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"Kincsem - Bet on Revenge" - an epic Hungarian film at the 23rd CAIFF

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided

The 23rd California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) opens at the Orinda Theatre Nov. 10 with India's selection for the 2023 Oscars, "Last Film Show." Information about all the films and festival events can be found at <https://www.caiff.org/film-submissions>.

"Kincsem - Bet on Revenge" is the Hungarian film that will close the festival on Nov. 17. The highly entertaining full feature will continue to play for a week at the Orinda Theatre after the lights of the festival have gone dark.

"Kincsem," with its valiant cavalades, ironclad characters, evil traitors and brave heroes, is a hymn to the indomitable character of a country, Hungary, to its men, women, and of course its horses. This movie is a must see if you have an interest in heroic stories and Conan style revenge.?

There was once a real mare called Kincsem. She lived in Hungary from March 1874 to March 1887. During her four-season racing career she ran 54 races and won them all. Kincsem holds the longest undefeated record of any racehorse. The movie that bears her name is otherwise purely fictional.

The story takes place in the late 19th century when Hungary was a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, led by two different governments under the leadership of Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I. A few years prior, a Hungarian revolution had been crushed by Franz Joseph with the help of the Russian army. The resentment of the Hungarian people against the victors, and against the Hungarians that sided with the Emperor, is the backdrop of the story. There are two sides: the good ones who own Kincsem and are true Hungarians, and the traitors who would do anything to crush the brave horse that symbolizes the spirit and the revenge of an untamable country.

The beautifully filmed melodramatic period movie would not be complete without the harrowing love story that may develop between the hero and the daughter of the traitor. In the spirit of a true cloak-and-dagger film, "Kincsem" includes many well choreographed action scenes. Spectators will be treated to duels as well as balls and love scenes.

Horse race enthusiasts will also appreciate the suspense created by the races. Several of these are filmed with mastery, and even if one thinks they know the ending, surprises are nicely introduced.

The feature film aimed at the general public is striking and directed with great efficiency by Gábor Herendi. Ernő Blaskovich is played by Ervin Nagy, while Andrea Petric portrays the bold and beautiful Klara von Oettingen.?

The movie, released in Hungary in 2017, was the most successful Hungarian film of the last decade in that country. It has won several international awards including the Best International Film, the Best Cinematography and the Best Screenplay at the California Wine Country Film Festival.

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