



To recognize and reward exceptional accomplishments in the production and performance of musical theatre in local high schools

FREDDY© Awards documentary planned for the big screen

Los Angeles based CANYONBACK FILMS has been to the Lehigh Valley twice in the last few months, making a documentary about the State Theatre Center for the Arts FREDDY© Awards. The documentary takes a behind the scenes look at the entire program, from rehearsals of participating high school musicals to the FREDDY© Awards Ceremony, which will broadcast live from the State Theatre on May 22nd.

Filmmakers Matthew Kallis and Christopher Lockhart stumbled upon a clip posted on YouTube from a previous FREDDY© ceremony. Says Lockhart, "I couldn't even decipher what the clip was. It looked like a rock concert, but there was a show tune coming from the stage. Then as the close up moved in, I saw it was a high school kid and I was completely baffled."

That was May 23, 2007...the night before the 2007 FREDDY© ceremony. Luckily, in addition to the television broadcast on WFMZ Channel 69, the 2007 ceremony was also streamed live for the first time on wfmz.com, where the filmmakers were able to watch the entire ceremony. They were impressed by the quality of the EMMY® Award winning broadcast. "There are other shows that do give awards to high school musical theater, but none of them are televised," says Kallis, "that really made a big difference for us in terms of deciding to do the documentary."

The film crew visited several participating schools during their most recent visit this month. To help capture the student's point of view and gather footage when they are not in the area, they distributed high-definition hand-held cameras to students. "Hopefully we'll be able to tell some stories that really reflect universality," adds Lockhart, "and kids all around the country will be able to see themselves in these stories."

They will return in April and May to continue filming. The documentary is expected to be completed in about a year and is planned for full-length theatrical release.

Currently in its 6th year, the State Theatre Center for the Arts FREDDY© Awards program recognizes and rewards accomplishments in local high schools of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, PA and Warren County, NJ. 27 high schools are participating this year. For more information visit www.freddyawards.org.