

QUVENZHANÉ
WALLIS

THE PROPHET

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SYNOPSIS

The Prophet, by celebrated Lebanese author Kahlil Gibran, is among the most popular volumes of poetry ever written, selling over 100 million copies in forty languages since its publication in 1923. Gibran's timeless verses have been given enchanting new form in this painterly cinematic adventure about freedom and the power of human expression.

This breathtaking animated feature, produced and spearheaded by Salma Hayek, was an official selection at Cannes and made its North American premiere at Toronto International Film Festival. Written and directed by Roger Allers (*The Lion King*), the film intersperses Gibran's elegant poetry within stunning animated sequences by filmmakers Tomm Moore (*The Secret of Kells*, *Song of the Sea*), Bill Plympton (*Guide Dog*), Joan Gratz (*Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase*), Nina Paley (*Sita Sings the Blues*), and a host of award-winning animators from around the world. Set in a Mediterranean sea-side village, Kamila (Salma Hayek) cleans house for exiled artist and poet Mustafa (Liam Neeson), but the more difficult job is keeping her free-spirited young daughter, Almitra, (Quvenzhané Wallis) out of trouble. The three embark on a journey meant to end with Mustafa's return home – but first they must evade the authorities who fear that the truth in his words will incite rebellion.

Featuring music from Damien Rice, Glen Hansard and Yo-Yo Ma.



KAHLIL GIBRAN'S
THE
PROPHET



WORLD PREMIERE – CANNES FILM FESTIVAL (WORK IN PROGRESS)

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE – TORONTO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL

US PREMIERE – NEW YORK INT'L CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL

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“AWE INSPIRING! IT TOOK MY SOUL ON A JOURNEY.”

“Think of *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet* as a gift: a work of essential spiritual enlightenment, elegantly interpreted by nine of the world's leading independent animators.

As visually mesmerizing as it is profound!”

- *Variety*



“A CELEBRATION OF LIFE, FREEDOM AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT!”

“And a celebration of the art of animation. It's the contrast and variety of seeing these pieces together that makes one appreciate the craft more.”

- *The National*

“A THEATRICAL TREASURE, EQUAL PARTS BEAUTIFUL AND INSPIRING!”

“An enchanting experience. One of the most pleasant surprises of TIFF!”

- *Movie Mezzanine*

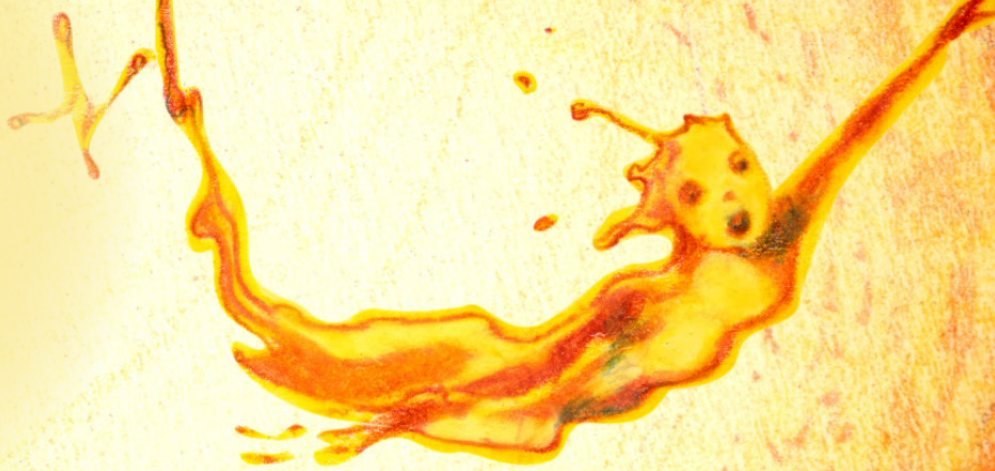
“GORGEOUS!”

- *The Hollywood Reporter*

“UNQUESTIONABLY EXTRAORDINARY!”

