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# News Release

## **BAMcinématek presents *Hungarians in Hollywood*, October 7—27 and November 23**

**Part of the year-long festival *Extremely Hungary*  
organized by the Hungarian Cultural Center**

BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave.)

Tickets: \$11 per screening for adults; \$8 for seniors (65 and over),  
\$8 for children (ages five to eleven), and \$8 for students (25 and under with valid I.D.)

Monday–Thursday, except holidays; \$7 BAM Cinema Club members

Tickets available by phone at 718.777.FILM

Call 718.636.4100 or visit BAM.org

**Brooklyn, September 15, 2009**— From October 7—27 and November 23, BAMcinématek, the repertory film program at BAM Rose Cinemas, presents *Hungarians in Hollywood*, featuring the extraordinary contributions made by Hungarian directors, producers, screenwriters, actors, musicians, and studio heads during the Golden Age of the Hollywood studios of the 1930s and 1940s, the New Hollywood of the 70s, and the Independent movement of the 1980s. It will include work by directors Michael Curtiz, Charles Vidor, and George Cukor; producers Adolph Zukor and Alexander and Zoltán Korda; actors Béla Lugosi and Johnny Weissmuller; writers Melchior Lengyel and Lajos Bíró; cinematographers Vilmos Zsigmond and Laszlo Kovacs; and composer Miklós Rózsa. The program will also feature a 25th anniversary screening of *Stranger than Paradise* starring Hungarian-born actress Eszter Balint. *Hungarians in Hollywood* is a part of *Extremely Hungary*, a year-long festival showcasing contemporary Hungarian visual, performing, and literary arts in New York and Washington D.C., organized by the Hungarian Cultural Center. This series provides a rare glimpse at the legacy of several generations of Hungarian immigrants and Hungarian Americans who influenced all sectors of the American film industry.

*Hungarians in Hollywood* spotlights several classic Hollywood directors who were born in Hungary—notably Charles Vidor, André de Toth, and Michael Curtiz—as well as Hungarian-Americans George Cukor and Cornel Wilde, all of whom made their names in a variety of genres in the Hollywood studio system. Both de Toth and Curtiz began

*more...*

**BAM**Rose Cinemas

their film careers in Hungary as actors and directors. Curtiz—represented in the series by *Passage to Marseille* (1944)—began his career around 1912. He was the production director of a Budapest film studio before leaving to work in Europe when the Hungarian film industry was nationalized by the Communist party in 1919. In the 1920s he went to Hollywood where he directed over 100 films. De Toth started working as a director in the 1930s in Hungary, then in England where he worked on Michael Powell and Ludwig Berger's *The Thief of Baghdad* (produced by countryman Alexander Korda), and ultimately moved to Hollywood, where he was best known for 1953's *The House of Wax* and a series of Westerns, including *Man in the Saddle* (1951), screening as part of the series. Vidor worked in Germany at UFA studios and came to the U.S. in the 1920s. BAMcinématek will screen his most famous film *Gilda* (1946), starring Rita Hayworth. Rounding out the series is a Cukor comedy—*The Royal Family of Broadway* (co-directed with Cyril Gardner, 1930). An American with Hungarian heritage like Cukor, actor-director Cornel Wilde is represented in the series by the war film *Beach Red* (1967), in which he also stars.

The important contributions of Hungarian-born producers Alexander and Zoltan Korda, and art director Vincent Korda, are represented in the series in Michael Powell and Ludwig Berger's *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940). Alexander Korda started as a director, critic, and government officer in Hungary and was part of the nationalization of his country's industry after the First World War. When the political right seized control of the industry, he left Hungary and ended up in Hollywood. He later returned to Europe where he founded London Films, deeply influencing British cinema by producing films by Powell, Carol Reed, and others. Alexander Korda produced *Baghdad* with his brother Zoltan Korda, and it features art direction and production design by Vincent Korda. (The film also features work from many other Hungarians including a script by Lajos Biró, second unit direction by André de Toth, and music by Miklós Rózsa.) Another key producer, Adolph Zukor, moved to the U.S. as a teenager, began his career in film exhibition, founded Famous Players, and eventually became head of Paramount Pictures. A Zukor production, Henry Hathaway's *Souls at Sea* (1937), starring Gary Cooper, is another highlight of the series.

