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NEWS

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50 YEARS OF MEMORIES: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

- 1964 **Michael Kutza**, age 22, is determined that Chicago should be a home for the appreciation of international film. Legendary *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist **Irv Kupcinet** is an early supporter, and introduces him to the recently widowed silent screen comedienne **Colleen Moore Hargrave**, then living in Chicago, who opens many doors for Kutza among Hollywood elite and Chicago society. Kutza founds Cinema/Chicago, the organization that presents the Chicago International Film Festival.
- 1965 The first Chicago International Film Festival debuts at the original Carnegie Theatre at Rush & Oak Street on November 9. Eight films are shown in the feature category, chosen from more than 300 entries from 15 nations. Other categories included Religious Films, Experimental Films, Industrial Films, Short Subjects, Educational Films, Television Commercials, Documentaries and Cartoons. In its inaugural year, the Festival honors **King Vidor** in a ceremony attended by **Bette Davis**, and **Stanley Kramer** gives a public talk, offering advice to student filmmakers. The first Gold Hugo for feature film goes to “The Lollipop Cover.” Short films by the soon-to-be-legendary director **William Friedkin** are presented.
- 1966 In 1966, Kutza announces that the Festival is open to “Adults Only” to avoid having to obtain approval for his programming from the Chicago Censor Board, a civic group made up of policemen’s widows that rated films for local audiences. The board is ultimately dissolved by the U.S. Supreme Court two years later. **Harold Lloyd**, **Otto Preminger** and silent film comedienne **Colleen Moore Hargrave** are celebrated at the Festival.
- 1967 The Festival presents “I Call First” (later renamed “Who’s That Knocking at My Door”), the first feature film by **Martin Scorsese**, starring **Harvey Keitel**. Scorsese’s film is reviewed by **Roger Ebert** as one of his first assignments for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, who wrote that it “made a stunning impact in its world premiere Wednesday night at the Chicago International Film Festival.” Honored that year are **Busby Berkeley**, **George Cukor**, **Ruby Keeler**, graphic designer and filmmaker **Saul Bass**, **Pablo Ferro** and animator **Richard Williams**. The year also sees the

debut of the iconic “eyes” logo, a composite of close ups of silent screen sirens Theda Bara, Pola Negri and Mae Murray, designed by Kutza.

- 1968 Two short films by **John Lennon** and **Yoko Ono**, “Two Virgins” and “No. 5,” receive their world premieres at the Festival. The Festival pays tribute to **Mervyn LeRoy** and famed Canadian animator **Norman McLaren**. Winner of the Gold Hugo for Best Feature is “Innocence Unprotected” from Yugoslavian director **Dusan Makavejev**.
- 1969 The Festival debuts a New Directors series, as well as a Films for Children competition judged by children. For the first time, the Festival receives public acknowledgement from **Mayor Richard J. Daley**. The Mayor had earlier told Kutza, “The films you show could lose me votes!” and had declined public support of Kutza’s audacious, often experimental, programming, fearing it could prove a political liability, though the administration had quietly helped the Festival to secure hotel partners and theaters. The career of animator **George Pal** is celebrated. Belgian director **Harry Kümel** is awarded the Best Feature Gold Hugo for “Monsieur Hawarden.”
- 1970 **Illinois Governor Richard B. Ogilvie** publically supports the Festival, writing, “Too often, the avant-garde image of the filmmaker has been interpreted as antithetical to the mid-American ethic. But that is a view which disregards an essential element of that ethic: its firm foundation in the concept of individual freedom. Film is free, as America is free.” (15 years of grants from the State of Illinois follow.) The Festival features its first all-critics jury, with banter and barbs exchanged by the *Chicago Sun-Times*’s **Roger Ebert**, the *Chicago Tribune*’s **Gene Siskel**, *Chicago Today*’s **Mary Knoblauch** and *The Chicago Daily News*’ **Sam Lesner**. **Howard Hawks** and **George Stevens** visit the Festival and discuss their work and influences. Celebrated documentarian **Les Blank**’s short “The Blues Accordin’ to Lightnin’ Hopkins” takes home a Gold Hugo.
- 1971 Film Festival honorees include **Sonja Henie**, Hollywood director **Franklin Schaffner** and film/television producer **Donald Siegel**. Polish director **Krzysztof Zanussi**’s “Family Life” and **Claude Jutra**’s “Mon Oncle Antoine” are among the films that debut at the Festival, with Zanussi’s film winning the Special Jury Prize and Jutra’s taking home the Gold Hugo for Best Film. **José Luis López Vázquez** wins the Best Actor award for “The Ancines Woods.”
- 1972 **Grigory Kozintsev**’s “King Lear,” representing the USSR in the Festival, is among the notable films screened. Film festival honorees include renowned documentary director **Frederick Wiseman**, including a retrospective of his work, **Abel Gance**, **Paul Morrissey** and **Linwood G. Dunn**. For the second consecutive year, **José Luis López Vázquez** is honored with a Best Actor Silver Hugo, this time for his performance in “Mi Querida Señorita.” British director **Mike Leigh**’s directorial debut “Bleak Moments” wins the Gold Hugo for Best Film.

