



March 11, 2008

Dear Festival Programmers,

My name is Aaron Kubey; I am the executive director and president of the National Theatre of the Deaf. Our goal for the National Theater of the Deaf is to produce theatrically challenging work of the highest quality, drawing from as wide a range of the world's literature as possible; to perform these original works in a style that links American Sign Language with the spoken word; to seek, train and employ Deaf artists; to offer our work to as culturally diverse and inclusive an audience as possible; to provide community outreach activities that will educate and enlighten the general public, opening their eyes and ears to Deaf culture and building linkages that facilitate involvement in our methods of work.

We wholeheartedly support *Universal Signs*, and we would love to see this film at your festival. *Universal Signs* has a very special connection to the National Theater of the Deaf. All of the Deaf actors in the film, Anthony Natale, Troy Kotsur, Deanne Bray, and Robert DeMayo are National Theatre of the Deaf alumni. These seasoned Deaf actors of the stage gracefully transition to the screen in *Universal Signs*. The film affords these talented actors a new arena to hone and perform their craft. For this opportunity, the film should be recognized and celebrated.

The film beautifully expresses my culture, Deaf culture. It exemplifies the filmmakers' commitment, attention to detail, and great sensitivity to the Deaf community. The filmmakers understood the significance of making a film that portrays a minority group of which they themselves do not belong. The production worked closely with Robert DeMayo, Deaf actor and teacher and National Theater of the Deaf alumni. Robert was the film's American Sign Language (ASL) consultant and ASL coach. He not only transliterated the English script into ASL, but also taught ASL to the cast and crew including the writer/director, Ann Calamia, the producer, Catherine Miller, and the female lead, Sabrina Lloyd. Robert also assisted the Deaf actors with their lines by confirming that their sign language choices matched the backgrounds of their characters. By doing this, the film has an even greater level of authenticity and significance for the Deaf audience who recognize clues about the characters' upbringing and culture based on their signs. (This is similar to a hearing person recognizing an accent or colloquialism.) The filmmakers also worked with the Deaf community when captioning the film.

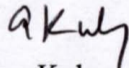
Corporate Headquarters
139 North Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 236-4193
(860) 236-4163, fax

www.ntd.org

Because of this, the captions are clear and well placed for all audiences – Deaf, Hard of Hearing and hearing. *Universal Signs*' captions should set the standard for all film captioning. From script to screen, for every step of the process, the filmmakers worked with the Deaf community. The end result of their great efforts is an honest film that clearly expresses the beauty of sign language.

Universal Signs was created in the same spirit as the National Theatre of the Deaf. It is a film with a loving message that bridges the Deaf and hearing worlds, and one in which we all can be proud.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AKubey". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Aaron Kubey
Executive Director/President
National Theatre of the Deaf