during the eight-day festival at Landmark E Street Cinema (555 11th St., NW) starting September 11. The festival will also include readings from six screenplays and conclude with a Best of the Fest showcase.

If that's not enough to excite your inner cinephile, you can check out one of the open-invitation parties to rub shoulders with some of the 180 visiting filmmakers, or attend a seminar led by filmmaker Kelley Baker. For those with children, DC Shorts is offering a free Family Films series as part of the Penn Quarter Arts on Foot celebration.

Festival founder and director Jon Gann—who started the event after tiring of what he saw as Hollywood's casual treatment of filmmakers—recommends ordering tickets in advance because numerous shows are expected to sell out.

Asked which films he felt were most worthy of the \$12 admission, Gann was at a loss but eventually decided on three sure to please a Washington audience. The first is Funniest Fed 2007, directed by local filmmaker Rob Raffety. The comic documentary, which Gann calls "very Washington," follows numerous federal workers who enter a standup-comedy contest. His second pick, Irish Twins, is written and directed by Rider Strong of TV's Boy Meets World, who also acts in it. The third, Bloom, is a dark 13-minute drama about lost love.

For the first time this year, moviegoers can vote for their favorite shorts via a phone-ballet system immediately following each show; DC Shorts is the nation's first film festival to use such a method. Winners will be announced September 14, followed by encore presentations September 14 through 18.

Capitol Coment Blog

### **Washingtonian Favorites: Jon Gann**

By Alejandro Salinas

Every Thursday, we bring you interviews with noteworthy Washingtonians. This week, we catch up with Jon Gann, filmmaker and organizer of the DC Shorts Film Festival.

*Occupation:* Filmmaker, Festival Organizer, Graphic Designer, Bon Vivant

*Must have item at all times:* Sad, but my iPod.

*Signature drink:* Makers Mark on the rocks.

*Finish the sentence:* When not working, you can find me...Out with friends or my dog, Pilot.

*Washingtonian(s) you admire?* Anyone who runs a non-profit. What work!

*Favorite neighborhood in the city?* Penn Quarter/Chinatown.

*Washington insider tip(s)?* It's really about who you are, not who you know.

*Finish the sentence:* Thinking about the metro makes me...

Wonder what inconvenience I am going to be thrown today.

*What would you change about DC?* Easier-to-navigate bureaucracy and bigger thinking.

*As you answer these questions, what websites are open in your browser?* Macintouch.com (I am a MacNerd) and DCShorts.com

*What's your daily routine like?* Wake, espresso, work, lunch, work, nap, work, dinner/drinks/date/friends, tv and play with dog, sleep, repeat.

*What side(s) of DC would you want to see depicted more on film?* DC's arts scenes -- music, film, fashion, visual arts.

This is not only a government/spy town.

*Top five directors and why?* Billy Wilder for the classics, Charlie Chaplin for the genius, Steven Spielberg for the drama, Pedro Almodovar for the sensitivity, Martin Scorsese for the guts.

*Are you currently working on any films yourself?* I am overseeing a community documentary titled "I Shaved for This?! The State of Dating in America." I am coordinating eight other documentarians in creating nine small films about different aspects of the dating scene and rules.

*What is the first film you remember seeing?* Freaky Friday with my grandmother and siblings at Wheaton Plaza -- before it was enclosed. Damn, I AM old.

# The Washington Times

## BEYOND: DC Shorts film fest at milestone 5-year mark makes event eligible for Academy Awards

By Sonny Bunch

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the DC Shorts Film Festival, an important milestone. Why? Because upon completion of this fifth year, the festival is eligible for accreditation by the Academy Awards.

"They only look at festivals that are five years plus," programmer Jon Gann says, but age alone doesn't guarantee accreditation. "It's a lot of paperwork on our end, and a lot of begging."

Sandwiched between the Toronto Film Festival and the New York City Short Film Festival, the District's festival - which runs through Thursday at Landmark's E Street Cinema - risks getting lost in the shuffle. Mr. Gann tries to mitigate that worry by making the festival especially attractive to burgeoning filmmakers.

"Our deal with filmmakers," Mr. Gann says, "is that if you can get to Washington, we will house you and feed you as best we can." A number of private homes are housing artists, and restaurants around the city have donated meal tickets; the Hotel Monaco also is offering a steeply discounted rate.