- *Biography.com*

KAHLIL GIBRAN'S
**THE
PROPHET**



DOHA FILM INSTITUTE, PARTICIPANT MEDIA,
CODE RED PRODUCTIONS, FFA PRIVATE BANK,
MYGROUP AND FINANCIÈRE PINAULT PRESENT
A VENTANAROSA PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH HANSON, INC.
CREATIVE PROJECTS GROUP

PRODUCTION CREW

Directed by ROGER ALLERS
Written by ROGER ALLERS
Inspired by the book THE PROPHET by KAHLIL GIBRAN
Producer: SALMA HAYEK-PINAULT
Producer: CLARK PETERSON
Producer: JOSÉ TAMEZ
Producer: RON SENKOWSKI
Executive Producer: STEVE HANSON
Executive Producer: FRANÇOIS PINAULT
Executive Producer: JEFF SKOLL
Executive Producer: JONATHAN KING
Executive Producer: JULIA LEBEDEV
Executive Producer: LEONID LEBEDEV
Executive Producer: NAËL NASR
Executive Producer: HAYTHAM NASR
Executive Producer: JEAN RIACHI
Executive Producer: JULIAN KHABBAZ
Art Director: BJARNE HANSEN
Character Designer: UWE HEIDSCHOETTER

Editor: JENNIFER DOLCE
Associate Editors: JOE THYGESEN
JAMES KIRKPATRICK

Story Artists: GAETAN BRIZZI
PAUL BRIZZI
WILL FINN
RALPH ZONDAG

Post Production Supervisor: BRYNNE ORLOSKI

CHAPTER DIRECTORS

Freedom: MICHAL SOCHA
Children: NINA PALEY
Marriage: JOANN SFAR
Work: JOAN GRATZ
Eating & Drinking: BILL PLYMPTON
Love: TOMM MOORE
Good & Evil: MOHAMMED HARIB
Death: GAETAN BRIZZI & PAUL BRIZZI

VOICE CAST

Liam Neeson: Mustafa
Salma Hayek: Kamila
John Krasinski: Halim
Frank Langella: Pasha
Alfred Molina: Sergeant
John Rhys-Davies: Yousef
Quvenzhané Wallis: Almitra

TECHNICAL CREDITS

Running Time: 84 minutes
Rating: PG for thematic elements including
some violence and sensual images.
Format: 1.85 Aspect Ratio, Dolby 5.1 Sound



GKIDS



KAHLIL GIBRAN AND THE BOOK THE PROPHET

Kahlil Gibran is celebrated in Lebanon as a literary hero, and is believed to be the third-best-selling poet of all time, behind Shakespeare and Laozi.

Gibran is best known in the English-speaking world for his 1923 book *The Prophet*, an inspirational series of 26 philosophical essays written in poetic English prose. Since it was first published in 1923, *The Prophet* has never been out of print. Having been translated into more than 40 languages, it was one of the bestselling books of the twentieth century in the United States. A new paperback edition will be released in July 2015 by Random House.