- 1973 Film festival highlights include a complete retrospective of the work of Indian auteur **Satyajit Ray** and tributes to **David L. Wolper** and classic **Warner Bros.** musicals. **Rainer Werner Fassbinder's** "The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant" wins the Special Jury Prize. Greek master **Theo Angelopolous's** first feature "Reconstruction" is shown along with his "Days of '36."
- 1974 Film Festival honorees include **Robert Wise, Vincente Minnelli**, Slovak film writer and director **Ján Kadár** and **Angela Lansbury**. The Gold Hugo for Best Feature goes to **Georgy Shengalaya's** "Prosmani" from the USSR. "The Clockmaker of St. Paul," the feature debut of French filmmaker **Bertrand Tavernier**, also has its premiere at the festival.
- 1975 **Milos Forman's** "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest" has its world premiere at Opening Night of the Festival with **Jack Nicholson** and other cast members in attendance. A tribute to **Pier Paolo Pasolini** is planned, but the celebration becomes a memorial when the director is murdered the night before his departure for Chicago. Also honored is **Stanley Donen**. Notable screenings include Polish filmmaker **Andrzej Wajda's** "Land of Promise," which takes home the Gold Hugo.
- 1976 Notable debuts include the cult-classic documentary **Albert and David Maysles' "Grey Gardens"** and **Wim Wender's "Kings of the Road,"** which was awarded the Gold Hugo. Native Chicagoan turned film star **Charlton Heston** and Metro Goldwyn Mayer Costume Designer **Helen Rose** are honored.
- 1977 The U.S. premiere of **Peter Weir's "Picnic at Hanging Rock"** and **Sidney Lumet's "Equus"** debut at the Festival. The Festival includes a retrospective of **Mel Brooks' films** and tributes to **Ann Miller, Lindsay Anderson, Krzysztof Zanussi** and costume designer **Edith Head**. Celebrated Cuban auteur **Tomas Gutierrez Alea's "The Last Supper"** wins the Special Jury Prize.
- 1978 **President Jimmy Carter** offers the Festival his congratulations, and the Festival presents the world premiere of **Martin Rosen's** much anticipated animated "Watership Down." That year, honorees included **Orson Welles** (who, unable to attend, creates a special short film for the occasion) and **Mickey Mouse**, who arrived from Hollywood via train and met with Chicago **Mayor Michael Bilandic** before a screening of clips from classic Disney animation. Hungarian film "A Quite Ordinary Life," directed by **Imre Gyöngyössi** and **Barna Kabay**, and Spanish director **Jaime Chavarri's "To an Unknown God"** debut at the Festival.
- 1979 The Chicago Theatre hosts the opening night of the Festival for the first time, thanks to support from **Mayor Jane Byrne**. Special effects master **Peter Ellenshaw Sr., Karen Black** and **Maximillian Schell** receive honors that year, and films from 24 nations are screened. A Festival favorite is **Victor Nuñez's "Gal Young 'Un"** and the Gold Hugo for Best Feature goes to "Angi Vera" a Hungarian drama from director **Pál Gábor**.

