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NEWS

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THE CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ITS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY IN STYLE

A Star-Studded Red Carpet, an Emotional Pre-Screening Presentation and the U.S. Premiere of Liv Ullmann's "Miss Julie" among the Highlights of the Festival's 50th Anniversary Opening Night

CHICAGO, IL (October 10, 2014) – Opening Night of the 50th Chicago International Film Festival was more than a golden celebration for an institution that has left an indelible mark on the city of Chicago. It was also a gathering of friends, as veteran actress **Liv Ullmann**, actor **Colin Farrell**, Festival Jury Member **Kathleen Turner** and "The Fugitive" director **Andrew Davis** joined Festival Founder and Artistic Director **Michael Kutza** on the red carpet for the U.S. Premiere of Ullmann's latest film "Miss Julie" on Thursday, October 9 at the Harris Theater.

The red carpet event was packed with onlookers eager to capture the excitement as well as local, national and international media. Chicago actress and producer **Grace McPhillips** ("The Other One," an official selection of the 50th Chicago International Film Festival), walked the red carpet, followed by **Andrew Davis** ("The Fugitive"), whose first feature film, "Stony Island" (1978), received its World Premiere at the 18th Chicago International Film Festival. They were soon joined by the members of the **International Feature Competition Jury**: Academy Award®-nominated and Golden Globe®-winning actress **Kathleen Turner**; acclaimed filmmaker and New German Cinema pioneer **Margarethe von Trotta**; Turkish director **Ferzan Ozpetek** (whose latest film, "Fasten Your Seatbelts," is an Official selection at this year's Festival); award-winning Israeli cinematographer **Giora Bejach**; and Iranian editor and director **Parviz Shahbazi**. And then came the moment the media and the public were waiting for: **Liv Ullmann** and **Colin Farrell**, together on the red carpet with **Michael Kutza**.

Once inside the theater, the audience was treated to video greetings from past Festival honorees and friends, including Davis; producer, writer and director **Robert Zemeckis**; and director **Martin Scorsese**, whose first film, "I Call First," premiered at the 1967 Chicago International Film Festival. In his video message, Scorsese acknowledged the encouragement he received from both the Festival and a young film critic at the time named **Roger Ebert**.

Michael Kutza took the stage, and after some hilarious reminiscences about Scorsese's first trip to Chicago, he introduced a video that illustrated the year-round work done by Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival. After remarks from Chairman of the Governing Board **Jeanne Randall Malkin**, Representative **Ken Dunkin**, 5th District of the State of Illinois, and President and CEO of Columbia College Chicago, **Dr. Kwang-Wu Kim**, the lights went down and the audience was treated to a personal video message from Chicago Mayor **Rahm Emmanuel**. Emmanuel acknowledged the role the Chicago International Film Festival has played in the City's history, but also as a "place where storytellers come to share the universal language of cinema."

The Festival then presented **American Airlines** with the **Gold Hugo for Leadership in the Arts**, in recognition of American Airlines' continued support of the arts and the Film Festival. **Judi Gorman**, Regional Manager, Sales Promotion & Community Relations, Central Division Sales for American Airlines, accepted the award on behalf of its worldwide employees and commented that both American's and the Festival's missions are aligned to "promote cultural diversity and raise the profile of Chicago as a city that does work."

After formally introducing the members of the International Feature Competition jury, the Festival went on to honor some dear friends who are no longer with us in a video remembrance. Among the "Absent Friends:" director and writer **Patrice Chéreau**; writer, director and Chicagoan **Harold Ramis**; director and festival honoree **Richard Attenborough**; and silent screen comedienne and the Festival's "Godmother" **Colleen Moore**, among others. But the largest round of applause was reserved for the final image on the video presentation: film critics and supporters of the Festival, **Gene Siskel** and **Roger Ebert**.

Ullmann then joined Kutza on stage to present the U.S. premiere of her film "Miss Julie." Calling Kutza her "absolute favorite Festival director," Ullmann declared films a "most important medium"—one that makes theaters a "magic place" where people can see "real life." She described Farrell as a "genuine actor," one who gave the best performance of his career for her film. Farrell returned the compliment by describing Ullmann as "the most incredibly deeply feeling" person he's met and one whose work on behalf of the disenfranchised will long be remembered.

The celebration continued with a post-screening reception at the **Chicago Cultural Center's** Sidney R. Yates Gallery, 77 E. Randolph St., with hors d'oeuvres from such restaurants as Masada, RL, Vienna Hot Dogs, and Eli's Cheesecake, drinks courtesy of Casale del Giglio and Stella Artois, cocktails featuring Effen Vodka, coffee and pastries courtesy of Lavazza, as well as a performance by multifaceted, vocal powerhouse **Terisa Griffin**.

The celebration ended on a sweet note as Ullmann, Farrell and Kutza cut into a special one-of-a-kind movie-themed gigantic cheesecake courtesy of **Eli's Cheesecake**.

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ABOUT CINEMA/CHICAGO

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a not-for-profit arts and education organization dedicated to encouraging better understanding between cultures and to making a positive contribution to the art form of the moving image.

The 50th Chicago International Film Festival runs October 9-23, 2014.

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