

SKOURAS FILMS

## **“SWIMMERS” to open on June 16 at the Balboa and Elmwood Theaters**

Acclaimed film stars two-time Tony Award-winning  
Best Actress **Cherry Jones** and astonishing young  
newcomer **Tara Devon Gallagher** (“Mad Hot Ballroom”)



[www.SwimmersTheMovie.com](http://www.SwimmersTheMovie.com)

A story of human frailty and individual strength in the face of a fracturing American dream as observed through the eyes of an 11-year-old girl, Doug Sadler’s “Swimmers” will open at the Balboa Theater in San Francisco and the Elmwood Theater in Berkeley on Friday, June 16, 2006.

The critically-acclaimed motion picture stars two-time Tony Award-winning Best Actress **Cherry Jones** in her most prominent film role to date, **Shawn Hatosy**, **Sarah Paulson**, **Robert Knott**, and **Tara Devon Gallagher**, now 13, who lit up the screen in “Mad Hot Ballroom.”

“Swimmers” is director-writer Doug Sadler’s second feature film. A former professional actor, he studied at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, before graduating with an MFA from the American Film Institute in 1995. Sadler was selected by *Filmmaker Magazine* in 2001 as one of “25 New Faces” to watch. In 2004, he was invited by The Sundance Institute to refine “Swimmers” at its prestigious Writing and Directing Labs, where he worked closely with such filmmakers as Robert Redford and Ed Harris.

“Swimmers” debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2005, where it became a finalist for the distinguished Humanitas Prize. It went on to win the Grand Jury Prize for “Best New American Film” from the Seattle Film Festival, “Best American Independent Film” from the Festroia International Film Festival in Portugal, “Best Actor” (Robert Knott) from the Cartagena Film Festival in Spain, and “Best Director” and “Best Narrative Feature” from the Savannah Film Festival. The film has also been an official selection at over a dozen international festivals, including in Germany, Ireland, and the Czech Republic.

Following its Sundance premiere, James Greenberg of *The Hollywood Reporter*, wrote: “Before Miramax brought independent film to the multiplex and Sundance made it a national sport, American independent cinema was about regional filmmaking. Small, well-told stories rooted in a specific time and place. A rocky coming-of-age tale set along the Maryland coast, ‘Swimmers’ is that kind of film. Mature audiences looking for a deeply-felt, human-scale story should be given the chance to enjoy this one in theaters.”

Chris Kaltenbach of the *Baltimore Sun* recently wrote that “Doug Sadler brings understated magic and beauty to his tale of a waterman’s family struggling to stay afloat in ‘Swimmers,’ a remarkable film that is both heartbreaking and hopeful with moments of sublime tenderness and welcome humor.”

“Swimmers” marks the astonishing acting debut of a major new talent, **Tara Devon Gallagher**, in the pivotal role of Emma Tyler, whose passion for swimming is suddenly disrupted by an ear injury requiring expensive surgery. Gallagher’s only prior onscreen appearance was as one of the featured dance competitors in the hit documentary, “Mad Hot Ballroom.”

**Robert Knott** – who previously co-starred in Ed Harris’ “Pollack” and Walter Hill’s “Wild Bill” – plays Emma’s father, a waterman struggling with the fact that his profession is teetering on the brink of extinction as the Chesapeake’s once-productive fishery spirals downward.

Broadway legend **Cherry Jones** portrays Emma’s fiercely-determined mother, who has no choice but to become the emotional jetty that keeps the family from being swept away by financial crisis and outside influences. Jones won her second Tony Award for Best Actress last year in “Doubt,” and is currently starring with Ralph Fiennes in the Broadway revival of Brian Friel’s “Faith Healer.”

In “Swimmers,” **Sarah Paulson** tackles her most challenging film role to date as Merrill, the mysterious, kohl-eyed beauty who suddenly turns up in town in a desperate attempt to understand her own troubled past. As the story unfolds, Merrill and Emma – who is shattered by her own recent loss – form a delicate bond that becomes their sanctuary from the personal crises that threaten to drown both. As Merrill becomes an oasis for Emma, who feels invisible at home, she in turn finds herself growing ever more dependent on the unconditional friendship the child provides. Paulson co-starred with Jessica Lange on Broadway last year in “The Glass Menagerie,” and opposite Annette Bening in “The Cherry Orchard” at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles this spring.

**Shawn Hatosy**, co-stars in “Swimmers” as Emma’s brother, the town’s newly-installed police officer who first encounters Merrill wandering aimlessly at the bottom of an empty pool, then falls hard for the quixotic stranger. Hatosy previously co-starred in such independent films as “Outside Providence, and Nick Cassavetes’ “Alpha Dog,” which debuted at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

The Balboa Theater is located at 3630 Balboa Street at 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue in San Francisco; 415-221-8184; [www.balboamovies.com](http://www.balboamovies.com). The Elmwood Theater is located at 2966 College Avenue in Berkeley; 510-540-6482.

**For more information about the film, visit [www.SwimmersTheMovie.com](http://www.SwimmersTheMovie.com).**

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

***A press kit and preview of available JPEGs is available at <http://www.swimmersthemovie.com/press.htm>***

Lyla Foggia  
foggia public relations  
(661) 259-6561  
[lyla@foggiapr.com](mailto:lyla@foggiapr.com)