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Shooting Gallery, Loews launch film series Feb. 25

By CHARLES LYONS

HOLLYWOOD — Gotham-based indie shingle the Shooting Gallery, in conjunction with Loews Cineplex Entertainment, will launch its indie film series Feb. 25 for 12 weeks in 17 major markets.

Series, announced early last year (*Daily Variety*, Jan. 27), calls for a dedicated "indie" screen in Loews theaters in each market.

The Gotham kickoff of the series will feature a benefit screening of "Judy Berlin" in memory of actress Madeline Kahn, a principal in the film who died from ovarian cancer recently.

Among the markets where the series will run are New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Washington, D.C., Boston, Chicago, Detroit and Houston.

Turn to page 61

INDIE FILM SERIES LAUNCH SET



The Shooting Gallery and Loews Cineplex film series will feature a benefit screening of "Judy Berlin" in honor of the pic's star Madeline Kahn, who died of ovarian cancer recently. Pic also stars Barbara Barrie and Bob Dishy, above.

Continued from page 23

The first series slate is: Eric Mendelsohn's "Judy Berlin," winner of the directing award at Sundance 1999; "Orphans," a dark comedy by Peter Mullan that won the best actor award at the 1998 Cannes Intl. Film Festival; "Such a Long Journey," helmed by Sturla Gunnarsson and set against the eve of India's 1971 war with Pakistan; "Southpaw," an Irish doc about a real-life Rocky from Liam McGrath; "Croupier," a thriller by Mike Hodges; and "Adrenaline Drive," a comedy directed by Japanese filmmaker Shinobu Yaguchi.

"The idea for this came out of attending festivals for years," said Larry Meistrich, chairman and CEO of the Shooting Gallery. "These films need a chance to breathe, and there's a huge discerning audience that wants to see them. We firmly believe they have demanded it."

Loews Cineplex Entertainment executive veep Robert Lenihan

added: "Our company is committed to enabling Shooting Gallery to realize its vision of making the works of independent filmmakers available to the general moviegoing public. We look forward to hosting the program in theaters throughout the U.S."

Corporate sponsorship

The Shooting Gallery Film Series at Loews draws added support from corporate sponsors such as Encore Media Group (EMG), which has signed an initial sponsorship pact. Encore and Starz! pay cable channels will telecast the film series, while EMG will provide on-air promotional support for both the series and the individual features.

An information Internet site will provide a constantly updated calendar of events, details about each film, chats with filmmakers, simulcasts of interviews with the films' principals and post-screening discussions.

The Shooting Gallery has produced such indie pics as "Sling Blade" and "Henry Fool."