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## The 20th anniversary of Espoo Ciné International Film Festival is celebrated from 21 to 30 August 2009!

This year's Espoo Ciné International Film Festival is the 20th edition of the festival. To mark the anniversary, the festival is extended to ten days instead of the traditional six. The festival also expands geographically: in addition to the heart of the festival, the Espoo Cultural Centre in Tapiola, films are screened in the Bio Rex Sello cinema in Leppävaara and in Andorra in Helsinki.

### Special 20th anniversary programme

The anniversary edition brings an exceptionally impressive programme for the festival audience. In addition to the traditional items on the agenda, the 2009 programme includes a selection of festival favourites from the past years and a 20th anniversary exhibition on display at the Espoo Cultural Centre. This year, the top films of the programme are screened more than once.

### The Finnish debut director of the year: Zaida Bergroth

The most anticipated Finnish film of the year is Zaida Bergroth's debut feature film *Last Cowboy Standing*. The film is based on the most notable Finnish theatre event of the 1990s, Antti Raivio's stage play *Skavabölen pojat* ("The Boys of Skavaböle") which immediately made Q-teatteri the most interesting newcomer of the new Finnish theatre companies. Now the magic of the play has been transferred to the silver screen.

Although the film is the director's debut feature, Zaida Bergroth has already made a mark with her short films such as *Heavy Metal* (2006) and *Glass Jaw* (2004), both award-winners at the Tampere International Short Film Festival. *Last Cowboy Standing* features many today's top Finnish actors, including Leea Klemola and Martti Suosalo.

### Film programme

The backbone of the anniversary year's film programme is formed by new European cinema: in addition to the traditionally well represented Spanish and German films, French cinema is given a special focus this year. Confirmed titles so far include Claude Chabrol's latest film *Bellamy*, starring Gérard Depardieu, and Jean-Paul Lilienfeld's *Skirt Day*, featuring another top favourite of the silver screen, Isabelle Adjani, in her first film role for several years.

Bertrand Tavernier, who became a cult name in the early 1980s with his Jim Thompson adaptation *Clean Slate*, has now filmed another American detective story: James Lee Burke's detective figure Dave Robicheaux is finally given a worthy interpretation by Tommy Lee Jones in the new award-winning film called *In the Electric Mist*.

*Everyone Else*, the winner of a number of awards at the Berlinale this year, represents German cinema at its very best. The film's director, Maren Ade, was widely noted for her debut feature, and her latest film fulfils all expectations.

Austrian cinema, which has enjoyed a renaissance over the past few years, is still going strong. Whereas James Lee Burke's hero, Dave Robicheaux, is one of the most fascinating American detective figures of today, Wolf Haas' phlegmatic Simon Brenner is one of his most notable counterparts in the old world. In *The Bone Man*, the film's director, Wolfgang Murnberger, has together with the author and the key actor Josef Hader created an unforgettable film noir interpretation of the Brenner novel with the same name.

The hit song by Sting, *An Englishman in New York*, had a model in real life: the British style icon Quentin Crisp, the self-confessed "stately homo of England", who moved to New York at the age of 73. The English expression "witty" reportedly cannot be fully comprehended before one has heard Crisp speaking. Richard Laxton has succeeded in creating a breathtaking low-key study of Crisp's life in New York. The selection of potential protagonists for the film cannot have been very extensive to begin with, and John Hurt probably emerged as the only possible choice. Hurt naturally also won an award for his work in the film in Berlin. It has to be noted in this connection that Hurt played Crisp already in the 1970s in the film adaptation of his autobiographical novel *The Naked Civil Servant*.

The Turkish-born director Ferzan Özpetek has been one of the most popular Italian filmmakers also in Finland after the turn of the millennium. Özpetek's latest film *A Perfect Day* is a remarkable family drama set in the world of Italian politics, and has been praised for being extraordinarily topical in its homeland. The female lead actor of the film, Isabella Ferrari, won the award for Best Female Actor at the Venice International Film Festival.

### **The outdoor screening – with live accompaniment!**

One of the long-standing favourites of the festival is the free outdoor film screening arranged each year. The films screened at the beautiful terrace behind the Cultural Centre have traditionally been favourites of the younger section of our audience, but this year's film is guaranteed to appeal to all age groups: the sing-along favourite of the past year, the Abba musical *Mamma Mia!*

To honour the festival's anniversary edition, the film is accompanied by a live performer: Finland's one and only gay choir Out 'n loud, who take Abba's music to an entirely new level.

### **Exhibition: The history of Spanish cinema**

The lobby of the Cultural Centre will host an extensive exhibition focusing on the history of Spanish cinema. The exhibition has been arranged by Instituto Cervantes in collaboration with the Spanish Foreign Ministry and the Lunewerg publishing house.



The exhibition, entitled *Cine Español. Una crónica visual* ("Spanish Cinema: A Visual History") examines the colourful history of Spanish filmmaking from 1869 to 2006 with spectacular photos and posters. The exhibition will be opened by its commissioner, film historian Jesús García de Dueñas.

### **Kino Tapiola**

Last year the Espoo Ciné screenings scheduled to Kino Tapiola were moved to another cinema in the last moment because of an asbestos hazard that was discovered just before the festival. After that the building has been found to require extensive renovation. Unfortunately this means that no film screenings can be arranged in this classic neighbourhood cinema until the works are finished. The renovation works are scheduled to be finished later in the year, after which Espoo Ciné will take over the theatre on a year-round basis.

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