

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Kingston Canadian Film Festival Pulls a Line Change as *Heated Rivalry* Closing Event Moves to Larger Ice After Instant Sell-Out

- “Beyond the Cottage: Inside the *Heated Rivalry* Revolution” features panelists Lori Fischburg, Elamin Abdelmehmed, Angie Fazekus, and Kyle Rich with moderator Liz Duff –
 - Shane Hollander’s junior hockey roots traced to Kingston –
 - Additional tickets now on sale –
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KINGSTON, ON (February 18, 2026) – When the [Kingston Canadian Film Festival](#) dropped the puck last week on tickets for its *Heated Rivalry* closing event, the response was immediate — and electric. Tickets for the **March 1** event sold out faster than a breakaway goal, leaving hundreds of fans without a seat. So KCFF is making a line change: moving the “**Beyond the Cottage: Inside the *Heated Rivalry* Revolution**” screening and panel to the Regina Rosen Auditorium at the Grand Theatre, one of Kingston’s most celebrated performance spaces. The new venue increases capacity and puts hundreds of fresh seats back on the ice, [available now](#). The premier all-Canadian film and cultural festival in the world, KCFF26 runs **Feb. 25 – March 1**.

If anyone needed one more reason to lace up for this one, consider this: eagle-eyed fans have recently resurfaced a local detail from the original novel. Shane Hollander — *Montréal Metros* forward, reluctant romantic, and one half of the most talked-about rivalry in television — once played junior hockey in Kingston. Before the MHL, before the rivalry, before the romance, Shane [wore Kingston’s white, black and gold colours](#). The birthplace of organized hockey didn’t just shape the sport — it may have helped shape the man.

“Moving to the Grand Theatre lets us give this extraordinary event the home-ice advantage it deserves,” said KCFF Executive Director Marc Garniss. “And now that we know Shane’s a Kingston boy, it feels even more like this event was always meant to be.”

The event features a special big-screen presentation of a fan-favourite episode from the series, followed by the must-see panel *Beyond the Cottage: Inside the Heated Rivalry Revolution*. Moderated by [Late Night Scrolling](#) podcaster [Liz Duff](#), the panel traces how *Heated Rivalry* has sparked change across multiple corners of contemporary culture, including how the series is changing the game for independent Canadian producers and broadcasters with *Heated Rivalry* producer **Lori Fischburg**; how the music featured in the series has launched emerging artists into the spotlight while reigniting attention around established acts with CBC host [Elamin Abdelmehmed](#); how modern fandom helped propel its rapid international ascent from beloved underground novels into the TV stratosphere with University of Toronto pop culture professor **Angie Fazekus**; and its influence on LGBTQ+ athletes and the game itself with sports professor [Kyle Rich](#) of Brock University. Attendees will have the opportunity to win official *Heated Rivalry* merchandise.

For the full story on **Beyond the Cottage: Inside the *Heated Rivalry* Revolution**, read the original KCFF press release [here](#).

As [previously announced](#), KCFF is proud to present [opening night film *Youngblood*](#). Also previously announced are an extensive lineup of music-focused programming as part of the [Amherst Island Radio Music Series](#), and engaging comedy programming as part of the [ShozerTV Comedy Showcase](#). A total of 15 short films from filmmakers across the country are featured in KCFF's Canadian Shorts program. Additionally, KCFF is proud to showcase local Kingston filmmakers in its [Doc Factory](#), [18MM](#) and [Slaight Music Video](#) programs, as well as KCFF's [Local Shorts](#) program, featuring eight short-form films from Kingston-based talent.

In all, the festival presents more than 100 individual films over more than five dozen screenings. The festival also programs more than 30 non-film events, including live music concerts and stand-up comedy. Performing this year at KCFF26 are recently announced musical artists **Arkells** along with **Bif Naked**, **July Talk**, **Born Ruffians**, and **Julianna Riolino**, as well as comedians **Shaun Majumder**, **Mark Forward**, **K. Trevor Wilson**, and **Guled Abdi**. A full list of the dozens creative talent expected to attend KCFF can be found [here](#).

KCFF26 wraps up **Sunday, March 1** with a closing night event featuring the awarding of nine awards, including the [Playback Prize for Best Canadian Feature](#) (\$5,000) and the **Visual Menace Best First Feature Award** (\$2,500), as determined by the festival jury.

The 2026 Kingston Canadian Film Festival is presented by TD Bank Group. Premier partners are the Slaight Family Foundation, Amherst Island Radio, and Cogeco. Major supporters are ACFOMI, Delta Hotels Kingston Waterfront, Downtown Kingston BIA, Kingston Community Credit Union, Homestead, Marriott Kingston, Pattison Outdoor Advertising, Shaftesbury, and Tourism Kingston. KCFF benefits from the patronage of Diane Blake & Stephen Smith, the Norman & Margaret Jewison Charitable Foundation, the McLean Smits Family Foundation, and the Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation. Join the KCFF Circle of Supporters [here](#) or learn about sponsorship opportunities [here](#).

About the Kingston Canadian Film Festival

The Kingston Canadian Film Festival (KCFF) is Canada's premier all-Canadian film festival and the largest of its kind in the world. For more than a quarter century, KCFF has celebrated the diversity, creativity, and vitality of Canadian screen-based storytelling, presenting feature films, documentaries, shorts, and music videos that bring filmmakers, artists, and audiences together each year in a dynamic festival setting. More than a film festival, KCFF is a multi-disciplinary, intersectional cultural event that transforms traditional and unconventional venues across historic downtown Kingston into a vibrant, walkable festival hub, featuring live comedy and music, exhibitions, industry conversations, workshops, networking events, and community gatherings.

With nearly 100% of films screening at KCFF accompanied by live post-screening Q&As with visiting talent, the festival has welcomed leading Canadian filmmakers and performers including Atom Egoyan, Deepa Mehta, Alanis Obomsawin, Don McKellar, Mina Shum, Matt Johnson, Jay Baruchel, Brigitte Berman, Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor, Jeff Barnaby, Gerry Dee, Cathy Jones, Jeremy Hotz, Bif Naked, Donovan Woods, Gordon Pinsent, and casts from *The Kids in the Hall*, *Letterkenny*, *Trailer Park Boys*, *Baroness von Sketch Show*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, among others.

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For more information: scott@hendersonpr.com