

Free, open-air Old Pasadena Film Festival kicks off

By Janette Williams Staff Writer

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The free, open-air Old Pasadena Film Festival, which has featured classic movies and such screen favorites as Marilyn Monroe and Audrey Hepburn in past years, kicks off a three-week series of family entertainment on Friday.

PASADENA - For any movie buff, the chance to put on the biggest free outdoor film festival in California is like, well, something out of the movies.

For Steve Mulheim, staging this year's Old Pasadena Film Festival, which opens tonight at One Colorado, has been a labor of love.

Mulheim, president and CEO of the Old Pasadena Management Association, says he's not an

expert, just an amateur film buff who hopes everyone will like what he likes - "The old black-and-white classic stuff" and the opportunity to see them and other vintage movies on the big screen.

In the past the shopping district has worked with American Cinemateque to put on the festival, Mulheim said.

"But this year we had some ideas and wanted to move forward on our own."

A variety of screenings will be held every Thursday, Friday and Saturday through July 31, with the focus on women in film. The festival kicks off at 8:30 p.m. tonight with the 1977 Woody Allen classic "Annie Hall," starring Diane Keaton.

"We knew we wanted to focus on great leading ladies - and, conveniently, there's a book called '50 Greatest Leading Ladies Of All Time,'" Mulheim joked.

The festival's quirky tradition of showing movies in parking garages and other urban settings has been "a bit of a victim of its own success," Mulheim said. This year several movies are being shown for the first time in the larger, and more family friendly, surroundings of Central Park.

One innovation from last year proved so successful that it's back - silent movie accompaniment by the Malibu Coast Chamber Orchestra.

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"We had so much amazing feedback last year, we're bringing it back," Mulheim said.

On Friday at One Colorado, the orchestra will accompany a series of Mary Pickford silent shorts, "What Daisy Said," "Ramona," "The Gibson Goddess," and "Willful Peggy."

Among the stellar leading ladies featured in the One Colorado series are Marilyn Monroe in "How to Marry a Millionaire"; Meryl Streep in "Death Becomes Her"; Barbra Streisand in "The Way We Were"; Mae West in "She Done Him Wrong"; Katherine Hepburn in "Bringing Up Baby"; Bette Davis in "All About Eve"; and the cast of Saturday's feature, "The Women."

With its Manhattan setting and all-star, all-female cast, including Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell, Joan Fontaine and Marjorie Main, "The Women" is described by organizers as "the original `Sex & the City.'"

Regular screening sites are back, including Hugus and Mills alleys at One Colorado. The series of travel movies, including "Chocolat" and "Seven Years in Tibet," will be shown at Distant Lands bookstore, 56 S. Raymond Ave.

Now all Mulheim has to do is find a suitably creepy venue for the final movie, "Night of the Living Dead."

"We're working on something we think will be a lot of fun for a zombie movie," he said. "I don't

know if we can get authorization to use the (Sares Regis) parking lot south of Green Street and make it a drive-in."

For a complete schedule of movie screenings, go to oldpasadena.org.

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