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## Hungarian Film Festival Insider in Hollywood

Posted on November 4th, 2008 by Adrienne Papp



The 8th annual Hungarian Film Festival was held Oct. 16-23 in Los Angeles at the Fine Arts Theater in Beverly Hills and Sunset 5 in West Hollywood. Presented by Bunyik Entertainment, this one-week showcase of Hungarian films is an exciting new event in the Hollywood sky, and included several U.S. film premieres and honorees from other international film festivals.

With this year's theme celebrating *Hungarians in Hollywood*, the festival's slate of sixteen films included several premieres of Hungary's most talented filmmakers, as well as a compilation of U.S. films that were made with the talents of Hungarians like Michael Curtiz, Laszlo Kovacs, Andy Vajna, Miklós Rózsa and Vilmos Zsigmond. This event gave great exposure to the wealth of talent that Hungarians have contributed to the U.S. film industry.

The festival opened with József Sipos film *Eszter's Inheritance* (an entrant in the Montreal Film Festival) in its U.S. premiere. Based on Sándor Márai's classic of the same title, this lush, atmospheric film takes place in pre-World War II Hungary. Starring legendary Hungarian actress Mari Töröcsik, the film follows a dowager whose comfortable life on her family's estate is dramatically changed by the receipt of a telegram from the only man she has loved. Ms Töröcsik, an honored guest at the festival, now in her sixth decade of filmmaking, attended the screening at the Fine Arts Theatre.

Other noteworthy films were *Delta*, the festival's Best Film award winner (and winner of the film critics' award at Cannes). *Delta* is a deeply felt fable about a young man (played by Félix Lajkó) returning home from the wild to the Danube delta and discovering a sister he never knew existed. A relationship develops between the two, who invoke disapproval from the local villagers. Csaba Bollók's *Iska's Journey*, the official Hungarian Academy Award entrant for Best Foreign Language Film in 2008, was originally shown at the annual Hungarian Film Week in Budapest and was also a favorite at the festival. The film traces the descent of young Iska (Mária Varga) from slaving for her family in coal fields to being kidnapped into servitude, and expresses a sense of humanity maintained in the face of hardship.

The theme of *Hungarians in Hollywood* put a spotlight on the many talents of Hungarians and Hungarian-Americans who have made major contributions to the U.S. film industry. Among the most prominent are Michael Curtiz, the Oscar-winning director of *Casablanca*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *White Christmas*, Adolf Zukor, studio mogul at Paramount Pictures, William Fox, founder of Fox Studios, actors Tony Curtis, Bela Lugosi and Peter Lorre, Andy Vajna (producer and co-founder of Carolco Pictures), Frank Darabont (director of *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*), George Cukor (Oscar-winning director for *My Fair Lady*), legendary screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, Laszlo Kovacs (award-winning cinematographer), producer Joe Pasternak, and the sensational and ageless Zsa Zsa Gabor.

An event honoring Hungary's greatest living filmmaker, Miklos Jancso, was held at the LA County Museum of Art Oct. 17-24 as an extension of the festival. Included in the showing were Jancso's films *The Round Up*, *Silence and Cry*, *The Red and White*, and *The Red Psalm*.

For more information on Hungarians in Hollywood and the Hungarian Festival please visit [www.hffla.org](http://www.hffla.org)



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