

Portland Filmgoers To Screen Joss Whedon Film To Benefit Gender Equality

Second Annual Charity Event Is Part Of Unprecedented Worldwide Effort Conceived In Portland

Portland OR (04 May 2007) – On June 22 and 23, as part of an unprecedented worldwide event conceived here in Portland and now in its second year, filmgoers at the historic Hollywood Theatre will screen the Universal Pictures film *Serenity*, with proceeds to benefit Equality Now and the Women's Film Initiative.

Equality Now works to end violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world through the mobilization of public pressure, while the Women's Film Initiative is a project of Film Action Oregon established in recognition that few role models exist for women interested in pursuing filmmaking behind the camera.

The screenings are part of a coordinated screening effort (conceived late in 2005 by Portland-area fans of the motion picture written and directed by Joss Whedon) which includes fifty such fan-organized screenings in the United States, Australia, Austria, Canada, England, France, Ireland, Scotland, and New Zealand, all to benefit Equality Now, one of Whedon's favorite charities.

"The watchword here really is Benefit," said Christopher Frankonis, coordinator of the original worldwide effort in 2006 and a member of PDX Browncoats, a group of local fans of *Serenity* and its precursor television series, *Firefly*. "Naturally, fans receive the benefit of seeing *Serenity* on the big screen once again. But more significantly, Equality Now, and this year the Women's Film Initiative as well, benefit from a truly unique grassroots fundraiser."

"Film Action Oregon, through its Women's Film Initiative, is dedicated to leveling the playing field for women in Oregon's film community," said Ellen Bergstone Beer, Film Action Oregon's executive director. "Events like this help us raise awareness and funds for this important work."

"All of us continue to be amazed by and grateful for the Browncoats' generous and committed support for our work," said Amanda Sullivan of Equality Now. "Their energy and enthusiasm is inspiring and these screenings are coming at a critical time when we are especially in need of funds. We thank each and every one of them."

"There are two ways to fight a battle like ours," said Whedon, best known for creating the iconic character and series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and a dedicated supporter of Equality Now. "One is to whisper in the ear of the masses, try subtly and gradually to

change the gender expectations and mythic structures of our culture. That's me. The other is to step up and confront the thousands of atrocities that are taking place around the world on an immediate, one-by-one basis. That's a great deal harder, and that's Equality Now."

The inaugural effort in 2006 raised over \$69,000 worldwide for Equality Now, with Portland's screening leading the way.

"Last year at a sold-out 500-seat event, we raised over \$7,200 for Equality Now, marking Portland's take as more than 10% of the worldwide total, and more than any other participating city," said Frankonis. Paraphrasing an oft-quoted line from *Firefly*, he added: "In 2006 we did the impossible. This year, we top it."

Portland's screenings, presented by PDX Browncoats and Film Action Oregon, will be held on Friday, June 22 and Saturday, June 23, at the historic Hollywood Theatre, located at 4122 NE Sandy Boulevard. Doors open at 7:00 PM on Friday and 1:00 PM on Saturday for pre-screening activities, with programming starting at 8:00 PM and 2:00 PM, respectively. For tickets, merchandise, sponsorship opportunities, further information, and email updates see <<http://serenitynow.pdxbrowncoats.com/>>.

About PDX Browncoats

Portland's own group of *Firefly* and *Serenity* fans, which began meeting regularly during the run-up to the film's release in 2005. They conceived the original (and then-unprecedented) worldwide charity screenings event held in 2006. For more information about PDX Browncoats, see <<http://www.pdxbrowncoats.com/>>.

About Equality Now

Founded in 1992 to work for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women around the world by working with national human rights organizations and individual activists to document violence and discrimination against women and mobilize international action to stop these human rights abuses. For more information about Equality Now, see <<http://www.equalitynow.org/>>.

About the Women's Film Initiative

A project of Film Action Oregon established in recognition that few role models exist for women interested in pursuing filmmaking behind the camera. Comprised of four programs: INSPIRE: A Program for Young Women Filmmakers; Faerie Godmother Film Scholarships; Women's Vision Film Grants; and Portland Women's Film Festival. For more information about the Women's Film Initiative, see <<http://www.filmaction.org/>>.

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