



WE CHAMPION SHORT FILMMAKING

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2013 DC Shorts Film Festival Media Report

2013 Media Coverage

Our media coordinator, Scott Circle Communications, was able to secure media coverage in dozens of newspapers, magazines, blogs and community listings. A complete list of our media coverage is available at dcshorts.com/news/in-the-news. A summary of the outlets that covered DC Shorts 2013 are:

Newspapers & Magazines

The Washington Post (multiple sections)
RIA Novosti
On Tap Magazine
DC Modern Luxury
Asian Fortune
Diplomatic Courier
Washington Examiner
Washington City Paper
Northern Virginia Magazine

Blogs

Huffington Post
Roll Call
The Dressing
DC This Week
DCist
GoingOutGuide
Broadway World
BlackTie DC
Cheap in DC
Brightest Young Things
Quantico Live

WAMU

BROADCAST

WUSA Morn. Show
NewsChannel 8
WTOP

Blogs and Web News (with links)

[DC Shorts Film Festival Returns for 10th Year](#), [Broadway World](#), July 30, 2013

[Women Working Without Words](#), [The Dressing](#), Aug. 11, 2013

[Expansion of a Shrunken Head](#), [The Dressing](#), Aug. 13, 2013

[Yell FIRE, Not HELP!](#), [The Dressing](#), Aug. 15, 2013

[Filmmaker David Scheve Delivers LGBT History in New Animated Series](#), [Huffington Post](#), Aug. 29, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Festival Marks 10 Year Anniversary in the District](#), [DC This Week](#), Sept. 9, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Festival Returns for its 10th Year](#), [Broadway World](#), Sept. 9, 2013

[Why This Actress/Writer/Director Saw a Need to Make a Comedy Film About Women in Their 40s](#), [Huffington Post](#), Sept. 11, 2013

[Have you met Jon Gann?](#), [Blacktie – Washington, D.C.](#), Sept. 12, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Festival](#), [Cheap in DC](#), Sept. 12, 2013

[Editor's Picks: Going Out Guide](#), [Washington, Post](#), Sept. 13, 2013

[DC Shorts Storms the Nation's Capital](#), [Movie Maker](#), Sept. 13, 2013

[Washington Post Food Calendar](#), [Washington Post](#), Sept. 17, 2013

[DC Shorts 2013 Preview with Fest Director Jon Gann](#), [Brightest Young Things](#), Sept. 18, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Fest, Quantico Live](#), Sept. 18, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Festival Standing Tall](#), Roll Call, Sept. 19, 2013

[10 things to do in the D.C. area](#), Washington Post, Sept. 19, 2013

[Popcorn & Candy: Shorts and Secretaries Edition](#), DCist, Sept. 19, 2013

[Major Festivals For Titanic Tale](#), The Cork News, Sept. 20, 2013

Newspapers and Magazines (with links)

[Russian Movies to Make Their Debut at Washington Film Festival](#), RIA Novosti, July 19, 2013

[Russian Films Bring “Different Viewpoint”](#), RIA Novosti, Aug. 7, 2013

[DC Shorts Fest Sept. 19-29 Features Films from Russia and 21 Other Countries](#), Examiner.com, Aug. 24, 2013

[Garden Party](#), DC Modern Luxury, Sept. 2013

[The Sept. Guide](#), Northern Virginia Magazine, Sept. 2013

[DC Shorts Celebrates 10 Years](#), On Tap, Sept. 1, 2013

[Authentic Voices for DC's Chinatown](#), Asian Fortune, Sept. 3, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Festival Celebrates 10 Years](#), Diplomatic Courier, Sept. 5, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Festival: Comic Drama](#), Diplomatic Courier, Sept. 5, 2013

[DC Shorts Film Festival Turns 10](#), Washington Post, Sept. 18, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 1: Let the Reviews Begin](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 18, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 2: Experimental Narratives, Life on a Bike, and Creepy Dolls](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 18, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 3: Foolin’ Around With Nazis](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 18, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 4: When In Doubt, Always More Cats](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 18, 2013

