

Oct 27

# Films feature Indigenous people

**OHSWEKEN** — A very interesting film festival will be held in Hamilton this weekend. It is billed as the First International Indigenous People's Film Festival.

Because all the films to be shown will pertain to aboriginal people, the official opening ceremonies will feature Jacob Thomas from Six Nations, Malcolm Mason and traditional drummers and singers.

The opening will be Friday at 5:30 p.m. at the Art Gallery near Hamilton Place in the city's downtown. Admission is free and there will be refreshments.

The films will be shown at Hamilton's Broadway Cinema on King William Street.

At 7:30 p.m., there will be traditional indigenous Andean music by a group called Ayni. Ayni is a word expressing an aboriginal concept of "mutual help" both in the Aymara and Quechua languages which are spoken in South America.

The musical instruments used by Ayni are basically wind and percussion and have changed very little since the times of the Incas.

The first film, *It Starts With A Whisper*, was written, produced and directed right in Brantford and Six Nations by Shelly Niro and Anna Gronau.

At 9 p.m., *Women in the Shadows* will be shown. It is about First Nations writer and film maker Christine Welch's search for her Metis foremothers.

At 10 p.m. the intriguing story of Ishi, the Last Yahi will be shown. It concerns the sudden 1911 appearance in California of "the last Wild Indian in North America."

For the more than 40 years of his life, he had lived in hiding with a tiny band of survivors who died one by one. When captured, the man knew no English nor modern life.

Yet his dignity and lack of bitterness soon showed he was not the one who was "wild and savage." Ishi's story is tragic yet very inspiring.

Saturday's showings begin at 12:30 p.m. with four family-oriented short films — *For Angela*, *Lord of the Sky*, *The Sniffing Bear* and *Moccasin Flats*.

At 2 p.m., *Before Columbus*, a three-part series, starts.

Admission to two Saturday evening films will be \$7.50 for each film. Where the *Rivers Flow North* begins at 7 p.m., and *Dance Me Outside* at 9:30 p.m.

Traditional Indigenous Music of the Andes will be performed by Ayni at 6:30 p.m.

Free admission returns Sunday afternoon. *Coppermine*, an Inuit film, starts at 12:20 p.m.

*Five Centuries Later* begins at 1:45 p.m. This recounts the oppression of aboriginal people in countries such as Bolivia and Guatemala where they have no political power and are kept in abject poverty and ignorance. With less and less land to cultivate, starvation looms for them.

A \$5-admission charge will apply to the final in the festival.

*Imagining Indians* starts at 3 p.m. Produced and directed by Victor Masayesva Jr., a Hopi, the 89-minute film addresses several issues regarding Hollywood's stereotyping of North American natives.

It also points out some problems that arise when traditional native myths and rituals become something to be bought and sold.

The festival ends with singers, drummers, Jake Thomas and Malcolm Mason in the closing ceremonies.

It sounds like an interesting weekend.



George Beaver

## our town

*Our Town* is an Expositor feature which provides a forum for news and views from some of the smaller centres in the region. George Beaver is a freelance writer who lives on the Six Nations reserve.