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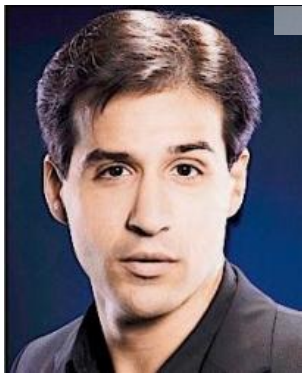
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A 'Grand' Film Of Hope Shot In Astoria

BY TONY BARSAMIAN



John Solo, co-owner of Grand Café, on 30th Avenue in Astoria, produced and stars in the independent film "Hope", premiering Thursday, July 16.

He's known in the neighborhood as John Solo, a co-owner of Grand Café on 30th Avenue in Astoria. But Solo has another career, one that has put his face before millions of people across the country. Solo is an actor and producer whose latest endeavor, the film, "Hope", directed and written by Justin Foran, will premier this Thursday, July 16 at the Long Island International Film Expo at 4:30 p.m. To view its trailer, visit www.hope-themovie.com.

Solo also stars in "Hope", much of which was shot at the Grand Café and at Queensboro Plaza. The film tells the story of an 11-year-old boy whose mother has died and who lives in his own private hell—a broken home in the projects of Queens. Left to the ubiquitous electronic babysitter, television, he hears almost endless iterations of the "hope and change" theme of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. The campaign slogan inspires him to run away to Washington, D.C. to attend Obama's inaugural ceremonies. His journey to the nation's capital leads him from despair to hope.

Solo's list of television credits includes guest starring roles on "Conviction", an episode of "Law and Order", and the daytime television dramas "All My Children" and "Guiding Light". His first film role was in the independent film "Blackout", directed by Jerry LaMothe. His other independent film credits are "The Big Shot Caller", directed by Marlene Rhein; "Frankie & Maddy"; directed by Tim McLaughlin; "Anything's Possible", directed by Javier Rodriguez and shown at the Tribeca Film Festival, and "Dugout", directed by Chris Fraga. Live theater credits include roles in "Two Gentlemen Of Corona", directed by Pam Berlin; "One Big Happy Family", a Sackett Group/BAM production; "Picnic On The Battlefield" at the Chocolate Factory in Long Island City; "Antigone" at the Greek National Theatre in Athens; "The Drifter" and "Sexual Perversity In Chicago" at Gotham City Improv; "Glen Gary, Glen Ross", "Moony's Kid Don't Cry" and "A Thousand Babes" at Theater 22; "Oh My God" and "Orpheus Descending" at NYU Black Box Theater, and "The Glass Menagerie" at Pyramid Theater Group.



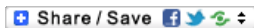
The Grand Café, 37-01 30th Ave., in addition to offering a brunch rated Number 1 in the triborough area, is the setting of much of the independent film "Hope", in which John Solo, one of its two owners, stars.

An alumnus of Bronx H.S. of Science, Solo holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from New York University and has had private coaching sessions with Vincent D'Onofrio and Nico Hartos and a group class session with

Anthony Abeson. He attended a summer acting program at the Stella Adler Conservatory and a commercial and soap opera intensive course led by Linda Laundra. His academic background and years of training have developed in him the ability to focus on every aspect of a character's life and metamorphose himself completely into the role he is playing, a metamorphosis highlighted by each phrase of dialogue and action of the character in every scene in which he appears. Solo hopes one day to work with Al Pacino, who he sees as representative of all Mediterranean people in his looks and demeanor and for whose potential and quality of acting he has the highest regard. "Dog Day Afternoon" is his favorite Pacino film.

Solo's abilities extend beyond acting. He and co-owner Teddy Passelis at Grand Café, 37-01 30th Ave., have created an elegant brasserie that satisfies the finest European palate while offering the contemporary dining atmosphere of South Beach. Grand Café is ranked as offering the Number 1 brunch in the tri-borough area, according to the "City's Best" online restaurant survey. For more information, visit www.grandcafelounge.com.

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