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Highly anticipated local documentary comes to Cinetopia Sneak Preview of Welcome To Commie High!

Ann Arbor, Michigan (April 15th, 2019) — One of the most highly anticipated events of this year's Cinetopia Film Festival will take place on May 12th with a special sneak preview of the almost finished *Welcome to Commie High*, a new documentary that brings to life the evolution of one of Ann Arbor's most beloved educational institutions, Community High School.

The screening, in the Michigan Theater's main auditorium, will act as a fundraiser to help secure the funds needed to finish the film, as well as giving supporters and the local community a chance to see this important and timely documentary on the big screen in a festival setting. Proceeds from tickets will go towards finishing and releasing the film to a wider audience.

According to Director, Donald Harrison, "We can't imagine a better way of sharing this special sneak preview of our film than at the Michigan Theater with our local community! For almost a half century, Community High has done school differently, attracted a unique cross section of Ann Arbor and made impacts well beyond. Our film explores the "Commie High" model and how it serves as an alternative mirror for understanding cultural, social, political and philosophical dynamics in America as they have evolved over decades."

The screening will take place on Sunday, May 12th at 6.30pm at the Michigan Theater's Main Auditorium, followed by a Q&A session with director Donald Harrison and crew/cast. A jazz ensemble from Community High School will perform preceding the program in the grand foyer of the theater. Advanced tickets are recommended and available here: <http://bit.ly/commiesneak>

About *Welcome to Commie High*:

Community High School was an experiment in public education. Considered a "school without walls" by its founders, it was challenged from its opening day in 1972. Maligned with a bad reputation, threatened regularly with closures, it was called "Commie High" by some that questioned its merits (and proudly by many within its culture). Fast forward twenty years later, Community High had become so popular that long lines formed to attend, culminating in a two-week camp out in 1996, and a subsequent lottery system for admission. Today "Commie High" remains one of the only schools from this movement to do school differently that survived and continues to evolve and thrive.

About Donald Harrison:

Donald is an independent filmmaker and lead producer of 7 Cylinders Studio, a custom video production company in Ypsilanti, MI, which he launched in 2012. He's taught film & video courses at the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and The Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor. Donald served as Executive Director of the Ann Arbor Film Festival from 2008 – 2012, growing the organization through its historic 50th season. He currently serves on the Cultural

Economic Development Committee for the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation and helps program the Ypsi Experimental Space (YES).

About Cinetopia Film Festival:

The Cinetopia Film Festival is an annual, curated festival in metro Detroit, featuring more than 50 of the best feature-length dramas, comedies, and documentaries from the world's best film festivals (Sundance, Cannes, Venice, Toronto, Berlin, SXSW, Tribeca, and more). It takes place over the span of 10 days every spring at venues throughout the region. The festival is not submission-based; instead, the extensive festival program is selected by a team led by Indiewire Influencer Russ Collins from the nationally-renowned Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor. Created in 2011 for the people of Southeast Michigan, Cinetopia honors the rich heritage of cinematic culture and Michigan's proud legacy of outstanding cinema artists through special pre- and post-film events, including presentations, discussion panels, and Q&A sessions with directors, writers, and actors. For more information, visit cinetopiafestival.org.

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