

<b>11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EUROPA CINEMAS CONFERENCE (16-19 NOVEMBER 2006)</b> <b>EUROPA CINEMAS AWARDS 2006</b>
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Paris, 21 November 2006.

Claude Miller, Costa-Gavras and Jeanne Moreau presented the 2006 Europa Cinemas Awards to 3 European exhibitors from the network during an evening at the Cinéma des Cinéastes:

- **Award for Best Programming: Grand Teatret cinema** (6 screens) in Copenhagen, Denmark, managed by Kirsten Dalgaard and Kim Foss.

- **Award for Best Initiative for Young Audiences: Cinema Paradiso** (2 screens) in St. Pölten, Austria, managed by Gerald Knell and Alexander Syllaba.

- **Award for Best Entrepreneur: Enrique Gonzáles Macho, Cines Renoir**, with 65 screens throughout Spain.

## **BEST PROGRAMMING**

### **Grand Teatret, Copenhagen (Denmark)**

#### **A Danish "institution"**

A veritable (even a venerable) institution – this is the best way to describe the Grand Teatret, which occupies a special position on Copenhagen's cultural scene. Opened in 1913, the cinema is one of the oldest in the capital, a kind of historic monument that has managed to adapt to the market and to audience's tastes. Having started out with a single screen, it was developed into a three-screen complex in 1976. It then became a five-screen cinema in 1977, before a sixth screen was added in 1988. The building has been regularly renovated and today offers 773 seats, of which 326 are in the original film theatre.

The Grand Teatret has succeeded in building up a loyal audience by favouring *cinema d'auteur*, and, more specifically, European films. A bold decision that has enabled it to achieve more than 350,000 admissions per annum. It is not unusual for certain films to be shown only at the Grand Teatret, such as *Time to Leave*, *The Caiman* or *Paradise Now*. In 2005, its biggest successes were *The Downfall*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Manslaughter*. The results achieved by the latter also illustrate the importance of local production in the programming for the six screens. "Most Danish films make it onto the bill at the Grand Teatret", explains **Kim Foss**, the cinema's director, who succeeds **Kirsten Dalgaard**. American cinema is not entirely absent from the screens, but priority is given to the works of established auteurs or to films originating from the independent scene. In general terms, "the Grand Teatret favours quality films over commercial productions", Kim Foss explains. A successful run is already being predicted for *The Queen*, which succeeded *Volver* and *The Lives of Others* in the main screen at the beginning of November.

In his role as head of the distribution company Camera Film, Kim Foss is also in a position to supply his cinema with *films d'auteur* that he discovers at the major festivals and at film markets, namely 12 to 15 releases a year. Camera Film distributed *Vera Drake* and *March of the Penguins*, for example, which enjoyed considerable success at the Grand Teatret. Also worthy of mention are the numerous events that are organised, such as CPH: DOX (International Documentary Festival) and the focus on French cinema running from November to December.

## **BEST YOUNG AUDIENCE ACTIVITIES**

### **Cinema Paradiso, St. Pölten (Austria)**

#### **Youth to the fore!**

Cinema Paradiso, which opened in 2002, has developed into a major venue in the small town of St. Pölten. With its two theatres, one offering 118 and the other 60 seats, the cinema is attracting more than 40,000 people a year. In 2005, it was one of the few Austrian cinemas that experienced an increase in admissions. This success can be attributed both to the quality of the programming and to the comfort it offers the public. Having taken over the site of a former commercial cinema that had closed its doors following the arrival of a multiplex on the outskirts of the town, the Cinema Paradiso team wanted to create a venue with a warm, convivial atmosphere. With a bar, a summer

terrace and a multi-purpose hall, the cinema, which also plays host to concerts, exhibitions and even public readings, has no shortage of strengths.

Particular attention has been paid to welcoming young audiences. "We are keen to show children who are used to seeing blockbusters at the local multiplex that there are other forms of cinema", explains **Gerald Knell**. This initiative focuses as much on family audiences as it does on schoolchildren. Families can discover at least one film a week as part of **Cinema Kid**. As far as possible, the films shown are European, with Sweden's *Pippi Longstocking* and Germany's *Die wilden Hühner*, two examples of films that have recently been on the bill. Schoolchildren are able to benefit from the **Cinema School** programme, which is intended for children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 18. At the end of the projections, they are regularly invited to meet the directors of the films they have seen, such as, recently, Sabine Derflinger and Andreas Gruber.

Cinema Paradiso also offers special weeks for schoolchildren two or three times a year. The screenings are organised around a theme that encourages them to think about modern society, and the films are discussed with experts associated with social, economic, ecological or even political subjects. The price of a ticket is fixed at € 3 for schoolchildren and € 5 for everyone else. The last event of this kind was held from 8 to 11 November 2006 under the title "Gemeinsam für eine gerechte Welt", or "Everyone together for a fair world".

## BEST ENTREPRENEUR

### Enrique Gonzáles Macho, Cines Renoir (Spain)

#### 20 Years of Dynamism

Since the first Renoir cinema opened in Madrid in 1986, **Enrique Gonzáles Macho** has not stopped developing arthouse cinema across Spain, from Madrid to Tenerife, spanning Barcelona, Bilbao, Palma and Zaragoza. Today, the Renoir network counts 65 screens and 2.5 million admissions per year. Enrique Gonzales Macho started his career as a distributor before switching to exhibition, where he's demonstrated a knack for finding the key to success in each of the locations he's created, with an accent on conviviality and diversity of films on offer. Their characteristic spirit of independence has established these film theatres as a bastion of European cinema, which comprises 70% of their programming. The film with the longest run was *All About My Mother*, projected for 57 consecutive weeks in Madrid. In a highly competitive market, the Renoir network is distinctive for its choice of the original version, a rarity in the country. To reach foreign, non Spanish-speaking audiences, he doesn't hesitate to present Spanish films subtitled in English. A way of standing out from the crowd.

In 2006, he opened a new complex with 7 screens and 1,300 seats on the Canary Islands, located in a historic cinema which he took over and entirely refurbished. To guarantee maximum comfort, he did not hesitate to reduce capacity by 400 seats. Admissions have now reached 2,500 per week and are still growing. Today, Enrique Gonzales Macho is working on a new concept which he plans to test 90 kilometres from Madrid, a Renoir space with 4 theatres in a general-interest multiplex with 13 screens in all. While the interior and ticket counter will be shared by both entities, the programming and decoration of the Renoir space will be distinct from the rest of the multiplex. "Outside the big cities, it's sometimes difficult to create locations exclusively dedicated to arthouse films," he explains. "This concept should allow us to offer a wide variety of films, and to redeem costs more easily by taking advantage of the dynamic of the entire site." If successful, he plans to create a Renoir franchise in other cinemas in Spain.

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In 2005, the cinemas of the Europa Cinemas network devoted 59% of their screenings to European films and 37% to non-domestic European films.

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Europa Cinemas supports the dissemination of European films in theatres and runs a network of cinemas that is supported by MEDIA Plus and Euromed Audiovisual II, programmes of the European Commission (Brussels), the Centre National de la Cinématographie (Paris), Eurimages (Council of Europe – Strasbourg), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Paris) and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (Paris).

EUROPA CINEMAS NETWORK: 1688 screens, 689 cinemas, 403 cities, 59 countries

