

Celebrating Italian Cinema: Los Angeles-Italia Film Fashion and Art Fest

Natasha Lardera (February 07, 2012)



The full program for the festival, to be held on February 19-25, has been unveiled. The event will focus on tributes to some of the greatest names in Italian cinema, including Sofia Loren, Pupi Avati, Sergio Corbucci and Marina Cicogna, and contemporary Italian comedies.

Italian cinema is celebrated in Los Angeles just a day before the much awaited Academy Awards at the Los Angeles-Italia Film Fashion and Art Fest.

As announced, the Feb. 19-25 festival -- which will take place in Hollywood's Chinese Theater -- will feature a retrospective from horror master **Dario Argento**, it will present the Los Angeles-Italia Excellence Award to Italian production designer **Dante Ferretti** and set decorator **Francesca Lo**



Schiavo (both are nominated for Oscars this year in connection with **Martin Scorsese's** [Hugo](#) [2]), and it will honor **Sergio Corbucci**, the Italian director best known for his violent interpretations of the Spaghetti Western genre.

"This festival is important for Italian film because it's a window for the world to see what is happening in Italy," Italian filmmaker **Pupi Avati**, the festival's chairman, said in an interview to The Hollywood Reporter on the sidelines of Monday's announcements. "When you bring an Italian film to this event and to Chinese Theatre, you are not bringing the film to America, you are bringing it to the cinema industry's heart. Italy needs this kind of exposure, and I think the cinema industry will find things of interest as well." Avati will be honored with a special screening of the documentary *A Poet out of the Crowd* by Adriano Pintaldi on the 25th.

The festival will open on the 19th with the documentary **Becoming Sophia** by Gianluigi Attorre. From Pozzuoli to Los Angeles, Sofia Loren has gone far and her career is told in this collage of never-seen before images coming from cinematic archives from all over the world. The pictures portray the actress and the woman, a person of great charisma, talent and tenacity. Visual imagery is commented by those who have been close to Sofia, from director Lina Wertmuller, her press agent Enrico Lucherini and her sister Maria who said: "When she won the Oscar I gave her a basil plant to remind her of where she came from."

The program features other documentaries: *Peppino 50*, a film by Vincenzo Mollica on the career of Italian singer and songwriter [Peppino di Capri](#) [3] (screening will be held on the 24th) and **Vasco Rossi** -This is my Story by Alessandro Paris and Sibylle Righetti on Italian rocker [Vasco Rossi](#) [4] (also to be held on the 24th).

The focus on Italian comedies is one of the centerpieces of the festival, bringing the increasingly popular and often domestically high-grossing genre of films to an audience that might not see them otherwise. Among the titles is **Fausto Brizzi's** *Come è bello fare l'amore* (Isn't it great to make love), the first Italian comedy to be made in 3D and which will open in Italian cinemas this coming Friday, and *Benvenuti al Nord* (Welcome to the North), which is setting records at the box office so far this year.

There will also be, on February 20th, a special screening of *The Professor* by Giuseppe Tornatore in honor of the recently deceased Italian American actor Ben Gazzara. The gangster film is loosely based on the career of one of Naples' most sadistic crime bosses, [Raffaele Cutolo](#) [5]. Here, the mobster, played by Gazzara is simply called "The Professor," and we witness the progressing of his career until a police chief, played by Leo Gullotta, enters the picture.

A tribute to producer Marina Cicogna, best known for her work in the 1970s, including *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*, will take place on the 24th. This is her second major honor this year as she was previously the Grand Honor of Merit from Italian President **Giorgio Napolitano**, one of Italy's highest civilian honors.

All of the events at the Los Angeles-Italia Film Fashion and Art Fest are open to the public free of charge. The full program is available on the festival site www.losangelesitalia.com [6]

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