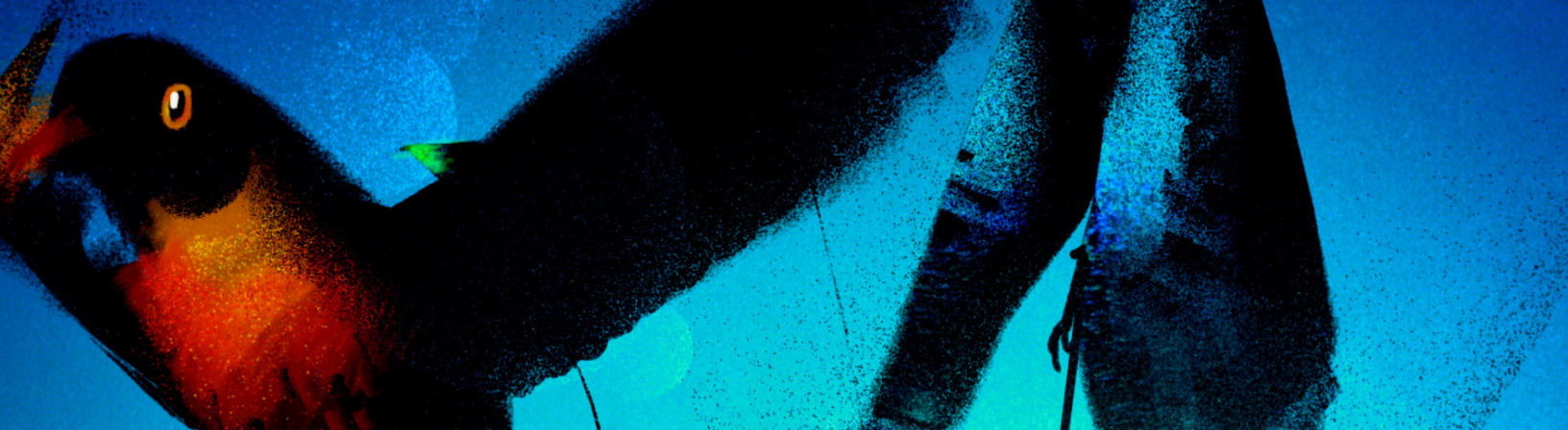
Gibran was born in the town of Bsharri in the north of modern-day Lebanon (then part of Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate, Ottoman Empire), to a Maronite Catholic family. As a young man, he immigrated with his family to the United States, settling in Boston, where he studied art and began his literary career, writing in both English and Arabic. In the Arab world, Gibran is regarded as a literary and political rebel. His romantic style was at the heart of a renaissance in modern Arabic literature (especially prose poetry), breaking away from the classical school.

In addition to writing, Gibran was an accomplished visual artist, whose watercolor paintings and sketches appear in the permanent collections of several galleries, most notably the Telfair Museum of Art in Savannah, GA. He died in 1931, at the age of 48.

"I love you, my brother, whoever you are - whether you worship in a church, kneel in your temple, or pray in your mosque. You and I are children of one faith, fingers of the loving hand of the one supreme being, a hand extended to all."

- Kahlil Gibran





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

ROGER ALLERS on Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*

Kahlil Gibran's book *The Prophet* has inspired millions of people since it was published in 1923, and I was among those moved by its poetry and insight. Indeed, while reading it for the first time when I was 20, I experienced a profound shift in consciousness; a "connectedness" to everything that was so deep it has stayed with me the following 45 years.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to adapt Gibran's book for the screen. My role has been to create a larger narrative out of Gibran's slim story and edit his poetic chapters back into the flow. I have done so with all reverence to Gibran's philosophy and also with his desire to unify all peoples of different faiths and backgrounds.

In the spirit of unity and diversity, I have joined forces with the visions of other artists to bring interpretations of Gibran's chapters to life. Animators from around the world have contributed their unique talents and styles to illuminate some of Gibran's most beloved verse. We have been like monks painting elaborate pages of a larger manuscript, but connected through a digital network of communication.

Not just artists, but there were many more—composers, musicians, producers, financiers from different parts of the world—who were inspired and gave of their energy, time, and the riches of their hearts.

In the words of Kahlil Gibran, "Work is Love made visible."





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Academy Award Nominee Salma Hayek has proven herself as a prolific actress, producer and director, in both film and television. She was nominated for an Academy Award, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and a BAFTA award for her leading role in Julie Taymor's *Frida*. Following *The Prophet* she will star alongside Pierce Brosnan and Jessica Alba in the romantic comedy, *Some Kind of Beautiful*, releasing August 21st.

Hayek has several other films set for release late 2015, early 2016 including *Septembers of Shiraz* alongside Adrien Brody, in which she plays the matriarch of a family crumbling in the wake of the Islamic revolution in 70's era Iran. Then there is *Tale of Tales* by acclaimed Italian director Matteo Garrone.

