
Cinema: The Venice International Film Festival opens today with the film "Comandante" by Edoardo De Angelis. The Golden Lion for lifetime achievement goes to Liliana Cavani

A memorable festival. Not for the controversy surrounding the Hollywood actors' and screenwriters' strikes, but for the rich programme marking the 80th anniversary of the festival. Starting on Wednesday August 30, until Saturday September 9, the Venice Lido will become the capital of cinema, with 23 films premiering in competition. Director Edoardo De Angelis will open the competition with "Comandante", a dramatic film set during the Second World War, starring Pierfrancesco Favino. The other Italians in the competition are: Giorgio Diritti, Matteo Garrone, Saverio Costanzo, Stefano Sollima and Pietro Castellitto. International directors include Sofia Coppola, Michael Mann, Luc Besson, David Fincher, Yorgos Lanthimos and Ryusuke Hamaguchi. There will also be numerous tributes to great filmmakers and actors: first of all, the festival's pre-opening event will be dedicated to the memory of Gina Lollobrigida, the Italian film star who died at the beginning of 2023. Two Golden Lions for Lifetime Achievement will be awarded during the Festival: the first to Liliana Cavani at the opening of Venezia80, the second to Asian actor Tony Leung Chiu-Wai on Saturday, September 2. The Italian actress Caterina Murino will host this year's festival. CNVF-SIR report **In memory of Gina Lollobrigida** Gina Lollobrigida, one of the first Italian movie stars, died on January 16 at the age of 95. She was an elegant and dynamic actress who also made her mark in the American film industry. The Venice Film Festival is dedicating the opening night of the 80th edition to her and her successful career, with the screening of two films in which she starred: Orson Welles' *Portrait of Gina* (1958, 27'), restored by the Filmmuseum München, and Mario Soldati's *The Wayward Wife* (1953), edited by the Centro sperimentale di cinematografia - Cineteca nazionale. **De Angelis and Favino, the first on the red carpet** The historical drama "Comandante" by Edoardo De Angelis, a Neapolitan filmmaker born in 1978 who has distinguished himself in the last decade with socially committed works such as "Indivisible" (2016), "The Vice of Hope" (2018) and the miniseries "The Lying Life of Adults" (2023), will open the Venezia80 competition. "Comandante", written by De Angelis himself with two-time Strega Prize winner Sandro Veronesi, tells the story of Salvatore Todaro, commander of the submarine Cappellini during the Second World War, who risked his life and that of his crew to save 26 Belgian shipwreck victims. Alberto Barbera, the Festival's artistic director, said: "As a historical drama, the fruit of a major production investment by the Italian film industry, Edoardo De Angelis' film has clear contemporary overtones. The account of the true story of Commander Salvatore Todaro, who rescued the sailors who survived the sinking of the enemy merchant ship, is a powerful reminder of the need to put ethical values and human solidarity before the brutal logic of military protocols." **23 screenwriters participating in the competition** A total of six Italian film directors are competing for the Golden Lion. Along with De Angelis are: Saverio Costanzo with 'Finalmente l'alba' starring Lily James, Alba Rohrwacher and Willem Dafoe, an international film project shot in Cinecittà; Giorgio Diritti with 'Lubo', based on the novel 'Il seminatore' by Mario Cavatore; Matteo Garrone with 'Io capitano', an insight into African migrants in search of a better future on their way to European shores. Also, Stefano Sollima with "Adagio", featuring Tony Servillo, Valerio Mastandrea and Pierfrancesco Favino in the cast, and Pietro Castellitto with "Enea", a grim gaze on present-day Rome with Benedetta Porcaroli, Chiara Noschese and Sergio Castellitto. On the Hollywood front, expectations are high for Sofia Coppola's competing biopic 'Priscilla', the story of Elvis Presley's ex-wife Priscilla Presley, starring Cailee Spaeny and Jacob Elordi. Despite the Hollywood strikes, it seems that the entire cast has been confirmed for the Venice red carpet. Also in the spotlight is the return of Michael Mann, who will present 'Ferrari', a biopic of Enzo Ferrari starring Adam Driver, Penélope Cruz and Shailene Woodley. Bradley Cooper's new directorial project, Maestro, a tribute to Leonard Bernstein starring Cooper himself and Carey Mulligan, will also be screened at Venezia80; the US director-actor will almost certainly be absent from the screening in

solidarity with his colleagues on strike overseas. Another welcome comeback is that of cult director David Fincher with 'The Killer', starring Michael Fassbender and Tilda Swinton. European directors in the spotlight include Luc Besson with 'Dogman', Stéphane Brizé with 'Hors-saison', Yorgos Lanthimos with 'Poor Things', Agnieszka Holland with 'The Green Border' and Bertrand Bonello with 'La Bête'. Other notable participants include Japanese director Ryusuke Hamaguchi with 'Evil Does Not Exist', Mexican filmmaker Michel Franco with 'Memory' and Chilean director Pablo Larraín with 'El Conde'. Competing for the Golden Lion are also Nikolaj Arcel (The Promise Land), Ava DuVernay (Origin), Timm Kröger (Die theorie von allem), the duo Ma?gorzata Szumowska and Micha? Englert (Woman of) and Fien Troch (Holly). **Liliana Cavani awarded Lion for Lifetime Achievement** The first of two honorary awards at Venezia80 will be presented to Italian director Liliana Cavani. She will receive the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement during the opening ceremony. British actress Charlotte Rampling, celebrated lead actress in the 1974 film *The Night Porter* directed by Cavani herself, will deliver the *laudatio*. Cavani's masterpieces include *Francesco d'Assisi* (1966, RAI), *Galileo* (1968), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1977) and *Francesco* (1989). Festival director Barbera said: "Liliana Cavani, one of the most emblematic protagonists of the new Italian cinematography of the 1960s, is a versatile artist capable of working for television, theatre and opera with the same unconventional spirit and intellectual dynamism that made her films famous. Hers has always been a non-conformist way of thinking, unhindered by ideological prejudices or constraints of any kind, driven by the need to constantly search for a truth hidden in the most remote and mysterious corners of the human soul, reaching the limits of spirituality." At Venezia80, Liliana Cavani will also present her new film 'L'ordine del tempo', based on the book by Carlo Rovelli. **'La La Land' director Damien Chazelle heads the International Jury** The decision will only be announced on Saturday, September 9, when the 80th Golden Lion will be awarded. An international jury headed by Oscar-winning director Damien Chazelle will be judging the 23 competing films. Chazelle had the honour of opening the Venice Film Festival in 2016 with 'La La Land' and in 2018 with 'First Man'. He is joined in the panel by New Zealand director Jane Campion, Oscar winner in 2022 for "The Power of the Dog"; Italian director-producer Gabriele Mainetti; Palestinian actor Saleh Bakri; French director-writer Mia Hansen-Løve; Irish director-writer Martin McDonagh; Argentinian director-writer Santiago Mitre; Chinese actress Shu Qi; and US director-journalist Laura Poitras, Golden Lion winner at Venice79.

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