Hungarian actors in the series include well-known character actors like Béla Lugosi—in his most famous role as *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931) as well as his surprising turn in Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka* (1939)—and Peter Lorre in *Passage to Marseille* (Michael Curtiz, 1944) and *Invisible Agent* (Edwin L. Marin, 1942). Actresses Zita Johann and Illona Massey both appear in horror pictures in the series—*The Mummy* (Karl Freund, 1932) and *Invisible Agent*, respectively. Hungarian-American Johnny Weissmuller plays Tarzan in *Tarzan and His Mate* (Cedric Gibbons, 1934).

*Hungarians in Hollywood* also acknowledges the contributions of key screenwriters and cinematographers of Hungarian origin. Writers Lajos Biró and Melchior Lengyel are spotlighted in three films. Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka* was based on an original story by Lengyel, while Biró wrote Billy Wilder's *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943) and Michael Powell's *The Thief of Baghdad*. Cinematographers László Kovács and Vilmos Zsigmond are represented in *Paper Moon* (Peter Bogdanovich, 1973) and *Blow Out* (Brian de Palma, 1981) respectively. Both left Hungary during the uprising in the 1950s and found careers in 1970s Hollywood shooting films for Bogdanovich, de Palma, Robert Altman, John Boorman, and others.

The series also includes films scored by Oscar-winning composer Miklós Rózsa: *The Thief of Baghdad* and *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* (Douglas Sirk, 1958). Born in Budapest, Rózsa began his film career in film in England working with Alexander Korda. Another musician, Hungarian composer Franz Liszt is the subject and inspiration for British director Ken Russell's *Lisztomania* (1975), another highlight of the series, starring The Who's Roger Daltrey.

*Hungarians in Hollywood* is part of *Extremely Hungary*, a yearlong festival showcasing contemporary Hungarian visual, performing, and literary arts in New York and Washington, D.C., throughout 2009. The festival is organized by the Hungarian Cultural Center in New York, which sponsors a range of programs celebrating Hungary's past, present, and future, and is made possible in part by funding

from the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture. For more information, please visit the festival's website at [www.extremelyhungary.org](http://www.extremelyhungary.org).

**For press information, please contact Molly Gross at 718.636.4129 x3 / [mgross@bam.org](mailto:mgross@bam.org)**

**Hungarians in Hollywood schedule**

All prints are 35mm unless noted.

Wednesday, October 7 at 4:30, 6:50\*, 9:30pm

***Stranger than Paradise*** (1984), 86min

Directed by Jim Jarmusch

With John Lurie, Eszter Balint, Richard Edson

*Stranger than Paradise* announced Jim Jarmusch's singular style—defined by offbeat, deadpan humor, austere black and white cinematography, pregnant blackouts, and existential philosophizing—to the world and practically defined downtown cool in the 1980s. Willie (John Lurie), a hipster dwelling in New York's Lower East Side, is forced to take in his Hungarian cousin, Eva (Eszter Balint, a stage actress born in Budapest, who Jarmusch discovered acting in downtown NYC at the Squat Refugee Theater), on her visit to America. Together with Willie's buddy Eddie, they embark on a cross country trip that takes them from the frozen wasteland of rural Ohio to the dingy motels and tacky gift shops of Florida.

**\*There will be an introduction by Eszter Balint before the 6:50pm screening.**

Thursday, October 8 at 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

***Ninotchka*** (1939), 110min

Directed by Ernst Lubitsch

With Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Béla Lugosi

"*Garbo Laughs!*" Intended to soften the iconic Swedish actress' icy screen persona, Lubitsch's breezy romantic comedy finds Garbo playing a humorless Soviet envoy on assignment in Paris, where she finds both love and a new-found lust for life. "As a bonus to the frothy script, by Billy Wilder and others, and its surefire star power, *Ninotchka* features what is perhaps [Hungarian actor] Béla Lugosi's most likeable and relaxed performance" ([AllMovie Guide](#)). The script was based on an original story by Oscar-nominated Hungarian-born-writer Melchior Lengyel.

