

Release Date: August 23, 2018

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## **THE BLACK MONK** fiction film, inspired by Anton Chekhov

by filmmakers Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno

Produced in Association with The Staten Island Museum

### **A Cinematic Love Letter to Staten Island!**

**Movies Under the Stars at Snug Harbor 1000 Richmond Terrace in Staten Island  
Screening Friday, September 14, 2018 at Sunset 7:30 pm**

Post-screening Talkback with the filmmakers and Special Guests

Free Admission – Front Lawn/by Neptune Fountain - Bring lawn chairs or blankets!

In case of Inclement Weather – indoors in Snug Harbor’s historic Music Hall

Learn more and Read Chekhov’s short story at: [www.BongiornoProductions.com](http://www.BongiornoProductions.com)



Image courtesy of and © Bongiorno Productions Inc.

Emmy-nominated, award-winning, social justice, husband-and-wife filmmakers Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno are pleased to present their 105-minute fiction feature film *THE BLACK MONK* on Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. The film will be screened outdoors at Sunset 7:30 pm, on the Front Lawn/by Neptune Foundation in Snug Harbor, followed by a Talkback. In case of inclement weather, the film will be screened indoors in Snug Harbor’s historic Music Hall. Admission is free and audience is asked to bring lawn chairs or blankets. [Cheech a Cini’s Truckin’ Trattoria](#) will be selling their gourmet Italian street food.

The film was shot on Staten Island and celebrates iconic locations including the Staten Island Ferry, Wagner College, Alice Austen House, Staten Island Museum, and the New York Chinese Scholar’s Garden.

*THE BLACK MONK* was inspired by the eponymous short story by Anton Chekhov and depicts a filmmaker struggling with sanity who encounters a legendary monk and uncovers the meaning of life and a lost love.

**Starring:** Jack Berenholtz    Drew Dix    Emily Gardner Hall    Tim Nicolai  
Victoria Wallace    Charles Warburton    Rev. Augustine Curley, OSB

**Co-Sponsored by:**



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## Reviews:

***"Highly Recommended Movie: Beautifully shot, erudite, heartbreaking tale of misbegotten love...lush, serene backdrops--the courtyards of the new Staten Island Museum and the Chinese Scholar's Garden...There is something undoubtedly romantic about having a whole museum or botanical garden to yourself, for a full day of intoxicating conversation, with the love of your life."***

~Sam Weisberg, film critic, *Hidden Films*

***"A wonderful film....exhilarating script...Chekhov's unusual story is not an easy work to construe cinematically, but filmmakers Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno succeed brilliantly in conveying its elusive spirit."***

~Rosamund Bartlett, Chekhov Scholar and Author

***"The filmmakers (also co-screenwriters) have managed to tap into some of Chekhov's quirkiness and wit, and the result is quite entertaining. They have also done a great service by providing a valuable tool for teaching about mental illness."***

~Dr. Guy Glass, MD, MFA, NYU School of Medicine LITMED

***"THE BLACK MONK raises questions central to the spiritual life: how we want to live our lives in a safe garden but must venture out...how we must balance faith and science as believers...and how we must negotiate the joyful consolation of our relationships with God and others with the daily bumpiness when things don't go the way we want. This film is a modern riff on an ancient struggle to live for greater ideals in a messy world."***

~Christopher Bellitto, Professor of History, Kean University

***"It's no coincidence that filmmakers Marylou and Jerome Bongiorno chose Staten Island as a key location to shoot THE BLACK MONK, a compelling adaptation of the 1893 Anton Chekhov short story by the same name. Chekhov's protagonist in the original story, like Chekhov himself, suffered from tuberculosis, the dreaded respiratory infection that claimed more lives during the late 19th century than any other single disease. Staten Island, New York City's least populated borough, became something of a haven for TB patients in Chekhov's time. Before the era of germ theory and antibiotics, leading physicians and scientists concluded that open spaces, fresh breezes, and sunlight were the only 'cures' for the disease. Staten's Island's famous Seaview Sanitarium, the eerie remains of which made part of the backdrop for the film adaption of THE BLACK MONK, was the largest TB facility in the United States for much of the early 20th century."***

~Brett Palfreyman, Professor of History, Wagner College

Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden is located at 1000 Richmond Terrace in Staten Island and is easily accessible from the Staten Island Ferry. Please go to their website [snug-harbor.org](http://snug-harbor.org) for more information and directions. Free parking on site.

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