From an artistic point of view, the festival offers a number of attractions for would-be directors. "Most film festivals, you apply and send your check and get rejected and never know why," Mr. Gann explains. "We wanted a completely open system.... As a filmmaker, you just want to know why you were rejected." To that end, he devised an Internet-based judging system. Creators can log onto it once the lineup is announced and see critiques about their films' strengths and weaknesses and the reasons for their inclusion or rejection.

This year's festival also features two seminars led by Kelley Baker, aka "the Angry Filmmaker": "Making the Extremely Low Budget Feature" and "Guerilla Marketing and Self Distribution of Your Film." Both are offered free on Friday, with priority given to filmmakers in the competition.

There's plenty for the average moviegoer to enjoy as well, starting with the shorts themselves. More than 750 films were submitted, of which 103 ultimately were selected. They run the gamut from student films and microbudgeted indie movies shot with hand-held digicams to slicker productions. There are documentaries, features, animated films and experimental flicks.

The competition films have been divided into eight showcases, and audiences will pick their favorite from each

showcase for one of the festival's eight audience-choice awards.

Everything wraps up on Thursday at the E Street Cinema with four back-to-back showings of the best of the festival. Screenings are \$12, and an all-access VIP pass costs \$125.

In addition to securing entry into any screening, the VIP pass grants access to the Filmmaker Lounge, the spot where festival participants relax and get to know one another. Tickets can be purchased at [DCshorts.com](http://DCshorts.com).

On Saturday, the audience also will get the chance to judge six short screenplays and decide which will be given money and put into production.

"It's like a table reading on steroids," Mr. Gann says. "It's not a performance, but it's not really a table reading, either. In order to get the audience involved, it has to be done more professionally."

Professional actors and a professional director will come together to give the scripts a proper read-through; the audience then will vote via phone on which they preferred. With any luck, next year's festival will screen the winning selection.

September 13, 2008

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## DC Short Film Festival Showcases Local Talent

By: Aleesa Mann

Posted: 8/28/08

The 2008 DC Shorts Film Festival, which is being held Sept. 11 - 18, is in its fifth year and is continuing to gain popularity with a fan base that continues to grow.

"We have an international reputation among filmmakers so that helps a lot, and filmmakers who came to the festival in the past heavily talk it up to other filmmakers," says John Gann, the DC Shorts Film Festival Founder. "The first year we had 70 submissions and we showed 30 films. This year we had 600 something and we're showing 103 films, so it has grown quite a bit."

Gann, a filmmaker himself, created the festival after realizing his dissatisfaction with the film industry.

"I had just finished traveling around the world going to festivals with a film of mine, and I was pretty disgusted at how filmmakers were treated at festivals," Gann said. "So when I came back to D.C. I decided I was going to make a festival that's going to be about filmmakers and films and people."

For the DC Shorts Film Festival, a committee of film directors and festival volunteers reviewed the 650 film submissions received over a six-month period from December to May.

Then, over the course of the film festival week, the chosen 103 short films will be shown and reviewed by audience members using a phone-based ballot system, making the DC Shorts Film Festival the first festival to capitalize on the technology.

"I thought [the phone-based ballot system] was good for a lot of reasons. A, it helps us calculate votes much faster. B, it allows the filmmakers to leave a message about their films and audience members can actually call in and people can leave a message for the filmmaker so they actually get feedback from audience members," Gann said.

The festival is a great opportunity for aspiring directors and highlights the creativity and cultural life in a city that is widely known for its politics.

"We have quite a few first time directors in the festival this year. I would say probably a quarter of the films are from first time directors. We also have 13 local films. It's important to us to show films that are made locally to show what we can do as a community," Gann said.

Many students recognize the opportunity film festivals offer aspiring directors.

"I feel as though film festivals help aspiring directors by providing them with a place to display what they have to add to the tapestry of creative talent that we have here in DC and throughout the world," said sophomore Agnes Erskine, Radio, TV and Film major.

"It also gives [directors] a chance to view the works of their fellow aspiring directors. It's a great opportunity to set a foundation for making names for themselves," Erskine adds.

Britany Rickett, a sophomore film production major, intends to take advantage of the entry-level experience provided by film festivals by participating in events like the 2009 Filmfest DC.

"I will be volunteering for the event just to get a better feel for what kind of material I need to bring to compete with the international market," she says.

Rickett acknowledges the exclusivity of the film industry and feels film festivals may provide directors a competitive advantage.

"This industry is so hard to break into especially if you are trying to go against the trends, so being able to have your film viewed in a real theatre is the opportunity of a lifetime. You never know who will be in attendance or who will be able to give you that big break."

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