[What to See at the DC Shorts Film Festival](#), Washington Post Going Out Guide, Sept. 18, 2013

[Going Out Guide](#), Washington Post Local, Sept. 18, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 5: Magical Dumplings and Oingo Boingo](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 19, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 6: A Bucket Full of Something](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 19, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 7: Mimes, Starving Dogs, and a Claw Machine](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 19, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 9: They Don’t Know It’s a Dildo!](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 20, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 10: Ray Kurzweil, \(More\) Mimes, and Racism](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 20, 2013

[DC Shorts, Showcase 11: Lies, More Racism, and Cake](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 19, 2013

[DC Shorts, Family Showcase: So Many Apples](#), Washington City Paper, Sept. 20, 2013

DC Shorts Film Festival turns 10 *The Washington Post*

A decade ago, the only thing Jon Gann really knew about film festivals was that he didn't much care for them. After a year of traveling to dozens with his 9-minute film "Cyberslut," the man who would go on to found the [DC Shorts Film Festival](#) felt defeated by the massive, impersonal cinematic showcases that valued sponsors over filmmakers.

His feelings were crystallized one afternoon when he touched down in France and rushed to a screening of his short, hoping to arrive in time to introduce his movie and greet the audience.

"I got to the theater just as the lights were going down and the guy goes, 'Ah! Zees must be Jon Gann,'" Gann recalled, affecting a French accent. "And then they showed the film. And I said, 'Don't I get to meet people?' And he said, 'Ah, no, have a martini.' And I thought, I just came from another festival where I had a martini. I don't want another martini. I want to meet people; that's the whole point."

If Sundance conjures up images of celebrities in furry boots, Cannes is about A-listers playing dress-up along the Riviera and Toronto has become a factory of Oscar chatter, Gann decided DC Shorts would be about something more basic: films and, more importantly, the people who make them.

The 10th annual DC Shorts Film Festival kicks off Thursday with 11 days of events and screenings that feature more than 150 quick hits of animation, documentary, musicals, thrillers and fiction from countries near and far. All entries will have a run time between one minute and 30. Brad Pitt will not be posing for pictures and Martin Scorsese won't be doing a Q&A, but, from a filmmaker standpoint, Gann's festival has become increasingly important in the last decade.

"DC Shorts is getting to be so well known beyond the Beltway, it sort of puts D.C. on the map as a place for film and a cultural entertainment center," said Crystal Palmer, director of Washington's Office of Motion Picture and Television Development.

And, for the most part, Gann has made it happen all on his own.

The baby-faced 47-year-old is a fast talker with earrings and smiling eyes, and he is a ubiquitous, welcoming presence at the annual film festival, where he makes a point to meet as many people as possible between putting out fires. This year, Gann hired an operations manager so he can spend fewer hours thwarting potential disasters and more time enjoying the films and their creators. But in the beginning, it was just Gann and his longtime friend Gene Cowan, who helped with behind-the-scenes technical work.

“Jon came up with a very good description of our relationship — he’s Lucy and I’m Ethel,” Cowan said from his home in Silicon Valley. “So Jon will call me up and say, ‘Oh, here’s this new thing I’m doing, and you’re going to help me.’ And I’m kind of schlepped along by Lucy. And this was definitely one of those situations.”

A film festival sounded like a big undertaking, but Gann had one thing going for him: a venue. He lived in a building that was also home to Flashpoint, the downtown gallery and performance space.

“I think the biggest hurdle to jump was actually getting the films,” Cowan said. Gann tapped film school friends and acquaintances and managed to secure about 75 submissions.

The inaugural DC Shorts Film Festival featured three screenings showcasing 33 movies. Gann paid for the event from his checking account. But that Saturday in September 2004, people lined up around the block trying to get into Flashpoint’s black box, and Gann obliged, even if it meant momentarily ignoring fire code.

“I think Jon realized there was a pent up demand for it,” Cowan said. “Because where do you go to see short films? And where do short filmmakers go to show their films?”