- 1980 **Taylor Hackford's** first feature film, "Idolmaker" opens the Festival. A special selection of new films from Scandinavia is screened, and **John Houseman, Gloria Swanson, Neil Simon, William Friedkin** and film editor **Verna Fields** are honored. Program highlights include Polish film "Camera Buff," the first feature film from director **Krzysztof Kieslowski**, and German filmmaker **Percy Adlon's** debut "Celeste."
- 1981 Dedicated to and attended by French New Wave master **François Truffaut**, the Festival features a 12-hour marathon of the French filmmaker's work. Opening Night features a the presentation of a restored print of the 1924 film "Peter Pan" at the Granada Theatre, accompanied by a full orchestra from the Eastman House. Also honored are Argentine film director **Leopoldo Torre Nilsson** and "Looney Tunes" animator **Isador "Friz" Freleng**. New German Cinema leader **Margarethe von Trotta's** "The German Sisters" (alternatively titled "Marianne & Juliane") wins the Gold Hugo. The Festival presents **Peter Greenaway's** directorial debut, "The Falls."
- 1982 **President Ronald Reagan** praises the Festival, writing "The Chicago International Film Festival serves both artists and the public by providing a forum for discussion and sharing." The Festival presents a tribute to the recently deceased **Rainer Werner Fassbinder**, featuring five of his films. Chicago-born actress **Ann-Margaret** is on hand to speak to Festival guests and discuss her career. **Robert Altman's** "Come Back to the Five & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean" takes home top honors, and Altman makes his first of many appearances at the festival.
- 1983 The Festival showcases a retrospective of early British musicals, series of both French and Spanish films, and a tribute to **Jane Russell** and also welcomes "Rocky & Bullwinkle" cartoonist **Jay Ward**. French New Wave auteur **Jacques Demy** participates on the International Features jury. Australian filmmaker **Paul Cox's** "Man of Flowers" is screened and Spanish director **Victor Erice's** "The South" takes home the Gold Hugo for best feature.
- 1984 The 20th anniversary Festival salutes Italian comedies and classic monster movies as well as special effects innovator **Douglas Trumbull** of "2001: A Space Odyssey" and "Blade Runner." The Gold Hugo for Best Film goes to "Khandhar" directed by **Mrinal Sen** from India while Danish director **Lars von Trier's** "The Element of Crime" wins the Silver Hugo. Program highlights include **Leos Carax's** debut film "Boy Meets Girl" and **Mike Leigh's** "Meantime."
- 1985 Dancing and international intrigue open the Festival with the premiere of **Taylor Hackford's** "White Nights," starring **Mikhail Baryshnikov, Gregory Hines** and **Isabella Rossellini**, who are all in attendance. "Bonnie and Clyde" director **Arthur Penn** and camp icon **Russ Meyer** are celebrated. Argentine director **Luis Puenzo's** "The Official Story" receives its Chicago debut before going on to win the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film.

- 1986 For the first time in its history, the Festival is scheduled for October and utilizes the Music Box Theatre. Tributes to **Sydney Pollack** and **Deborah Kerr** are presented as well as a **Claude Lelouch** retrospective and a special focus on Argentine cinema. Among the highlights are the Canadian "The Decline of the American Empire" by Academy Award-winning director **Denys Arcand**, and cinematic master **Alejandro Jodorowsky** attends the Festival to present his classic cult films "The Holy Mountain" and "El Topo."
- 1987 The Festival celebrates its roots, honoring Kutza's mentor **Colleen Moore** a few months prior to her death. **Peter Gardos'** "Whooping Cough" from Hungary wins the Gold Hugo for Best Film. **Brian Dennehy** wins the Best Actor award for his performance in **Peter Greenaway's** "The Belly of an Architect". The Festival features an amazing lineup of films by renowned directors, including **Alain Resnais** (France), **Ettore Scola** (Italy), **Juzo Itami** (Japan), **Fernando Trueba** (Spain), **Arturo Ripstein** (Mexico), **Pedro Almodóvar** (Spain), **Krzysztof Kieslowski** (Poland), **John Woo** (Hong Kong), **Paolo and Vittorio Taviani** (Italy), and **Tsui Hark** (Hong Kong).
- 1988 The Festival honors "Midnight Express" director **Alan Parker**. Opening Night features **Andrew Birken's** "Burning Secret" at the Chicago Theatre. Notable films include **Theo Angelopoulos's** "Landscape in the Mist" and **Bela Tarr's** "Damnation," and **André Téchiné's** "The Innocent." The Festival presents a "British Renaissance" section, which includes films directed by **Mike Newell** and **Peter Greenaway**, among others.
- 1989 Celebrating 25 years, the Festival hosts two gala events at the Chicago Theatre: the world premiere of **Menahem Golan's** "The Threepenny Opera (Mack the Knife)" and a screening of **Charlie Chaplin's** "City Lights." "Rocky" producer **Irwin Winkler** receives a tribute hosted by **Martin Scorsese**, and the National Film Board of Canada is honored. Soviet director **Karen Chakhnazarov** receives the Gold Hugo for "Zenograd." **Michael Moore** attends the Festival to present "Roger and Me."
- 1990 In 1990, Kutza visits Moscow for a week-long event honoring the Festival at the Russian capital's Sovinterfest. The Festival has grown such that it necessitates the use of the Music Box Theatre as well as screens at the Fine Arts Theatre on Michigan Avenue. The Opening Night Gala features the world premiere of **Lina Wertmüller's** "Saturday, Sunday and Monday" with star **Sophia Loren**, winner of the Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award, in attendance. The Festival presents a 3-D retrospective. Other notable films include Iranian director **Abbas Kiarostami's** "Close Up", Egyptian director **Youssef Chahine's** "Alexandria Still and Forever," and Chinese director **Zhang Yimou's** "Ju Dou", which takes home the top prize for Best Feature.
- 1991 The Festival features a tribute to Chicago-bred actor **John Cusack**, a celebration of 20th Century Fox's CinemaScope classics, a retrospective of Spanish director **Elias Querejeta's** films, and the premiere of **Gus Van Sant's** "My Own Private Idaho." "Delicatessen," directed by **Jean-Pierre Jeunet** and **Marc Caro**, wins the Gold Hugo for Best Feature.