Noted for her acting career, Hayek has also dedicated much of her time to social activism. Hayek served as spokesperson for the Pampers/UNICEF partnership worldwide, to help stop the spread of life-threatening maternal and neonatal tetanus. She also served as the spokesperson for the Avon Foundation's *Speak Out Against Domestic Violence* program, which focuses on domestic violence education, awareness and prevention, as well as support for victims. In 2005, she spoke in front of the US Senate, encouraging its members to extend the Violence Against Women Act. In January 2006, the legislation was passed, ensuring that 3.9 billion dollars will be allocated to thousands of domestic violence crises and intervention agencies throughout the US. In April of 2005, Hayek visited the Arctic Circle for the celebration of Earth Day, in an effort to bring attention to the dangers that global warming is putting on the lives of the Inuit people and the rest of the world. In November 2005, she served as co-host, alongside Julianne Moore, at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo, which honored Nobel laureate Mohamed el-Baradei and the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency. She was also part of the *One* campaign that singer and activist Bono created, as well as a member of Global Green, and Youth Aids.

In 2013, Hayek, alongside Beyonce Knowles-Carter and Frida Giannini, the then creative director of Gucci, co-founded *CHIME FOR CHANGE*, an organization dedicated to improving the education, help and welfare of women and girls around the world.



PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

SALMA HAYEK-PINAULT

The first time I ever saw the book, *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran, I was six years old. My Lebanese grandfather kept it by his bedside. I was too young to read it, but I understood that it was a little treasure for him, a cherished object, and I was intrigued by its contents and the drawing of the mysterious man on its cover.

It wasn't until my late teens that I actually experienced its beauty and power. As a teenager the poem that touched me most was the one about love. In my 20's and 30's it was the one about good and evil. And now it's the poem about children. That's what this book is, and what I hope the film is. It changes as you change.

It is a book of wisdom and philosophy, but it's a simple philosophy, about the simple things in life that bond us together, like eating and drinking, and children, and love, and death. It is significant to me that it is an Arab writer who came up with this philosophy that goes beyond religion and is inclusive of everyone. It goes to the profound and simple place where we are all the same because we are humans that feel and care for our children and care for our life and ponder upon death. It's about connecting, about starting conversations, about exposing children to the beauty of who they are as human beings so they can see the beauty in others.

Kahlil Gibran loves life. Every poem is a love affair with life and this is a movie about life. The movie is a very personal experience for the viewer. The viewer is driving the boat, not the film. It's an experience for families that is both entertaining and inspirational. I think the whole world can use this message of peace, something that's uplifting and joyous, and that they can share with their whole family.

This movie is also a love letter to my heritage. It is one of the most personal projects I have ever undertaken and I am extremely proud of it. So, on behalf of everyone involved in making this film, I invite you to explore the film, and to discover for yourself the joy of Kahlil Gibran's world.





ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

ROGER ALLERS

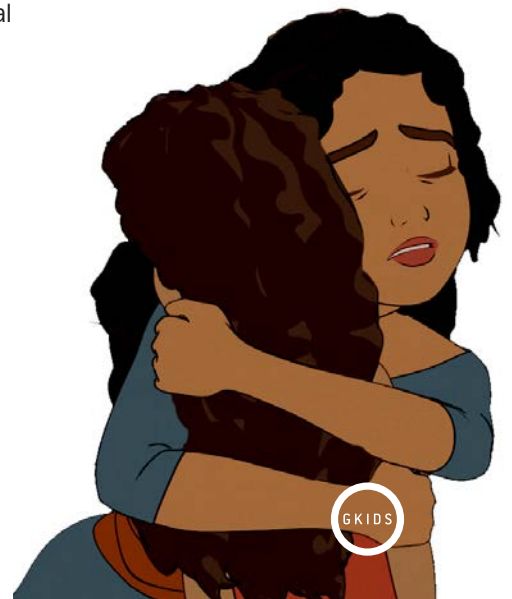
Roger Allers made his feature-film directing debut with *The Lion King*, following a prolific two-decade career in the animation medium that included everything from character design and animation to storyboarding. He was instrumental in shaping the structure and dialogue for the six Disney animated features made before *The Lion King*, serving as head of story on *Oliver and Company* and *Beauty and the Beast*, while also contributing to *The Little Mermaid*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *The Rescuers Down Under* and *Aladdin* in a “senior story” capacity. After Disney, Allers directed *Open Season* for Sony Animation, and with Irene Mecchi wrote and directed *Beatrice’s Goat*, a musical play for a charity whose aim is to end world hunger, the Heifer Foundation.