Friday, October 9 at 3, 6, 9pm

***A Time to Love and a Time to Die*** (1958), 132min

Directed by Douglas Sirk

With John Gavin, Liselotte Pulver, Jock Mahoney

"A masterpiece of mise-en-scene by Douglas Sirk, transforming an Erich Maria Remarque melodrama into a haunting story of the search for beauty in a dead world. John Gavin and Lilo Pulver are lovers who meet among the ruins of a bombed-out German town during World War II. Despite their efforts to make contact, happiness hovers just beyond their reach in Sirk's metaphysically charged CinemaScope images. A stunning triumph of form, of the sort possible only in Hollywood"

—[The Chicago Reader](#). *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* features a lush, evocative score by the great Hungarian composer Miklós Rózsa.

Saturday, October 10 at 6:50, 9:15pm

***Lisztomania*** (1975), 103min

Directed by Ken Russell

With Roger Daltry

Ken Russell's outrageously conceived rock opera is a glorious mess of a musical, a fantastical reimagining of the life of Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (Roger Daltrey of the The Who) and his relationship with Richard Wagner, featuring Vikings, robotic Nazis, and Ringo Starr as The Pope.

Sunday, October 11 at 2, 6:50pm

***Tarzan and His Mate*** (1934), 104min

Directed by Cedric Gibbons

With Johnny Weissmuller, Maureen O'Sullivan

Five-time Olympic gold-medal swimmer Johnny Weissmuller accomplished something that even Michael Phelps hasn't been able to replicate – he made the transition from sports star to Hollywood heartthrob as Tarzan in the successful franchise of the same name. Weissmuller proves he is of hearty Hungarian stock—he was born in Pennsylvania to Hungarian parents—when he wrestles a menagerie of jungle beasts while fending off ivory hunters who are attempting to re-domesticate Jane in *Tarzan and His Mate*, the second and arguably the signature film in the series.

Sunday, October 11 at 4:30, 9:15pm

***The Thief of Baghdad*** (1940), 106min

Directed by Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell

With Conrad Veidt, Sabu, June Duprez

One of the most spectacular films ever created, this wildly imaginative, riotously colorful retelling of *A Thousand and One Nights* was a collaboration by a host of Hungarians, among them producers Alexander and Zoltan Korda; their brother, art director Vincent Korda (who won an Academy Award for his work on the film); second unit director André de Toth; writer Lajos Bíró; and composer Miklós Rózsa. The result is a sumptuous Technicolor feast of storybook imagery.

Monday, October 12 at 6:50, 9:15pm

***Gilda*** (1946), 110min

Directed by Charles Vidor

With Rita Hayworth, Glenn Ford, George Macready

The incandescent Rita Hayworth lights up the screen as a femme-fatale caught between two men in Hungarian director Charles Vidor's (born in Budapest in 1900) lush, sexy noir. Hayworth's slinky dresses and sultry musical numbers—particularly her wildly provocative rendition of "Put the Blame on Mame"—gave cinema some of its most iconic images of the 1940s.

Tuesday, October 13 at 9:15pm

***Beach Red*** (1967), 105min

Directed by Cornel Wilde

With Cornel Wilde, Rip Torn

Hungarian-American director and star Cornel Wilde spearheaded this fatalistic World War II film chronicling an American assault on a Japanese-occupied island. The goings-on on the island are anything but pacific, when it's kill-or-be-killed for the soldiers on both sides. This adaptation of the Peter Bowman novel suggests the memories of home haunt the grizzled soldiers when they are faced with the horrors of war.

Wednesday, October 14 at 6:50\*, 9:30pm

***Man in the Saddle*** (1951), 87min

Directed by André de Toth

With Randolph Scott, Joan Leslie

Trained in the Hungarian film industry, the one-eyed de Toth (born in 1931 in Mako, Austria-Hungary) brought a distinctive take to the studio-system genre films. Famous for pioneering 3-D in *House of Wax*, de Toth was no less dynamic in 2-D, as evidenced in this melodramatic Western. De Toth's characters often find themselves in circumstances that spiral out of their control. Case in point, Randolph Scott and Joan Leslie, despite their feelings for each other, are pitted on opposite sides of turf war, one that could only end in a six-gun shoot-out.

**\*A Cinemachat with film critic Elliott Stein and photo archivist and de Toth expert Howard Mandelbaum will follow the 6:50pm screening.**

Thursday, October 15 at 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

**Blow Out** (1981), 108min

Directed by Brian De Palma

With John Travolta, Nancy Allen, John Lithgow

Accomplished Hungarian cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond, a graduate of Budapest's film school, is no stranger to providing A-list directors—Altman, Spielberg, Cimino, Boorman—with some of their most visually arresting films. In this re-imagining of Antonioni's classic *Blowup*, he offers DePalma a stylish palette to accompany the intrigue of soundman Travolta's chance recording of a murder.