The event has since evolved, adding a script competition, filmmaker workshops and rooftop parties. Screenings take place at six locations in D.C., Maryland and Virginia, including E Street Cinema, Angelika Film Center and Visarts Rockville. The film festival recently received a grant from the Oscar-bestowing Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. As its reputation has grown, so have submission numbers. This year, Gann received more than 1,200 films and 150 scripts.

Gann places each of the films that make the cut into a 90-minute block, taking a tapas-like approach to ensure that each festival screening has a colorful palette that might include a mini-documentary, a romantic comedy, an animated drama and something experimental or altogether unclassifiable. Regardless of the genre, though, Gann seeks out narrative threads.

“If you can tell a story in 10 minutes, then you really know what you’re doing, and filmmaking will always be about visual storytelling,” Gann said. “If you don’t have a story, you’ve got nothing.”

The selection process is unique to DC Shorts. Gann insists the 110 volunteer judges watch the films in their entirety — which doesn’t always happen at other festivals — and compile feedback for the director.

“As a filmmaker, when you enter a festival and you send them your film and your check, you usually just

get an e-mail that says ‘no,’ and you have no idea why that ‘no’ is,” Gann said.

For some, the constructive criticism can be hard to swallow, but Gann feels strongly that filmmakers ought to get something in return for their roughly \$35 submission fee.

“It’s unusual to get feedback about your film at all, and it’s really unusual to get honest feedback,” said Los Angeles-based director David Renaud, who returns to the festival for the second time with “The Morning After.” “Your mom is never going to tell you what she thinks about your film for real.”

But Gann will, even during his DC Shorts offseason.

“Not only was he supportive during the festival, but he’s continued to be supportive and available to me as a filmmaker, which is huge,” said local director and actor Joel David Santner, who won the screenwriting competition in 2011, which spawned the 2012 festival film “Mirror Image.” “I think that’s really good of him, and it’s kind of a representation of how he runs that festival.”

Gann has a knack for storytelling, which comes in handy when aiding filmmakers, and he believes nearly every short can be shorter. David Renaud’s wife, Mia Renaud, produced their film, and noted that Gann’s “sometimes hard-to-hear” suggestions led them to cut a lot of funny material.

“But after we made those edits, all of a sudden [“The Morning After”] started getting into festivals — a lot of festivals,” David said.

The Renauds may be the idealized example of Gann’s vision. The pair met during the 2006 DC Shorts and eloped in Vegas not long after. David is a doctor, Mia is a lawyer and their films are passion projects produced amid full-time jobs and raising two children. Their most recent film has been accepted into 15 festivals and counting.

“I never thought I could make a film, and David inspired me and sometimes pushed me and sometimes forced me, but he really convinced me that I could do it,” Mia said. “And to go back to DC Shorts where it really all started for me, it’s just so great.”

For his part, Gann plans to keep expanding DC Shorts, although he doesn’t want to remain its director forever. He’s written a book about film festivals, produced movies and gives talks to filmmakers, trying to demystify the selection process. In the meantime, he believes DC Shorts is on the right path, even if a few years ago he longed for the event to have more industry respect.

“But someone said, ‘Listen, you’re in D.C. You’re not in L.A., you’re not in New York. It’s not an industry

festival, but it's an important filmmaker festival, and isn't that more important? What you're doing is promoting filmmakers. Why would you want to be Sundance? You hate Sundance,'" Gann said.

That is, after all, why Gann started the festival in the first place. And, according to longtime collaborator Cowan, the path Gann is on is the one he set out for.

"It's beautiful because everything that Jon wanted the film festival to accomplish, he has accomplished — and more," Cowan said.

DC Shorts Film Festival

Thursday through Sept. 29. Various locations. 202-393-4266. www.dshorts.com. \$12-\$15 per screening; \$20-\$40 to watch films online; \$100 for all-access pass.