MICHAL SOCHA (“FREEDOM”)

Michal Socha is a filmmaker, graphic designer, animator and illustrator who has directed, written and produced a number of short films, including the award-winning *Chick*, *Concert*, *Icarus* and *Stone*. He was born and raised in Warsaw, Poland, where he attended the Academy of Fine Arts. Socha is now focusing on the short-film space as well as directing commercials and other commissioned work, and is the co-owner of animation and post-production studio BrosFX.

NINA PALEY (“CHILDREN”)

Nina Paley is a highly acclaimed American animator, cartoonist and director. Her debut animated feature *Sita Sings the Blues* won numerous film festival awards, and remains one of the most popular Creative Commons (open copyright) projects ever made. Prior to feature filmmaking, her comic strips “Nina’s Adventures” and “Fluffy” were syndicated across over 40 newspapers and alternative-weeklies. Her acclaimed animated short films include *The Stork*, *I Heart My Cat*, *Cancer*, and *Your Bliss*. She is based in Urbana, Illinois.





JOANN SFAR (“MARRIAGE”)

Joann Sfar is an award-winning comic-book creator, artist, novelist and film director. Wildly prolific, Sfar is considered one of the most important artists of the new wave of Franco-Belgian comics. He has written a number of successful graphic novels, including *The Rabbi's Cat*, *Little Vampire*, *Klezmer: Tales of the Wild East*, and *The Professor's Daughter*. Sfar turned to filmmaking with his first feature film, *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life*, a biopic about the illustrious French songwriter and singer Serge Gainsbourg. He then wrote, directed and produced the 2011 animated film adaptation of *The Rabbi's Cat*, which won the César Award for Best Animated Film. He lives and works in France.

JOAN GRATZ (“WORK”)

Joan Gratz is an accomplished director, artist and animator who pioneered the animation technique known as claypainting. Working with bits of clay she blends colors and etches fine lines to create a seamless flow of images. Her short film *Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase*, images of the human face are transformed to communicate the graphic style and emotional content of key artworks of the 20th century, won an Academy Award in 1992. Gratz worked at Will Vinton Studios from 1977 to 1987. During that time her work included design and animation for Academy Award nominees *Return to Oz*, *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Creation*. Since establishing her own studio, Gratzfilm, in 1987, she has received many honors for her work on independent shorts and commercials.

BILL PLYMPTON (“EATING AND DRINKING”)

Bill Plympton is an award-winning illustrator and animator, internationally recognized as one of the key figures in independent animation. His iconic pencil sketch look has featured in numerous TV commercials as well as regular occurrences on MTV. This commercial work then led to animated short films, which included the Academy Award-nominated *Your Face* and *Guard Dog*, as well as *How to Kiss*, *Guide Dog*, *Hot Dog* and *The Fan and the Flower*. His feature films include *The Tune*, *Mutant Aliens*, *Hair High*, *Idiots and Angels*, and *Cheatin'*. His new film *Revengeance* just completed a successful Kickstarter campaign and is currently in development.





TOMM MOORE (“LOVE”)

Tomm Moore is the co-founder, producer and creative director for Cartoon Saloon. His first feature film *The Secret of Kells* was Oscar-nominated for Best Animated Feature in 2010, while his second film *Song of the Sea*, was Oscar-nominated for Best Animated Feature in 2015. In 1999, Moore and Paul Young formed Cartoon Saloon while studying animation at Ballyfermot College, Dublin. In the course of the company's history, he has worked as director, art director, storyboarder, animator and illustrator on a range of projects from commercials to service work for feature films, TV series and shorts.

MOHAMMED SAEED HARIB (“GOOD AND EVIL”)

Mohammed Saeed Harib is a successful animator, writer, producer and director. In 2006 he created “Freej,” an animated series airing on Dubai TV that revolved around four elderly Emirati women who try to tackle social issues in the economically booming United Arab Emirates. Most recently, Harib directed “Freej Folklore,” a large-scale Arabic theatrical production. The show, which dealt with Arabic history, culture and traditions, was very popular in the United Arab Emirates and is now on tour. Harib was born in Dubai and graduated from Boston's Northeastern University with a degree in general arts and animation. He is believed to be the first 3D animator to hail from the Middle East.

