

Arts and Culture

# The Film Society of Lincoln Center

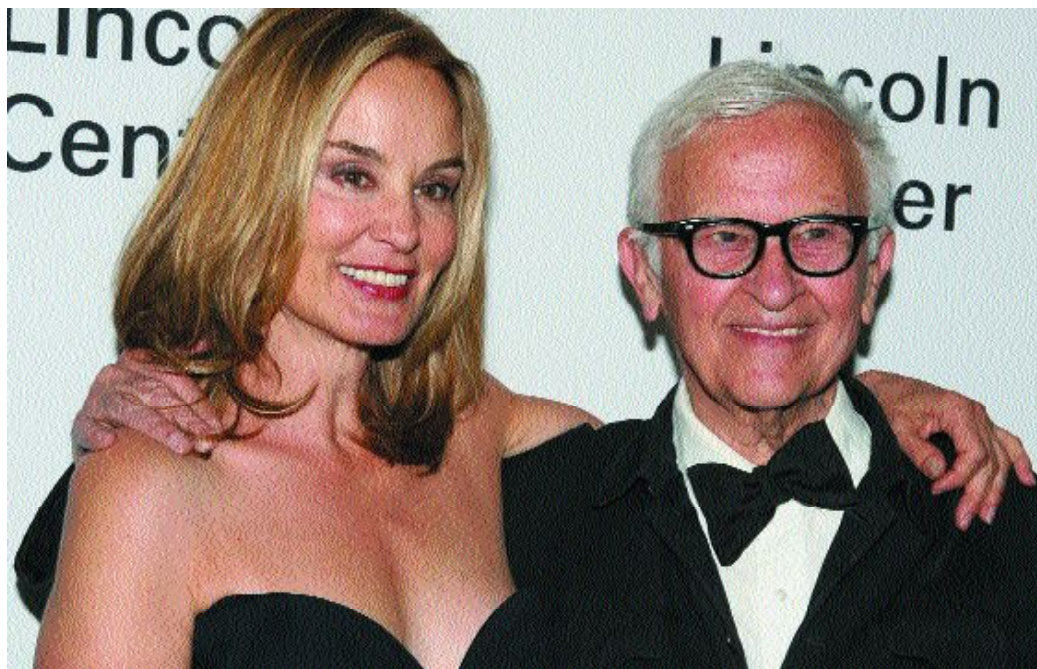
The Film Society of Lincoln Center was founded in 1969 to promote film, to recognize and support new filmmakers and to encourage the growth of a more discerning film-going audience. Since its founding the Film Society has worked to accomplish these goals by developing and administering such projects as the New York Film Festival, the New Directors/New Films series (co-sponsored by The Museum of Modern Art), Film Comment magazine, and its annual fund-raising Gala Tribute which honors pre-eminent filmmakers and actors. This year the Walter Reade is celebrating its fifteenth year of innovative year-round programming with a focus on national cinemas, American independent films, New York premieres and retrospectives.

Although one of the youngest of the twelve arts organizations comprising Lincoln Center, the Film Society has taken on an important role in the arts complex as the representative of the art of filmmaking. Its ability to draw rare public appearances from such personalities as Akira Kurosawa, Catherine Deneuve, Marcello Mastroianni, Clint Eastwood, Audrey Hepburn, Gregory Peck, and Robert Altman; and its role in landmark film events attest to the Film Society's status as a major international force for the art of film.

The Film Society is dedicated to one of the most vital art forms and operates a 268-seat theater within the Lincoln Center complex in the Rose Building at 165 West 65th Street, located on the plaza level. Described as a "jewel box of a theater," the Walter Reade Theater is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and is a showcase for film and video art on a year-round basis, reflecting the Film Society's commitment to contemporary filmmaking and video art from a broadly international perspective. A year-round film theater, it provides a venue for the exploration of international cinemas. Annual series include "Rendez-Vous with French Cinema Today," showcasing the best films from France; "Spanish Cinema Now;" "The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival;" "Open Roads: New Italian Cinema;" "LatinBeat" and an annual Jewish film festival.

The Film Society's activities are funded largely by private and corporate donors, many of whom gather at the Film Society's annual star-studded Gala Tribute, given each year since 1972 in recognition of the contribution of outstanding performers and filmmakers. Past participants include: Charles Chaplin, who returned to the United States for the occasion after 20 years of self-imposed exile; Fred Astaire, Alfred Hitchcock, Barbara Stanwyck, Billy Wilder, Sir Laurence Olivier, Claudette Colbert, Federico Fellini, Elizabeth Taylor, Sir Alec Guinness, Yves Montand, Bette Davis, James Stewart, Audrey Hepburn, Gregory Peck, Jack Lemmon, Robert Altman, Shirley MacLaine, Clint Eastwood and more. All these artists have appeared in person at Lincoln Center to receive the Film Society's honorary award.

The most established of the Film Society's programs is the New York Film Festival, celebrating its 34th year this fall. Recognized as a major New York event, the festival has introduced the American public to critically-acclaimed films, many of which have become contemporary classics. Throughout its history, the Festival has spotlighted such acclaimed directors as Luis Buñuel, Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, Milos Forman, Martin Scorsese, Pedro Almodóvar, David Mamet, Joel and Ethan Coen, Aki Kaurismäki, Jane Campion, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Jim Jarmusch, Robert Altman, Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, Tran Anh Hung, Quentin Tarantino, and Mike Leigh, amongst others. Since many of the artists involved with the films attend their screenings, the festival is always an occasion for a lively dialogue between the audience and the leading filmmakers from around the world.



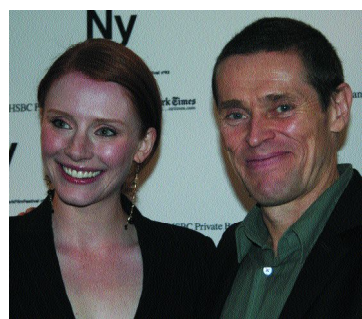
Jessica Lange and Albert Maysles at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's Gala Tribute to Jessica Lange. Photo by: Dave Allocca



Robert Downey Jr. and Keanu Reeves at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's advance screening of "A Scanner Darkly" Photo by: Godlis



Maria Bello and Viggo Mortensen at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's special screening of "A History of Violence." Photo by: Irene Meltzer Richard



Bryce Dallas Howard and William Dafoe at the New York Film Festival screening of "Manderlay," organized by the Film Society of Lincoln Center. Photo by: Irene Meltzer Richard



Film Society Program Director Richard Pena and Tim Burton at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's advance screening of "Tim Burton's Corpse Bride." Photo by: Irene Meltzer Richard



Steve Buscemi at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's Young Friends of Film screening of "Lonesome Jim." Photo by: Irene Meltzer Richard

In addition to the New York Film Festival, the Film Society co-sponsors (with the Film and Video Department of The Museum of Modern Art) the New Directors/New Films series. For 25 years, this series has brought public attention to the works of up-and-coming film artists. New Directors/New Films is famous for discovering new talents, including Steven Spielberg, John Sayles, Lasse Hallström, Spike Lee, Atom Egoyan, Nick Gomez, Gregg Araki, Todd Solandz, Mary Harron and Richard Linklater.

In 1974, the Film Society acquired ownership of the bimonthly magazine, Film Comment, one of the world's most prestigious cinematic journals to cover selectively all aspects of the film medium in a thoughtful and in-depth manner. Film Comment has traditionally attracted noted film scholars, historians, and critics.