- 1992 **Oliver Stone** receives a "Director of the Decade" Award at the Summer Gala. Also honored are **Jack Lemmon**, Indian director **Shyam Benegal**, Israeli director **Dan Wolman**, documentarian and director **Arthur Cohn** and **Kathleen Turner**. The Festival presents the premiere of **Alfonso Arau's** "Like Water for Chocolate," **Baz Luhrman's** first feature "Strictly Ballroom" and **Quentin Tarantino's** "Reservoir Dogs." The Education Outreach Program is launched, providing free film screenings to Chicago Public School students during the Festival.
- 1993 The Festival pays tribute to **Tom Cruise** and **James Earl Jones**. Festival highlights include **Robert Altman's** "Short Cuts", **Chen Kaige's** "Farewell My Concubine" and **Jane Campion's** "The Piano."
- 1994 **Woody Allen's** "Bullets over Broadway" opens the Festival, and Closing Night features **David Mamet's** provocative "Oleanna." The Festival presents a retrospective of the work of **Wes Craven** as well as tributes to **Rod Steiger**, Italian director **Luchino Visconti** and **Diane Ladd**.
- 1995 Notable films include the premiere of **Woody Allen's** "Mighty Aphrodite," **Bertrand Tavernier's** "Fresh Bait," **Hsiao-Hsien Hou's** "Good Men, Good Women" and **Marleen Gorris's** "Antonia's Line," which goes on to win the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Japanese auteur **Hirokazu Kore-eda's** feature debut "Maborosi" takes home the Gold Hugo for Best Film. The Festival celebrates the achievements of **Blake Edwards**, Italian director **Lina Wertmüller**, **Al Pacino** and **Sally Field**.
- 1996 **Jodie Foster** receives the Actor of the Decade award in 1996, and audiences are treated to the premieres of **Liv Ullman's** directorial debut "Private Confessions," **Billy Bob Thornton's** "Sling Blade," **Richard Spence's** "Different for Girls," **Lars von Trier's** "Breaking the Waves" and **John Hick's** "Shine." Also honored are **William Wyler**, **Michael Mann**, **Kim Novak** and **Andrew Davis**.
- 1997 A Career Achievement Awards goes to **Michael Douglas**. Also honored are **Spike Lee**, **Roger Corman** and **Liv Ullmann**. Notable screenings include **Ang Lee's** "The Ice Storm" and **Andrew Niccol's** first feature, "Gattaca." The prize for Best Feature goes to **Alan Rickman's** "The Winter Guest."
- 1998 The careers of **John Travolta**, **Pam Grier**, **John Boorman** and **Monte Hellman** are celebrated, while fans get a first look at **Bill Condon's** "Gods and Monsters" and **Gary Ross's** "Pleasantville." "Angel on My Shoulder" from director **Donna Deitch** is named Best Documentary and "The Hole" from Taiwanese director **Ming-liang Tsai** is awarded Best Feature. The Education Outreach Program is expanded to provide free, year-round film screenings to Chicago Public School students and offer a special screening program for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

