Academy Shines New Light on "It's a Wonderful Life" in LA and NYC

December 5, 2011

Beverly Hills, CA (RPRN) 12/05/11 — The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will examine the technology behind "It's a Wonderful Life" at Los Angeles and New York City screenings on Friday, December 9, and Monday, December 12, respectively. Hosted by Oscar®-winning visual effects supervisor Craig Barron and Oscar-winning sound designer Ben Burtt, the programs will explore studio production methods of the era, the use of matte paintings in key scenes, and the origins of the film's sound effects. Both programs will begin at 7 p.m.

"It's a Wonderful Life" (1946) is one of only two motion pictures produced by Liberty Films, the independent company Frank Capra and Samuel J. Briskin created in 1945. Although the film performed only modestly at the box office when it was first released, it went on to earn five Oscar nominations, including Best Motion Picture, Best Actor (James Stewart), Directing (Capra), Film Editing (William Hornbeck) and Sound Recording (RKO Radio Studio Sound Department, John Aalberg, sound director).

The inventors of the snow machine that made its debut with the film won an Academy Technical Achievement Award in 1948. Synthetic snow replaced bleached cornflakes, the previous method of simulating falling snow in movies.

The Los Angeles screening of "It's a Wonderful Life" will be held at the Academy's Linwood Dunn Theater and will present a newly struck print by the Academy Film Archive. Although advance tickets are sold out, a standby line will form on the day of the event, and standby numbers will be assigned starting at approximately 5:30 p.m. Any available tickets will be distributed shortly before the program begins. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Ticket holders should plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the event to ensure a seat in the theater.

The Linwood Dunn Theater is located at 1313 Vine Street in Hollywood. For more information, visitwww.oscars.org or call (310) 247-3600.

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The New York screening will be held at the Academy Theater in New York City. Tickets are $5 for the general public and $3 for Academy members and students with a valid ID. Tickets may be purchased online at www.oscars.org or by mail (a printable order form is available in the Events & Exhibitions section of the website). Tickets may also be purchased at the box office prior to the event (subject to availability).

The Academy Theater in New York City is located at 111 East 59th Street (between Park and Lexington avenues). Doors open at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.oscars.org or call (212) 821-9251.

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The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is the world's preeminent movie-related organization, with a membership of more than 6,000 of the most accomplished men and women working in cinema. In addition to the annual Academy Awards – in which the members vote to select the nominees and winners – the Academy presents a diverse year-round slate of public programs, exhibitions and events; provides financial support to a wide range of other movie-related organizations and endeavors; acts as a neutral advocate in the advancement of motion picture technology; and, through its Margaret Herrick Library and Academy Film Archive, collects, preserves, restores and provides access to movies and items related to their history. Through these and other activities the Academy serves students, historians, the entertainment industry and people everywhere who love movies.

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