



Courtesy of ifcfilms.com

A cool cat behind *No One Knows about Persian Cats* at the Criterion. Independent films are in the area this weekend, and quite a range is offered.

First off, let's mention two showing on the closing nights of the **CT Film Festival**:

On May 8 at 10 p.m., the Danbury Music Theater premieres *Burning Inside*, the second feature film by **Nathan Wrann**, a West Haven filmmaker. While many indie films tend to have themes of uplift or alienation, or feature political ax-grinding, Wrann aims for cult thriller status with a tale of an amnesiac's quest for revenge; the movie was filmed entirely in Southern Connecticut with folks mostly from here. Not only that, Wrann may be known to some readers as the co-owner/operator of Elm City Java, the first fair trade cafe in our fair city back in 2002-2004.

On May 9 at 4 p.m., the Palace Theater features the "Home State" screening of *Harvest*, winner of the Best American Independent Film Award at the 34th Annual Cleveland Film Festival in March. The film was filmed in Madison and vicinity in 2008, and is set there. Filmmaker **Marc Meyers**, who has family roots in Madison, Guilford and New Haven, will be on hand for Q&A after the film. Meyers derived the fictional story from journals he kept during his grandfather's last summer. The film is a celebration of family ties and looks at how impending death brings a family together and makes us all reconsider what matters to us in life. The secondary cast features many CT natives, and the stars are Oscar-nominated actors **Robert "Jagged Edge" Loggia**, **Barbara "Breaking Away" Barrie**, Tony Award-winning actress **Victoria Clark** and relative newcomer **Jack Carpenter** of *I Love You, Beth Cooper*. Music for the film was composed by **Duncan Sheik**. Meyer's first film, *Approaching Union Square*, is currently airing on the **Sundance Channel**.

For info on the festival: ctfilmfest.com

And coming to the Criterion: Remember all those rock anthems about how the music was a force for freedom during times of repression? Or maybe you think "underground" means "not on MTV yet"? Opening May 7 is *No One Knows About Persian Cats*, an indie film by Iranian filmmaker **Bahman Ghobadi** that follows the scrappy, danger-filled existence of bands — hip-hop, rock, indie, punk — in Tehran where the music they make is outlawed, and making the film, in 17 days of shooting, was furtive due to lack of government permission and because filming the bands in their rehearsal sites and venues risked bringing the heat down on those spots. The film won Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2009, and the soundtrack is selling well in Europe. One of the featured bands, **Take It Easy Hospital**, consists of the couple **Negar Shaghaghi** and **Ashkan Koshanejad** who were arrested for making their music, and in the film enact a fictionalized version of their story. In Persian, with English subtitles; many of the bands sing in English.

And speaking of cult films: *Birdemic* is coming to the Criterion's "Insomnia Theater," 11:30 p.m., May 7-8. Filmed on the proverbial shoestring budget in California, the film is ostensibly a thriller and an homage to Hitchcock's *The Birds*, but **James Nguyen**'s film has them rolling in the aisles or shaking their heads at what is either inspiringly or dispiritingly awful filmmaking, the kind of experience you might want to bring Crow T. Robot along for. See it, if you dare!