Filmmaker David Scheve Delivers LGBT History in New Animated Series (AUDIO)

THE
HUFFINGTON
POST



This week I talked with filmmaker David Scheve about his new animated TV series "Hard Knock Rock." "Sufferin' Till You're Straight" is the third in a series of ten segments that is currently playing the LGBT film festival circuit. This hilarious animated music video delivers a brilliant history lesson about our LGBT community's long struggle for equality including Stonewall, gay marriage and more. The lead vocalist Essra Mohawk is a former member of Frank Zappa's The Mothers of Invention and features background vocals by Scherrie Payne and Susaye Greene both of Motown's The Supremes. Conceived by Scheve the music was composed by Todd Schroeder and the lyrics were written by Scheve and Neal LaVine. This three minute short was designed by legendary Warner Bros. / Disney animator Willie Ito. I talked to Scheve about "Hard Knock Rock" and his spin on our LGBT issues.

When asked what he would like to accomplish with "Hard Knock Rock" Scheve stated,

These films, I find can address a lot of subjects that are either taboo or difficult to talk about or things that make people uncomfortable, if you use a bit of humor and these films do that. So it brings up subjects that are good to have discussions about, subjects about gay rights and we're doing a spot on transgender and transsexual people and drag queens and just talking about things that are real life things that sometimes make people uncomfortable and with the humor level and the aspect of animation it lowers peoples defenses and it starts discussions that are really important.

David Scheve is the founder of TDA Animation, a film company that combines talents and styles from the '50s, '60s and '70s with modern world sensibility. His animated film series features some of Broadway's best including, Lillias White, Loretta Devine, Eileen Brennan and Elaine Stritch, as well as the iconic animated voice talent from his childhood including, June Foray, Lucille Bliss, Stan Freeburg and Jack Sheldon. David is currently at work on his next animated short film for the Hard Knock Rock series that features pop diva Martha Wash. "Hard Knock Rock: Sufferin' Till You're Straight" will be showing at the following upcoming film festivals: Harlem International Film Festival September 11-15th , DC Shorts Film Festival in Washington, D.C. September 19- 29th and NYC Independent Film Festival in NYC on October 18-20th.

For More Info & Film Schedule: facebook.com/Hard-Knock-Rock

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Festival Spotlight Friday: DC Shorts Storms the Nation's Capital by Alexandra Eide and Jennifer Kim

Posted on Friday, September 13th, 2013 at 10:07 pm.

MOVIE MAKER
THE ART AND BUSINESS OF MAKING MOVIES

Written by [Alexandra Eide](#)

Washington, D.C. is our nation's capital, but next week it is also turning into the capital of film—short films, to be exact. DC Shorts Film Festival is celebrating their 10-year anniversary, and we've picked them for our Festival Spotlight this week.



Starting on September 19, DC Shorts will be screening movies in six different locations around the city, as well as hosting numerous parties, free panels and a highly celebrated Screenplay Competition—all before its close on the 29th. Keeping in spirit with the cosmopolitan background of the city (and capitalizing on its abundance of foreign embassies), the 153 films this year have been sourced from 23 countries – including America's largest collection of short films by Russian filmmakers. The festival has also, uniquely, developed a feedback system for filmmakers to receive firsthand commentary from reviewers about their submissions – perhaps one of the most truly useful innovations of any film festival on the circuit.

MovieMaker spoke to DC Shorts' Media Liaison Laura Gross about what she hopes is their best incarnation yet. She explains their "Tapas Plate" approach to programming short films (you had us at "tapas") as well as the festival's plans to celebrate their decade anniversary. DC Shorts Film Festival begins next week, running from September 19-29.

MovieMaker Magazine (MM): *The 2013 installment of the DC Shorts Film Festival marks its 10-year*

anniversary. Can you tell us a little about the history of the past 10 years of DC Shorts?

Laura Gross (LG): Filmmaker Jon Gann created DC Shorts as an celebration of cinema without the commercialism and big-name worship he encountered when presenting a short at over 40 festivals in the early 2000s. Jon came back from his year on the circuit and shaped a festival that would focus on filmmakers and films, hoping that sponsorship money and parties would follow—and that’s what happened. The first year, DC Shorts showed 33 films (from 78 entries) in a single day, in a single theater. This year, we are showcasing 153 films (from over 1,200 entries) over 11 days in six venues throughout the area. DC Shorts is now the largest short film event on the East Coast.

