

18 March 2009
For Immediate Release

* NEW 35mm Prints, Imported from Hungary *

Four by Miklós Jancsó

April 1-6, 2009

Pacific Cinémathèque, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver

VANCOUVER — **Pacific Cinémathèque presents a four-film retrospective on Miklós Jancsó**, one of the great directors of 1960s European cinema, and "the most important Hungarian director of all" (Mira and A. J. Liehm).

One of the cinema's masters of widescreen composition and elaborately choreographed long-take sequence shots, Jancsó's fervid, transfixing, highly stylized and intensely formalist films are noted for their balletic, brutal study of repression, rebellion and revolution. Power and politics are destructive forces in Jancsó's singular cinema, which is highly allegorical and can approach abstraction in its use of ritual, spectacle, massive scale and geometrical patterning to depict human events. His dramas explore, obsessively, turbulent events of Hungary's past history; the historical settings serve as pretexts for Jancsó's true subjects: repression in the contemporary, post-1956 Hungary in which he lived; and, more universally, our capacity as humans to inflict very great cruelty upon one another.

Jancsó was the recipient of a Special Prize for his entire body of work at Cannes in 1979 (he had won the festival's Best Director award in 1972 for *Red Psalm*), and was accorded a similar honour — a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement — at Venice in 1990. It is no exaggeration to say that he was one of the world's leading filmmakers in the 1960s and early 1970s, when "he was generally considered a worthy equal to the likes of **Michelangelo Antonioni** and **Ingmar Bergman**" (Lloyd Hughes, *The Rough Guide to Film*). That Jancsó is less well known today speaks to the shifting winds of critical fashion, but also reflects the fact that his films — which demand to be viewed on the big screen — have simply become difficult to see: good 35mm prints of Jancsó's works have not been available in Canada or the U.S. for decades. This presentation features new 35mm prints, imported from Hungary, of four of Jancsó's greatest achievements.

"Hungary's greatest living filmmaker...The four films in [this] indispensable retrospective are cut from much the same, sublime cloth, together constituting a holy pantheon upon which the director's formidable reputation largely rests...All of the films in this series qualify as essential viewing, and the chance to experience 35mm prints on the big screen is a rare and beautiful thing." — Lance Goldberg, LA Weekly

Acknowledgments: Pacific Cinémathèque is grateful to Katalin Vajda of Magyar Filmuni in Budapest and Béla Bunyik of the Hungarian Film Festival in Los Angeles for making this presentation possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, see the Jan+Feb Pacific Cinémathèque Program Guide, or visit <http://www.cinematheque.bc.ca/four-miklos-jancso>

— FILM BRIEFS —

[The Round-Up](#)

(Szegénylegények)

Hungary 1965. Director: Miklós Jancsó

Cast: János Görbe, Zoltán Latinovits, Tibor Molnár, Gábor Agárdy, András Kozák

NEW 35mm PRINT! — Miklós Jancsó's international breakthrough came with this unusual, hypnotic historical drama, hailed by fellow Magyar director Zoltán Fábri as "perhaps the best Hungarian film which has ever been made." In the 1860s, forces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire round up a group of peasants and, through a ritualistic process of interrogation, torture and execution, attempt to weed out partisans who had participated in Hungary's 1848 revolt against Hapsburg rule. "For many critics his unparalleled masterpiece — all the elements of his style come together in an abstract historical parable about the nature of revolution and counter-revolution...The film was interpreted by many as an allegory of the retaliations that followed the 1956 revolution" (András Bálint Kovács). *B&W, 35mm, in Hungarian with English subtitles. 95 mins.*

[The Red and the White](#)

(Csillagosok, katonák)

Hungary/USSR 1967. Director: Miklós Jancsó

Cast: Tibor Molnár, András Kozák, József Madaras, Anatoli Yabbarov, Jácint Juhász

NEW 35mm PRINT! — Miklós Jancsó was commissioned by the Soviets to make a film commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. A co-production between Hungary and the USSR, the film is set during the Civil War that followed the Revolution, and concerns a group of Hungarian volunteers fighting for the Bolshevik side against White Russian forces. An epic back-and-forth struggle unfolds on a vast, expansive plain; each side commits atrocities as it gains the upper hand. The film showcases Jancsó's gift for panoramic pageantry, intricate camera movement, and geometric abstraction, and his interest in the rituals of power, the mechanics of dominance and submission. Neither the extreme formalism nor the anti-heroic content could have thrilled the Soviets, who first re-edited the film and then banned it. (It was released in Hungary and the West.) *B&W, 35mm, in Hungarian with English subtitles. 90 mins.*

[Red Psalm](#)

(Még kér a nép)

Hungary 1972. Director: Miklós Jancsó

Cast: Lajos Balázsovits, András Bálint, Andrea Drahota, Gyöngyi Bürös, István Bujtor

NEW 35mm PRINT! — Jancsó won Best Director honours at Cannes for this dizzying, dazzling film which recounts, in fervid, balletic, bloody fashion, and with much pageantry (and nudity), a farm workers' rebellion on a large Hungarian estate in the late 19th century. Jancsó's circling, swirling, incessantly moving camera captures the drama with breathtaking kinetic and metaphoric force; this 88-minute film is composed of a mere 28 shots, each demonstrating the director's bold, rhythmic command of the expressive extended take. *Red Psalm* is one of two Jancsó films — *The Red and the White*, also screening in this series, is the other — featured in *1001 Films You Must See Before You Die. Colour, 35mm, in Hungarian with English subtitles. 88 mins.*

[Silence and Cry](#)

(Csend és Kiáltás)

Hungary 1967. Director: Miklós Jancsó

Cast: Mari Töröcsik, József Madaras, Zoltán Latinovits, Andrea Drahota, András Kozák

NEW 35mm PRINT! — An elliptical, claustrophobic drama shot in the brilliant, breathtaking long takes that are Jancsó's trademark, *Silence and Cry* is set after the fall of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919. A young Red soldier, fleeing the anti-Communist manhunt, takes refuge at the isolated farm of a peasant family. His reluctant hosts are already under police scrutiny for being politically suspect. The local White commander is aware of the soldier's presence but, for personal reasons, keeps it a secret. The soldier discovers that the farmer is being poisoned, slowly, by his wife and her sister. "A

newly intimate, domestic level [for the director]...Jancsó's characteristic sequence shots turn the chamber drama into a political thriller pregnant with wider connotations" (Tony Rayns, *Time Out*). *B&W, 35mm, in Hungarian with English subtitles. 73 mins.*

— MEDIA RESOURCES —

**Hi-Resolution Digital Stills
select screeners??**

— SCREENINGS —

The Round-Up

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 - 7:30pm

Saturday, April 4, 2009 - 9:15pm

Monday, April 6, 2009 - 9:00pm

The Red and the White

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 - 9:20pm

Sunday, April 5, 2009 - 7:30pm

Red Psalm

Thursday, April 2, 2009 - 7:30pm

Saturday, April 4, 2009 - 7:30pm

Sunday, April 5, 2009 - 9:15pm

Silence and Cry

Thursday, April 2, 2009 - 9:15pm

Monday, April 6, 2009 - 7:30pm

\$9.50 Adult Single Bill

\$11.50 Adult Double Bill

24hr Film Infoline: 604 688 FILM

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