“Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.” This classic line from “Casablanca” captures the essence of the relationship between American audiences and motion pictures. That love affair, protecting the nation’s cinematic heritage, and the Library of Congress’ role in film preservation are examined in the documentary, “These Amazing Shadows” (www.pbs.org/independentlens/these-amazing-shadows/).

Written and directed by Paul Mariano and Kurt Norton, "These Amazing Shadows" will air nationally on the award-winning PBS series “Independent Lens,” hosted by Mary Louise Parker, on **Thursday, Dec. 29**, at **10:00 p.m.** (check local listings). This critically acclaimed documentary has also been released on DVD and Blu-ray and will be available through the Library of Congress Shop (www.loc.gov/shop/).

Since 1989, the Library of Congress selects 25 films each year for preservation in the National Film Registry. These films are selected for their cultural, historical or aesthetic significance and reflect the rich and diverse landscape of the American experience through a wide spectrum of genres. They include Hollywood blockbusters, home movies, independent films, shorts, the avant-garde, documentaries and animated films.

“These Amazing Shadows” examines the creation of the Library’s congressionally mandated preservation initiative and explores the nation’s love of movies through rich imagery and insightful commentary. The documentary artfully blends together popular-to-obscure registry film clips and interviews with directors, actors, producers, critics, scholars, archivists, Library staff and members of the National Film Preservation Board (NFPB).

The producers highlight more than 165 film clips from such movie classics as “Casablanca” and “The Wizard of Oz” to provocative documentaries and historic home movies. Discussing the power of cinema and the need to preserve it are such notables as Christopher Nolan, Rob Reiner, John Singleton, John Waters, Tim Roth, Debbie Reynolds, Leonard Maltin and the Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington.

As part of his mission to preserve the nation’s film legacy, the Librarian of Congress names the 25 annual selections to the registry after reviewing hundreds of titles nominated by the public

and conferring with Library staff and NFPB members. The number of selections in the registry currently totals 550. **The 2011 selections for the National Film Registry will be announced on Wednesday, Dec. 28.**

Described as a “valentine” to motion pictures, “These Amazing Shadows” showcases compelling moments and poignant examples of the power and influence of film on American culture. Among them are:

• “Boyz N the Hood” director John Singleton commenting on why he supported the controversial inclusion to the registry of D.W. Griffith’s racially biased masterpiece “The Birth of a Nation”;

• “Star Trek” actor George Takei recounting the experience of Japanese-Americans in relocation camps during World War II, which is authenticated by revealing scenes from “Topaz,” Dave Tatsuno’s home movie about the internment camps;

• Stephen Peck’s emotional insight into the value of such war films as “The Deer Hunter” and “Best Years of Our Lives”;

• Before-and-after restoration work on “The Godfather” negatives left in tatters from overuse;

• The Library’s discovery and restoration of the uncut 1933 drama, “Baby Face,” starring Barbara Stanwyck;

• The role of women filmmakers and the pioneering work of Dorothy Arzner and Lois Weber, who was Universal’s top director before 1920.

Founded in 1800, the Library of Congress is the nation’s oldest federal cultural institution. It seeks to spark imagination and creativity and to further human understanding and wisdom by providing access to knowledge through its magnificent collections, programs and exhibitions.

Many of the Library’s rich resources can be accessed through its website at www.loc.gov and via interactive exhibitions on a personalized website at myLOC.gov

.

# # #