

Famous Poles in the World Cinema

04/01/2008 Although Poland has a history of film making nearly as old as cinema itself, not everyone is aware of the background of some very famous names. That is why we would like to remind about at least few of them.

In mid-thirties a girl from Poland, Barbara Chalupiec, who started her career playing in comedies, gained worldwide fame. Pola Negri, because that is name she chose for her further career, starred in many films, first in Germany, then she moved to the USA and worked for the Paramount Pictures. Some of her titles are: Bella Donna, The Cheat, Spanish Dancer, Lilly of the Dust, East of Suez, Hotel Imperial.

After IIWW, despite difficult political situation, a number of very important events occurred, so significant that later they were referred to as the Polish School. One of the most recognizable names is Andrzej Wajda whose early films A Generation, Canal and Ashes and Diamonds show the essence of the Polish School: interest in heroism and moral evaluations of the war.

In the early sixties Roman Polanski finished Film School in Lodz. In Poland he made only one feature film: Knife in the Water (a drama in a beautiful Mazurian scenography). After that he decided to continue his career in the West. His best works are: Rosmary's Baby, Macbeth, Chinatown, Tess, Pirates, Death and the Maiden, The Pianist, Oliver Twist. Polanski is famous not only for his work but also for his private life - his wife, Sharon Tate was murdered by members of Charles Manson's group.

Nearly twenty years after Polanski's debut another name came into light: Krzysztof Kieslowski. His trilogy: Three Colours Blue/ White/ Red can be found in almost every DVD shop on the World Cinema shelf. The Decalogue which was filmed few years earlier as a tv series was broadcasted all over the world. The only woman in this male dominated list is Agnieszka Holland, who started her career under communist regime but emigrated to France before martial law was declared in December 1981. Kill the Priest, Europa, Europa, Oliver, Oliver, Secret Garden, Total Eclipse, Washington Square, and most recent: The Healer. These are just a few titles but should ring a bell in every cinema fan's brain.

Obviously, not only directors work in cinema's industry, although most of the times they are the ones to show on the red carpet. It is necessary to remind about those working behind the scenes: cinematographers.

Two Oscars for Schindler's List and Saving Private Ryan, and work for nearly all other Spielberg films, Janusz Kaminski is definitely on the top of "the best in this job" list. Just in last 5 years he was engaged in: Artificial Intelligence, AI, Minority Report, Catch Me If You Can, The Terminal, War of the Words and Munich.

Another famous name is SBawomir Idziak from Katowice in Poland. He was a cinematographer for well over 40 Polish films, but his worldwide known titles are Gattaca, Proof of Life, Black Hawk Down, and King Arthur. He will also be the director of photography for Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, the fifth film adaptation of J.K. Rowling's popular fantasy series.

Andrzej Bartkowiak, originally from Lodz, few years ago changed his main interest from being a cinematographer to being a director (Romeo Must Die). Before that he was a part of the team for projects such as: Thirteen Days, Gossip, U.S. Marshals, The Devil's Advocate, Dante's Peak and many others.

And many, many more, so keep coming back to search for more info.

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