

ONCE NOT FAR FROM HOME

A STARS NORTH™ FILM

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Stars North™ Receives 8 CRA Nominations

“Once Not Far From Home” Gains Recognition for Orlando-Based Film Company!

ORLANDO, FL —Stars North’s short film, *Once Not Far From Home*, has received 8 nominations for Florida’s most prestigious entertainment award: The Crystal Reel. The nominations were all in the “Best of” category and included: Short Film, Directing, Cinematography, Production Design, Hair and Make-Up, Costume Design, Editing and Original Score.

“We were thrilled to receive the news”, says Stars North co-founder, Todd Thompson. “Stars North is dedicated to making films in Florida, and it means a lot to be recognized so strongly (and in so many categories) for our efforts.”

Once Not Far From Home was directed by Ben Van Hook and written by Todd Thompson. The film features an impressive cast of recognizable faces, including TVs Erik Per Sullivan (*Malcolm In The Middle*), Skye McCole Bartusiak (*The Patriot*), Daniel Hugh Kelly (*Star Trek: Insurrection*), Orlando’s own, Brett Rice (*Monster*) and veteran actor, James Best (*The Dukes of Hazard*).

Produced by Thompson and Stars North partners Smithy Sipes and Kathryn Ruscio Kelly, *Once Not Far From Home* is a dramatic piece that explores the notion of true love between a curious little boy, a beautiful young girl and a mysterious old house that holds the secrets to their love and fate. The movie is set in the South sometime in the 1930s and is a thought-provoking, picturesque tale that illustrates how first love can last forever. Stars North shot the 35mm piece over a four-day period in July, 2004 and premiered it at the 2005 Florida Film Festival for two sold-out audiences.

Thompson’s goal when penning the script for *Once Not Far From Home* was to create a visual poem; a story that was driven exclusively by moving images set to music. When combined, he hoped that these two ingredients would make for a reminiscent, emotional experience that audiences would not soon forget.

“We were basically making a silent film,” director Ben Van Hook explains. “There is no dialogue between the main characters which made it extra challenging to direct. I knew I had to capture the perfect facial expressions, subtle nuances and find the right emotion levels in each scene in order to successfully communicate the tale we wanted to tell.”

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Once Not Far From Home is the second in a series of four short films produced by Stars North. Their first film, *Time & Again*, starred Academy Award®-nominee Seymour Cassel and premiered for a sold-out audience during the 2003 Florida Film Festival. *Time & Again* went on to earn the filmmakers over 6 independent film awards, including Best Short Film and Best Original Score.

“We are trying to do something really special here”, Thompson says. “Filmmaking is a great revenue-generator for the local economy, and we truly believe in all the talent and resources the State of Florida has to offer. Stars North’s number one focus is to continue making great films here.”

The filmmakers’ efforts are certainly paying off, and they hope that the recognition they receive at this year’s Crystal Reel Awards will help pave the way for a slate of Stars North film projects currently in development. However, attracting those who support the arts and meeting executive producers to finance projects is always an ongoing challenge. What sets Stars North apart from other film companies, though, is their abundance of talent and the knack for attracting a network of industry professionals who share their enthusiasm and passion for making quality, independent films.

“We couldn’t have done *Once Not Far From Home*, or any of our films for that matter, without the help and support of everyone involved” says Sipes. “The crew we had while shooting, and the people and companies we worked with to process, edit, composite our special effects and mix the final score were all top notch. This film is definitely a good example of their hard work and dedication and a testament to what’s possible when it comes to making movies right here in Florida.”

The 2006 Florida Crystal Reel Awards will be held on Saturday, November, 11, 2006 at the Plaza Theater at 425 North Bumby Road. Doors open at 6 p.m. with the ceremony scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. For tickets and other information, please contact 877-725-8849. For more information about *Once Not Far From Home* or to learn more about Stars North, please visit www.starsnorth.com.

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Interviews

Interviews with actors **Erik Per Sullivan**, **Skye McCole Bartusiak**, **Daniel Hugh Kelly**, **Brett Rice**, **James Best**, director **Ben Van Hook**, writer/producer **Todd Thompson**, and producers **Smithy Sipes** and **Kathryn Ruscio Kelly** are available. Please call (407) 292-6240 for scheduling.

Additional PHOTOS and ACTOR BIOS are available by request or by visiting www.starsnorth.com.

About Stars North™

Stars North™ is an independent movie production company based in Orlando, Florida. The company produces commercially appealing, quality films with memorable characters, engaging plots and redeeming messages. Stars North™ is committed to developing and producing projects in Florida that employ local cast and crew for worldwide distribution. The company has released four short films to date: *The Paper Route* (1999), *King Pathetic Creep* (2000), *The Chad Effect* (2001), *Time & Again* (2003) and *Once Not Far From Home* (2005).

For more information, please contact Stars North™ at (407) 292-6240, or visit the company's Web site: www.starsnorth.com.