Monday, October 19 at 6:30, 9:30pm

**Dracula** and **The Mummy**

**Dracula** (1931), 75min

Directed by Tod Browning

With Béla Lugosi

Arguably one of the first American films to truly take advantage of the talkie format, Browning's *Dracula* is rooted firmly in the tale's theatrical origins—it's an adaptation of the play, not the Stoker novel. Legendary Hungarian actor Béla Lugosi's voice positively drips with malice as he announces himself with one of cinema's greatest entrances: "I am...Dracula!"

Screens with **The Mummy** (1932), 73min

Directed by Karl Freund

With Boris Karloff, Zita Johann

Director Karl Freund was a prolific silent-film cinematographer as well as a producer, director, and actor – he performed in Dreyer's *Michael*—however his most famous contribution to the movies may have been when he made horror-film-icons come to life as he did with Boris Karloff in *The Mummy*. Zita Johann—born in 1904 near Temesvar, Hungary, and who moved to the U.S. as a child—shines as Karloff's love interest. While the campy Brendan Fraser remake of 1999 erred on the side of derivative *Indiana Jones* antics, the original is truly a horror film creepfest.

Tuesday, October 20 at 6:50, 9:15pm

**Five Graves to Cairo** (1943), 96min

Directed by Billy Wilder

With Franchot Tone, Anne Baxter, Erich von Stroheim

One of multiple screen adaptations of a play by Hungarian playwright and screenwriter Lajos Biró (born in Nagyvarad, Hungary in 1880), Billy Wilder's WWII adventure-romance concerns the last-surviving member of a British platoon stranded in the Sahara and forced to hide out in an abandoned hotel. Wilder effectively mixes action with his trademark acerbic wit to create an exciting espionage thriller, topped off by the great Erich von Stroheim's turn as Nazi General Rommel.

Wednesday, October 21 at 6:50, 9:15pm

**Souls at Sea** (1937), 92min

Directed by Henry Hathaway

With Gary Cooper, George Raft

With nearly 100 films to his name, the wildly prolific producer Adolph Zukor (born in 1873 in Risce, Hungary and who immigrated to the U.S. as a teenager) is said to have begun his illustrious career by offering peepshows in nickelodeons leading him to become treasurer of Loew's, founder of Famous Players, and eventually president of Paramount Pictures. His penultimate film as producer, *Souls at Sea*, showed how far he came. The derrings-do of sea-rescuers Cooper and Raft was an immensely elaborate undertaking for the criminally underrated Hathaway.

Thursday, October 22 at 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

***Passage to Marseille*** (1944), 109min

Directed by Michael Curtiz

With Humphrey Bogart, Claude Rains, Michèle Morgan, Peter Lorre

Michael Curtiz (born in Budapest in 1886) will forever be remembered for *Casablanca*, however his repertoire provides many other gems worth excavating, including *Passage to Marseille*. Teaming up again with Bogart, Rains, and, of course, the inimitable Lorre (born in Roszahaegy, Hungary in 1904), Curtiz tells another story of the war, this time of escaped prisoners fleeing while France surrenders.

Monday, October 26 at 6:50, 9:15pm

***Paper Moon*** (1973), 102min

Directed by Peter Bogdanovich

With Ryan O'Neal, Tatum O'Neal, Madeline Kahn

In the midst of the Great Depression, fast-talking Bible salesman Moses Pray (Ryan O'Neal) joins forces with nine-year-old orphan Addie Loggins (Tatum O'Neal, who received the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress). The two form an unstoppable team, criss-crossing the country, pulling con jobs, and along the way falling in with floozy Trixie Delight (the always fantastic Madeline Kahn). Legendary Hungarian cinematographer László Kovács contributed the striking black and white cinematography to this tender, affectionate homage to the Hollywood films of the 1930s.

Tuesday, October 27 at 6:50, 9:15pm

***Invisible Agent*** (1942), 81min

Directed by Edwin L. Marin

With Ilona Massey, Peter Lorre

Few actors are as well remembered for their cadence as Hungarian-born Peter Lorre is for his mischievously sibilant whisper. He is in full-form in this entry in the Invisible Man series, in which the grandson of the original transparent man lends his talents to spy on the Nazis. The film also features Ilona Massey, an actress who was born in Budapest in 1910.

