

Press Release



Honorary Golden Bears to be Awarded to Andrzej Wajda and Sir Ian McKellen

The 56th Berlin International Film Festival will award this year's *Honorary Golden Bears* for lifetime achievement to the Polish filmmaker and screenwriter Andrzej Wajda and the British actor Sir Ian McKellen.

An Honorary Golden Bear for Andrzej Wajda

Andrzej Wajda is one of Poland's most distinguished film directors. After studying painting and attending the film academy in Lodz, he began his career by assisting the Polish director Aleksander Ford. In 1954, he directed his first feature *A Generation* about the development of the Polish resistance movement in response to the German occupation. *Kanal* and *Ashes and Diamonds* rank as masterpieces of Polish cinema. With *Man of Marble* and *Man of Iron*, Andrzej Wajda took a stand in the political conflicts of his country, becoming one of the driving forces behind the Solidarity trade union. In the 1980s he staged Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* at the Schaubühne in Berlin and made the film *Danton* in France. Andrzej Wajda has been the Berlinale's guest several times. He has presented a number of films in the *Competition*, including *Pan Tadeusz: The Last Foray in Lithuania* (2000), *Miss Nobody* (1997) and *Holy Week* (1996). For the latter he took home the Silver Bear. In 2000 Andrzej Wajda received an honorary Oscar for his outstanding lifetime achievements.

Andrzej Wajda will be awarded the Honorary Golden Bear on 15 February 2006 at 8.30 pm in the Kino International. At the director's request, his film *Pilate and Others* (1972) will be screened after the ceremony in the original German version.

An Honorary Golden Bear for Sir Ian McKellen

With Sir Ian McKellen, the Berlinale is honouring one of Britain's most legendary actors of the stage and screen. By 1974 he was already a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Since then he has enthralled audiences around the globe as the eponymous protagonist in the screen adaptation of *Richard III* (1995), as well as for his performances in *X-Men* films and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. In 1999 Sir Ian McKellen was nominated for both an Oscar and a Golden Globe for his portrayal of Hollywood director James Whale in *Gods and Monsters*. He was again nominated for an Oscar for his performance as Gandalf in the first episode of *Lord of the Rings*. The actor, who was knighted in 1990, starred in David MacKenzie's *Asylum* (2004), which was screened at last year's *Berlinale Competition*.

Sir Ian McKellen will be awarded the Honorary Golden Bear on 11 February 2006 at 11.00 pm in the Kino International. *Richard III* will be shown following the ceremony.

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