

Port St. Lucie docudrama wins best documentary at Treasure Coast International Film Festival

By Cathy Reeder

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PORT ST. LUCIE — "City of Dreams," the docudrama recounting Port St. Lucie's first 50 years, won Best Documentary Film at the 4th Annual Treasure Coast International Film Festival on Saturday.

The movie's theme, "City Within a Dream," won Best Theme Song, competing against music from four other movies.

Port St. Lucie residents created the song: Mark Barnes composed the music, Robert Navarro did the arrangement and Alana Ferraro sang, with backup vocals from her church's children's choir at Holy Family Catholic Church. Carol Conners of Hollywood, Calif., wrote the lyrics.

The film won against two other documentaries. It premiered Wednesday night to a packed crowd of city dignitaries, eager city residents and film festival-goers at the Port St. Lucie Civic Center.

The fact that the film won at the festival means it resonates with people who know little about Port St. Lucie, said Jose H. Garofalo, the Port St. Lucie resident and veteran film director who co-wrote and directed "City of Dreams."

The judges included film industry insiders from New York, Los Angeles and Miami who know little about the city, and some of the 38 independent film directors from across from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Venezuela, France, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and Pakistan who had entries in the festival.

"Now we've had all these directors at the film festival tell us "City of Dreams" related to them. They loved it," Garofalo said.

The theme song got an additional tryout Friday at the St. Lucie Mets game at Digital Domain Stadium, said Richard McAfoos, president of the Port St. Lucie Historical Society, who oversaw movie production for historical accuracy and budget.

Teenaged singer Alana Ferraro took center field as the post-game fireworks started, her face lighting up the Jumbotron. She sang "City Within a Dream" before 3,000 fans.

"The crowd was ecstatic," McAfoos said. "Couples were hugging and everyone was swaying. They all waved their hands in the air in time to the music. It was just great."

While he hopes to do well in further film competitions, Port St. Lucie resident Garofalo said "City of Dreams" and its theme song have hit the mark that matters most.

"We accomplished what we set out to accomplish—to bring this city together."



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