- 1999 **Patricia Rozema's** "Mansfield Park" opens the Festival, and audiences are treated to screenings of **Lasse Halström's** "The Cider House Rules," **Kevin Allen's** "The Big Tease" and **Scott Hick's** "Snow Falling on Cedars." Tributes include **Lauren Bacall, Gregory Peck, John Frankenheimer, Morgan Freeman** and visual effects innovator **Ray Harryhausen**.
- 2000 **Lord Richard Attenborough**, hometown favorite **Harold Ramis**, Asian auteur **Sabu** and science fiction/horror director **Joe Dante** all receive tributes. **Laurence Fishburne** receives the Black Perspectives award, and **Richard Gere** is honored with a Career Achievement Award on Opening Night when **Robert Altman's** "Dr T and the Women" makes its debut at the Chicago Theatre. Also honored is longtime Festival friend, iconic photographer **Victor Skrebneski**. The Festival premieres American indie charmer **David Gordon Green's** debut film "George Washington."
- 2001 **Faye Dunaway's** directorial debut "The Yellow Bird" opens the Festival at the Chicago Theatre, and the actress is honored at a lavish celebration at Marshall Field's Walnut Room. **Halle Berry** picks up the Black Perspectives Award at the Music Box that year, before winning the Academy Award later that year. Notable debuts include **Jean-Pierre Jeunet's** "Amelie," **Sandi Simcha DuBowski's** "Trembling Before G-d" and **David Lynch's** "Mulholland Drive." **Hou Hsiao-Hsien's** "Millenium Mambo" wins the Gold Hugo for Best Feature.
- 2002 **Clint Eastwood** is honored at the Summer Gala at Navy Pier, while **Pierce Brosnan** brings glamour to Opening Night at the Chicago Theatre, introducing "Evelyn." The year includes several seldom-screened classics, including **Harold Lloyd's** "Speedy" with orchestra and "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum," as well as **Paul Thomas Anderson's** "Punch-Drunk Love" and a tribute to actor **Charles Dutton**.
- 2003 Participation in the Television Awards has grown so much that they receive their own celebration, which is now held each April. At the Festival in October, **Nicolas Cage, Robert Benton, Robert Downey, Jr. and Taye Diggs** are honored. The winner of the Gold Hugo for Best Feature is "Crimson Gold" **directed by** Jafar Panahi from Iran.
- 2004 **Liam Neeson** makes a red carpet appearance for the opening of the 2004 Festival, introducing "Kinsey." Movie-lovers get the first look at **Marc Forster's** "Finding Neverland" and **István Szabó's** "Being Julia" (with **Annette Bening** attending to discuss the film with audiences), and **Alexander Payne's** "Sideways." **Robert Zemeckis** comes to the Cadillac Palace to introduce the world premiere of "The Polar Express" with star **Tom Hanks**. The Festival celebrates the careers of **Irma P. Hall, Harry J. Lennix, Robert Townsend** and **Robin Williams**, whose award acceptance speech consists of an hour of improvisation. In May, Cinema/Chicago presents the inaugural Chicago Youth Media Festival, screening 19 short films made by student filmmakers 21 years old and younger.

