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Film Clips

By Derek Zemrak



Helen Hunt Photo provided

The California Independent Film Festival will be celebrating its 20th year Sept. 7 - 13 at the Rheem and Orinda Theatres. Oscar Recipient, four-time Golden Globe winner and four-time Emmy recipient, Helen Hunt, will be the honored guest and will receive the 2017 Diamond Award, given each year to a woman for her contribution to the entertainment industry.

A VIP reception for Hunt will be held at Cine Cuvée Wine Bar and Café at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10. The VIP reception is limited to 25 attendees. "A Conversation with Helen Hunt" will follow the reception at 6:30 p.m. at the Orinda Theatre.

Hunt, an Academy Award-winning actress, has become an accomplished filmmaker as well. She wrote, directed, produced and stars in two films: "Ride" and "Then She Found Me," which garnered critical acclaim, financial success, and won the Palm Springs Film Festival's Audience Award. It stars Hunt along with Colin Firth, Matthew Broderick and Bette Midler.

As an actress, Hunt's extensive and diverse body of work includes roles in film, theater and television. In 2011, she completed two independent film projects - Steven Bernstein's "Decoding Annie Parker" with

Samantha Morton, and Ben Lewin's "The Sessions" opposite John Hawkes and William H. Macy. "The Sessions" premiered in competition at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and took home the Audience Award, the jury prize for Best Ensemble. Hunt also received a Supporting Actress Oscar nomination and won the Independent Spirit Award for her performance.

Other film credits include: "Soul Surfer," "Every Day," "Bobby," "As Good As It Gets," "What Women Want," "Castaway," "Good Woman," "The Curse of the Jade Scorpion," "Dr. T & the Women," "Pay It Forward" and "Twister." Early career film credits include: "The Waterdance," "Kiss of Death," "Mr. Saturday Night," "Peggy Sue Got Married," "Next of Kin," "Girls Just Want to Have Fun," "Project X" and "Miles from Home."

Some of Hunt's recent TV work includes "Mad About You" and the critically acclaimed HBO Miniseries "Empire Falls." For her role as Jamie Buchman in "Mad About You," Hunt garnered four Emmy Awards, four Golden Globe Awards (three as lead actress and one as Producer for Best Comedy), and a Screen Actors Guild Award. She was also named Best Actress for her role in the film "As Good As It Gets" for which Hunt won a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award, and an Oscar.

She has also directed television episodes of ABC's "Revenge," "Mad About You," "The Paul Reiser Show," Showtime's "Californication" and FX Network "Feud."

Hunt is equally accomplished as a stage actress who recently reprised the role of 'Stage Manager' in David Cromer's latest production of "Our Town" at the Broad Stage in Santa Monica January and February, 2015. Hunt first played the role of 'Stage Manager' in the 2010 New York production of "Our Town" at the Barrow Street Theater. Additional theater credits include "Twelfth Night (Viola)" at Lincoln Center and Life Xs Three at Circle in the Square Theater. Other theater credits are "Taming of the Shrew" at NYSF-Shakespeare in the Park, "Been Taken" at EST, "Much Ado About Nothing (Beatrice)" at the Shakespeare Center L.A, "Methusalem" with the Actor's Gang, "The Value of Names" at the Skylight Theatre; and "Love Letters" in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Boston.

A Los Angeles native, Hunt grew up in an artistic environment. Her father, Gordon Hunt, is a director and respected acting coach. Hunt currently lives in Los Angeles with her partner, Matthew Carnahan, her daughter Makena Lei and her stepson Emmett.

The California Independent Film Festival is seeking sponsorship for the Helen Hunt event in Orinda. For more information, email derek@caiff.org.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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