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Deal aims to get more films to Charlotte

Agreement will place alternative and foreign titles at Park Terrace

LAWRENCE TOPPMAN
Movie Critic

After a year in the dark, the Charlotte Film Society will come back into the spotlight today when it signs an agreement with Consolidated Theatres to show movies at the Park Terrace.

Its Second Week series, which shows foreign and alternative films in rotation for one week, will start March 9 and continue April 13.

Programming will resume September through November. It could expand to as many as eight months next year at Park Road Shopping Center.



IFC Photo
Michaela Klingler plays Sandra in "Requiem," a German religious drama playing in April.

The society, which began showing movies at the Queen Park Theatre in the mid '80s, had been quiet since an abortive run at Regal Stonecrest last winter.

The deal with Consolidated is different. The CFS will book through veteran film buyer Trish Hammill, who worked with the group when it lodged at the Manor Theatre. Consolidated will say yes or no to titles but won't assemble choices. The society will pay for booking and shipping, rent the auditorium and share revenue after expenses. Consolidated will help with advertising and updates on CFS's Web site.

"Consolidated is on the same page with us," said CFS president Joe Alvarez. "The location is much better than Stonecrest, and Consolidated wants to do this more than Regal wanted to do it."

"We have more freedom and control over our operation now, though it will also cost us more money than it has in the past. But it's worth that to bring in some movies that missed Charlotte."

In March, that'll be the French *noir* "Army of Shadows," the Romanian drama "The Death of Mr. Lazarescu" and the American "Old Joy." April has "Gabrielle," a French version of a Joseph Conrad novel; "The Aura," an Argentine mystery; and "Requiem," a German religious drama.

"Foreign-language films have always been an area of emphasis," said Alvarez. "Right now, it's what we can get in a hurry. For fall, we can spread out our geographical diversity. We'll be about 30-70, English to foreign."

Marie McClaffin, director of marketing for Consolidated, knows this is a chance for her chain to draw new patrons to Park Terrace, the city's second-oldest theater (after the Manor).

"We're really excited to be the new partner," she said. "We'll extend discounts to their membership for all films at the Park Terrace, and we're creating a special combo package for CFS members at the concession stand."

Want to Join Society, Or See Movies?

The non-transferable membership cards are based on calendar years; the one valid through December 2007 costs \$5. It gets you a \$1 discount to any film at the Park Terrace, whether in the Second Week series or not, and a free rental for every fifth DVD at Visart Video.

Nonmembers can buy full-price tickets to any CFS film. Call Joe Alvarez at 704-364-5090 or visit www.charlottefilmsociety.com.