- 2005 Opening Night begins with **Susan Sarandon** greeting fans at the Chicago Theatre for the debut of **Cameron Crowe**'s "Elizabethtown." Other A-listers in attendance that year include **Terrence Howard** and **Nicolas Cage**. The Festival program also features **Anand Tucker**'s "Shopgirl," **Noah Baumbach**'s "The Squid and the Whale" and **Stephen Frears**' "Mrs. Henderson Presents." **Shirley MacLaine** receives a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Summer Gala. Cinema/Chicago rebrands the Chicago Youth Media Festival as the annual Future Filmmakers Festival and screens more than 50 short films made by student filmmakers 21 years old and younger in May.
- 2006 **Tom Cruise** makes a surprise appearance at the Career Achievement Award presentation for **Steven Spielberg** at the Summer Gala. The Festival also honors **Dustin Hoffman**, **Liza Minnelli** and **Ruby Dee**. **James Longley**'s "Iran in Fragments" is named Best Documentary, and **Asghar Farhadi**'s "Fireworks Wednesday" is awarded Best Feature.
- 2007 The 43rd Festival is dedicated to **Roger Ebert** and opens with **Marc Forster**'s "The Kite Runner." **Tony Gilroy**'s debut feature film, "Michael Clayton," screens at the Festival, as does **Anthony Hopkins**' debut feature "Slipstream." In addition, *Chicago Tribune*'s **Michael Phillips** hosts an evening honoring 100 years of filmmaking of Chicago's Essanay Film Manufacturing Company at the Music Box Theater.
- 2008 Film legend **Sidney Poitier** is celebrated for his contributions to the art of film, as are **Christopher Nolan**, **Mike Leigh**, **Viggo Mortensen** and **Jennifer Hudson**. The Festival also premieres **Danny Boyle**'s "Slumdog Millionaire" and **Charlie Kaufman**'s "Synecdoche, New York." Brazilian actor-cum-auteur **Matheus Nachtergaele** wins Best New Director for his film "A Dead Girl's Feast." The Gold Hugo for Best Feature goes to **Steve McQueen**'s "Hunger," which also wins a Best Actor award for **Michael Fassbender**. Cinema/Chicago rebrands the yearly Future Filmmakers Festival as CineYouth.
- 2009 At the Summer Gala, the Festival pays tribute to the career of **Quentin Tarantino** at the gala screening of "Inglourious Basterds." The Festival includes **Lee Daniels**' "Precious" as well as tributes to **Uma Thurman**, **Gabourey Sidibe**, **Willem Dafoe**, **Patrice Chéreau** and **Martin Landau**. **Tina Mabry**'s "Mississippi Damned" wins top honors for Best Feature.
- 2010 **Edward Norton** kicks off the Opening Night of the 46th Festival, introducing **John Curran**'s "Stone." By this time, the Festival regularly shows films representing more than 50 countries each year. Others saluted include **Guillermo Del Toro**, **Paula Wagner**, **Ron Howard**, **Forest Whitaker** and **Alan Cumming**. Russian director **Aleksey Popogrebskiy**'s "How I Ended This Summer" is named Best Feature and **James Rasin**'s "Beautiful Darling" is chosen as Best Documentary.

- 2011 The Festival celebrates the careers of **Claude Lelouch, Martin Sheen** and **Anthony Mackie**. Notable screenings include **Simon Curtis'** "My Week with Marilyn." Finland sweeps the awards with **Zaida Bergroth** winning the top prize in the New Directors competition for "The Good Son," and the Best International Feature prize going to **Aki Kaurismäki's** "Le Havre."
- 2012 The opening of the 48th Chicago International Film Festival is perhaps the most star-studded affair ever produced by Cinema/Chicago, with **Al Pacino, Christopher Walken, Alan Arkin**, musician **Jon Bon Jovi** and director **Fisher Stevens** all greeting fans and gracing the red carpet before a screening of "Stand Up Guys." **Lana Wachowski, Andy Wachowski** and **Tom Tykwer** visit the Festival for the debut of "Cloud Atlas." The Wachowskis reminisce about how the Festival had influenced them in their formative years growing up in Chicago. **Helen Hunt** stops by to introduce "The Sessions" and **David O. Russell** discusses his work on "Silver Linings Playbook." **Kelsey Grammer** is honored at the Festival's spring Television Awards, and the Festival spotlights films from the Middle East. **Leos Carax's** "Holy Motors" takes home the award for Best International Feature, with star **Denis Lavant** honored for his performance in the film. CineYouth welcomes director **Jonathan Levine** as its Opening Night guest and, for the first time, presents international films as Official Selections.
- 2013 Opening Night features **James Gray's** "The Immigrant," and Festival audiences are treated to the premieres of "Nebraska" with **Bruce Dern** in attendance, "The Inevitable Defeat of Mister and Pete" with director **George Tillman, Jr.** and star **Jennifer Hudson** in attendance to discuss the film, and **Joel and Ethan Coen's** "Inside Llewyn Davies" with actor **Oscar Isaac**. Other notable film icons who participate in discussions of their work include actor **Geoffrey Rush**, cinematographer **Haskell Wexler**, legendary Italian horror director **Dario Argento**, stage and TV actress **Elaine Stritch** and actor **Michael Shannon**. The Best Film award goes to Kurdish film "My Sweet Pepper Land." The year-round Education Outreach Screenings Program welcomes more than 7,000 Chicago Public School students to free film screenings.
- 2014 Who knows? But if history in any indication, it's going to be great!

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