Monday, November 23 at 6:50, 9:30pm

***The Royal Family of Broadway*** (1930), 82min

Directed by George Cukor & Cyril Gardner

With Ina Claire, Fredric March

This smart, polished and frolicsome satire of the Barrymore acting dynasty, based on the hit Ferber-Kaufman play, is the most rarely shown of major George Cukor comedies. (Cukor was born in New York City to Hungarian parents.) March gives a lunatic bravura performance lampooning John Barrymore which garnered him his first Oscar nomination.

### ***Extremely Hungary***

*Extremely Hungary* is a year-long festival showcasing contemporary Hungarian visual, performing, and literary arts in New York and Washington, D.C., throughout 2009. The festival reveals the roots of Hungary's thriving contemporary culture and its impact on American society through a broad spectrum of events at leading cultural institutions in the two cities. *Extremely Hungary* is organized by the Hungarian Cultural Center in New York. The festival is made possible in part by funding from the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture, and the participation of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The festival's chairpersons are George Soros and Kati Marton.

For more information about the complete festival and the Hungarian Cultural Center, please visit

[www.extremelyhungary.org](http://www.extremelyhungary.org).

## **Hungarian Cultural Center**

Dedicated to enhancing knowledge and appreciation of Hungarian culture, the Hungarian Cultural Center organizes and supports a wide spectrum of events that celebrate Hungary's past, present and future. HCC's ultimate goal is to bring attention to the great achievements in Hungarian art and culture while encouraging collaborations between Hungarians and New Yorkers.

## **BAMcinématek**

BAM Rose Cinemas "offers one of the most civilized movie-going experiences in the city."  
—The New York Times

The four-screen BAM Rose Cinemas (BRC) opened in 1998 to offer Brooklyn audiences alternative and independent films that might not play in the borough otherwise, making BAM the only performing arts center in the country with two mainstage theaters and a multiplex cinema. In July of 1999, beginning with a series celebrating the work of Spike Lee, BAMcinématek was born as Brooklyn's only daily year-round repertory film program. BAMcinématek presents new and rarely seen contemporary films, classics from cinema history, work by local artists, and festivals of films from around the world, often with special appearances by directors, actors, and other guests.

Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, BAMcinématek has not only presented major retrospectives by well-known filmmakers such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Shohei Imamura, Manoel de Oliveira, and Luchino Visconti, but it has also introduced New York audiences to contemporary artists such as Pedro Costa and Apichatpong Weerasethakul. In addition BAMcinématek programmed the first U.S. retrospective of directors Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Arnaud Desplechin, and Hong Sang-soo. Recently BAMcinématek co-curated a three year summer collaboration of new feature/documentary/short films with the Sundance Institute, 2006–2008.

BAMcinématek launched the first BAMcinemaFEST, June 17–July 2, 2009 a sixteen-day festival of new independent films and repertory favorites. Please visit BAM.org here for more information:  
[BAM.org/BAMcinemaFEST](http://BAM.org/BAMcinemaFEST)

[http://www.indiewire.com/article/bamcinematek\\_launches\\_first\\_bamcinemafest/](http://www.indiewire.com/article/bamcinematek_launches_first_bamcinemafest/)  
—indieWIRE on BAMcinemaFEST

## **Credits**

Leadership support for BAMcinématek is provided by The Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg Charitable Trust.

BAM Rose Cinemas are named in recognition of a major gift in honor of Jonathan F.P. and Diana Calthorpe Rose. BAM Rose Cinemas would also like to acknowledge the generous support of The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, The Estate of Richard B. Fisher, Jim & Mary Ottaway, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn Delegation of the New York City Council, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Bloomberg, and Time Warner Inc. Additional support for BAMcinématek is provided by The Grodzins Fund, and The Liman Foundation.

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## **General Information**

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Shakespeare & Co. at BAM kiosks. BAM Rose Cinemas is

Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, is open for dining prior to Howard Gilman Opera House performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of spoken word and live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with a special BAMcafé Live menu available starting at 8pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue;  
D, M, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue  
Train: Long Island Railroad to Flatbush Avenue  
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM  
Car: Commercial parking lots are located adjacent to BAM

For ticket and BAMbus information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit [BAM.org](http://BAM.org).

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