MM: *What can festival attendees expect this year? How will the festival be celebrating 10 years of short film?*

LG: As always, we strive to bring the best films from around the world. This year we will show films from 23 countries (we received submissions from 49) in every genre, style and length—from one minute to 25 minutes.

MM: *What makes the DC Shorts film festival unique among film festivals?*

LG: For our audience, we program in what we call the “Tapas Plate” approach: in a 90-minute screening, they see eight to 10 films from documentaries, comedies, dramas, animation, music videos, experimental, local films, and foreign films, all strung together in an emotional arc. Audiences laugh, cry, learn and are uplifted while experiencing something new every few minutes.

For filmmakers, we give feedback for every entry. We have developed a proprietary online system that allows our film reviewers to score and comment on the films. This information is sent to every filmmaker after decisions are made. It is a great window into why a film is or is not programmed. We have filmmakers who send their films to us every year just for the feedback.

MM: *What the festival gain from being based in DC? How does the festival work with and represent the local community?*

LG: DC is the center of world power—and we take advantage of that. We work with embassies and cultural attaches to find the best films from around the world. Every year, we focus on a single country, partnering with their embassy and major production studios. This year, we are showcasing the largest collection of short films by emerging Russian filmmakers to ever play in the United States—16 films from documentaries and comedies, to dramas, animation, and experimental. We are very proud of this work!



MM: *Your website highlights the festival's focus on films and filmmakers rather than on money and sponsors. What does the festival do to encourage new filmmakers while addressing the needs of more established filmmakers?*

LG: Our feedback program is one of the main reasons new filmmakers enter our competition. The unsolicited insights are worth far more than a \$35 entry fee. We also reach out to our alums—filmmakers we've screened before and worked with in the past. Chances are if we loved your past work, our audiences would like to see more.

DC Shorts also has a screenplay competition unlike anyone else's. Six finalists are selected (from over 150 entries). The writers come to DC, work with us to find and cast actors, and then perform a live table reading in front of an audience. The audience and a small jury decide the winner of a \$2,000 prize to make the film and screen it in the following DC Shorts festival. Last year's winner, *Shenanigans*, will make its world premiere at the festival.

MM: *In your opinion, what does the DC Shorts Film Festival do better than any other film festival?*

LG: We do so many things well: great hospitality, crystal-clear HD projection, a comprehensive and socially-geared web site, parties, and more. But the most important thing we do is help to connect filmmakers—connect them to an eager and enthusiastic audience that appreciates their work and with one another. The greatest compliment we receive is when a filmmaker calls to tell us that they will be working on their next project with someone they met at DC Shorts.

MM: *What do you think has contributed to the success of DC Shorts? What about the festival has kept attendees coming back over the past ten years?*

LG: As short film content has become more available online, the audiences who want to watch shorts has also increased. DC Shorts taps into an audience's desire to see the newest and best—often the stuff that is unavailable on the net.

This year, we have expanded the DC Shorts Online Film Festival, a one-week online pass to watch over 120 films from the festival on any computer, tablet, or smartphone. This is a great opportunity for our fan base outside of Washington, D.C. to catch the films and for new and emerging filmmakers to see the types of films we, and other major festivals, are programming.

MM: *What does the medium of short film accomplish, and how does the DC Shorts celebrate this medium?*

LG: Everyone has sat through a 90-minute feature with a 10-minute plot. Short films cut to the heart of the matter. Like short stories, short films are to be appreciated as their own form—they are not feature-length films smashed into a few minutes, but fully-formed, well-written and beautifully told stories that only need a few moments to touch an audience.

Our mantra when reviewing submissions is “plot first.” Our audiences want to see great storytelling. It doesn't matter what the SFX of the week is, or how cool the set is, or even what great A-list actor you convinced to work on the project. Filmmaking is, and always will be, visual storytelling. Without a plot, you have nothing to keep an audience interested.

The 2013 DC Shorts Film Festival runs from September 19-29. For more information about the fest, click [here](#).

To subscribe to *MovieMaker Magazine*, click [here](#).



DC Shorts fest Sept. 19-29 features films from Russia and 21 other countries



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August 24, 2013

The **DC Shorts Film Festival**, one of Washington's most popular, presents the largest U.S. showing of shorts by **Russian** filmmakers, plus some 150 other selections from more than 20 other countries Sept. 19-29.