PAUL & GAETAN BRIZZI (“DEATH”)

Paul and Gaetan Brizzi are twin brothers and highly respected animators. The brothers were born into an Italian family in 1951 yet raised in Paris, where they attended art school. After directing several acclaimed short films, the twins then directed their first feature, *Astérix et la surprise de César*, an adaptation of the beloved French comic book. In 1988, they launched Brizzi Films and produced animated television shows. They sold their studio to Disney and in 1994 moved to Los Angeles to work at the Walt Disney Feature Animation Studio. There, they directed sequences of *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, as well as the final sequence of *Fantasia 2000*. In 2001 the filmmakers left Disney to concentrate on their personal projects as well as their paintings. In addition to the “Death” segment, the brothers also completed the storyboards for *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet*.



THE COMPOSER

GABRIEL YARED

My story with *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran goes back to my teenage years in Lebanon, when I discovered, read and reread his book. It sounded like music to my ears! As well as this, when I was 17, I was hired by the Gibran Committee from his native village, Bsharri, to write music for “Sound and Light”, a show dedicated to him.

More than 40 years later, it was Salma Hayek who brought me back to the book. She came to me and talked about her idea of producing a film based on this book. I was immediately enthusiastic about the concept of this central story, written and directed by Roger Allers, punctuated by 8 chapters from the book, each one directed by 8 different directors.

The first two pieces I composed, long before working on the central story, were: *On Death*, which was still in its storyboard form from the Brizzi brothers, and *On Marriage*, inspired by a script written by Joann Sfar.

These were the two pieces that set the tone for what was to follow, both in terms of style and instrumentation.

For *On Death*, I wrote a slow waltz for solo cello and orchestra, as I had in mind Salma’s incredible proposition to have YoYo Ma as the soloist!

For *On Marriage*, I created a kind of Oriental Tango for which I used oriental instruments such as the Ney, the Kanun, the Oud, oriental percussion, accordion and a Hungarian cymbalum. All was combined with a string orchestra, resulting in a kind of ecumenical, universal musical experience.

Later in the composition process, I decided to use the Ney (and sometimes the Kanun) as the “voice” of the character Almitra, who does not speak, a character for whom I had immediate sympathy, and, for me, seems to be the backbone of the film.

This music was an ideal opportunity to go back and find my Lebanese-oriental roots again, and to allow these elements to work in harmony with my eclectic style. I put all my heart and soul into my work to score this wonderful animation and to try to find the deeper meaning of the book through the music. *The Prophet* gave me wings and so did my collaboration with Roger and Salma. It reminds me of one of Gibran’s most beautiful phrases “Work is Love made visible” to which I would add “and audible”!

The recording session took place at Abbey Road Studios with Peter Cobbin as engineer, and with musicians of all nationalities, English, Lebanese, Moroccan, Tunisian, Egyptian, Syrian, Greek and more... This perfectly reflected the universal harmony described and so desired by Kahlil Gibran.



ABOUT GKIDS

GKIDS is a distributor of award-winning feature animation for both adult and family audiences. Since 2009, the company has scored six Best Animated Feature Oscar nominations – second only to Disney – with *The Secret of Kells* in 2010, *A Cat in Paris* and *Chico & Rita* in 2012, *Ernest & Celestine* in 2014, and *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* and *Song of the Sea* in 2015. Current and upcoming releases include *When Marnie Was There* from director Hiromasa Yonebayashi and Studio Ghibli, 2014 Annecy winner *Boy and the World* from director Alê Abreu, and *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet*, from director Roger Allers and producer Salma Hayek. GKIDS also handles North American theatrical distribution for Oscar winner Hayao Miyazaki's famed Studio Ghibli library of films, one of the world's most coveted animation collections with titles *Spirited Away*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke* and others. GKIDS is longtime producer of the New York Int'l Children's Film Festival, an Oscar-qualifying event and North America's largest festival of film for children and teens. NYICFF jury members include Uma Thurman, Susan Sarandon, Geena Davis, Gus van Sant, Christine Vachon, Henry Selick and James Schamus. www.gkidsfilms.com

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