Marsha Dubrow
DC Art Travel Examiner
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The main country featured this year was chosen before the Russian controversies of: harboring leaker Edward Snowden; passing an anti-gay law; banning adoptions by U.S. families; and jailing the rock band Pussy Riot, festival founder and director Jon Gann told a recent press preview.

"Russia's politics are abhorrent," Gann said. "As an openly gay man, I am appalled ... and horrified. Initially, I worked with the Russian Embassy and their staff, but since, I have cut ties with them."

However, "We shouldn't be punishing emerging filmmakers for the policies of their

government," Gann added.

The **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences** (of the Academy Awards) seems to agree; the Academy's generous grant helped underwrite the festival's Russian program.

Here's a selection of the 16 Russian dramas, comedies, experimental, and animation:

- Two World War Two films:

-- "**We Are Not Slaves**" -- During World War Two's siege of Leningrad, a boy who's an outsider shows his bravery.

-- "**Convoy**" -- Separated from their battalions, a Russian and a German soldier must decide which of them will live.

- Several animated films, including:

-- "**The Primeval Father**" -- A caveman's excellent invention, and spirits, are crushed by his dastardly dad.

-- "**Umba-Umba**" -- A stray cat rescues miners trapped underground.

-- Animation/documentary "**System Preferences**" -- Computer pioneer Bashir Rameyev tries to achieve something extraordinary for his country.

For the festival's full schedule, click **here**. And click **here** for a description of each film, organized by Countries; Genre (Animation through Thriller); Interests (African American through Women's Issues)...

One of the most ingenious and effective is "**Stalled**", composed entirely of messages scrawled in women's rest rooms.

Another most powerful one is "**Frost**" -- "All things leave a mark in this world." In the Canadian Arctic, a young Eskimo's hunt for food takes her beyond a sacred boundary, and

she makes a terrifying discovery.

One of the most poignant documentaries is "**People of Dogs**". Johannesburg's poorest people are seen through their animals. One volunteer says, "I've been hijacked; I've been shot; I've been kicked (but) helping the people and their animals is a way of making society more compassionate."

- If your main interest is **LGBT**:

-- "**Sufferin' Till You're Straight**", a rockin' rollin' animated U.S. film

-- "**Gay 4 Pay**", a documentary from Singapore

-- "**The Commitment**", a U.S. drama of a gay couple's quest to adopt a child brings their relationship to new levels.

- If the **comedy** genre interests you more than gender, and U.S. is your most favored nation:

-- "**Shenanigans**" -- winner of last year's **screenwriting contest**, has more twists and turns than most full length romantic comedies.

-- "**Social Media Anonymous**" -- Snippets from this desperately needed support group: "Instagram is passé, and not in a good way." A prep school rejects a girl because she's "posted 47 pictures of herself dressed as fruits."

-- "**A Little Something on the Side**" -- "Eatin' ain't cheatin'".

-- Speakin' of eatin' -- "**Mile High Pie**" is mighty cute. Ed & Kay's Restaurant serves mountainous meringue pies in Benton, Arkansas.

Pies, including one called PCP -- Pineapple, coconut, pecan, and lots more food will be offered at the festival's "Grand Bash" **party** on Sept. 20 at the U.S. Navy Memorial plaza. And a roof deck **party** at Carroll Square also has dancing to music from movies on Sept. 19. At

both, you can mingle with filmmakers as well as fellow film lovers.

The fest has grown so popular that this 10th annual DC Shorts is expanding to six theaters across the metro area: not only downtown, but also in Anacostia, and suburbs of Rockville, Maryland and Fairfax, Virginia.

It includes free weekday lunchtime shows Sept. 23-27 at three locations.

Oh, how long is a short? One to 20 minutes. And although the fest is 11 days long, **tickets** sell out in short order.

For more info and tickets: DC Shorts Film Festival, <http://festival.dcsHORTS.com>. Tickets, <http://festival.dcsHORTS.com/tickets>.