

For immediate release
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NEWS RELEASE #3

**WORLD PREMIERE OF ISTVÁN SZABÓ'S BEING JULIA
TO OPEN FESTIVAL**

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Toronto – The 29th Toronto International Film Festival® opens September 9 with the world premiere **Gala Presentation** of **BEING JULIA**. The film is directed by Academy Award®-winner István Szabó (MEPHISTO), and produced by Golden Globe®-nominee Robert Lantos (SUNSHINE). Written by Academy Award®-winner Ronald Harwood (THE PIANIST) and based on the novel *Theatre*, by W. Somerset Maugham, the film features a stellar cast, superbly led by Academy Award®-nominee Annette Bening, and Academy Award®-winner Jeremy Irons. The pair are ably supported by an influential cast featuring some of Canada and Britain's finest actors. The film includes Bruce Greenwood, Michael Gambon, Miriam Margolyes, Juliet Stevenson, Shaun Evans, Lucy Punch, Maury Chaykin, Sheila McCarthy, Rita Tushingham, and Rosemary Harris.

In 1938, Julia Lambert (Annette Bening) is a beautiful and talented stage actress who rules London's West End. She is at her physical and professional peak – the embodiment of wealth, talent, and celebrity. Her husband, Michael (Jeremy Irons) is a brilliant theatrical producer who masterminds her career. But their long-standing relationship is more platonic than romantic and Julia begins to find the supposed splendour of her successes wearisome. A charming young American enters her life and she soon finds herself in the throes of a passionate love affair, one that makes her feel more beautiful and vital every day. When his ulterior motives threaten to ruin her, Julia delights in launching the ultimate revenge, and proves she is a more formidable actress than anyone had ever imagined.



What are you doing after work?



“We are thrilled to open this year's Festival with BEING JULIA,” said Piers Handling, CEO & Director of the Toronto International Film Festival Group. “Szabó has made a tremendously playful and uplifting film, capturing the effervescence of 1930s theatrical life with graceful panache. Annette Bening gives an award-worthy performance surrounded by tremendous Canadian and international talent.”

BEING JULIA is the ninth film produced by Robert Lantos to open the Festival, the others being **IN PRAISE OF OLDER WOMEN** (1978), **JOSHUA THEN & NOW** (1985), **BLACK ROBE** (1991), **WHALE MUSIC** (1994), **THE SWEET HEREAFTER** (1997), **FELICIA'S JOURNEY** (1999), **STARDOM** (2000), and **ARARAT** (2002). The film marks the second collaboration between István Szabó and Robert Lantos (SUNSHINE).

Drivers wanted: 

“It is a great honour to open the Toronto International Film Festival, especially after having worked with such a talented group of Canadians,” said Szabó.



TORONTO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL GROUP

The Toronto International Film Festival Group is a charitable, cultural, and educational organization devoted to celebrating excellence in film and the moving image.

István Szabó's **BEING JULIA** is a Serendipity Point Films production in association with First Choice Films, Astral Media, Telefilm Canada, and Corus Entertainment. **BEING JULIA** is distributed in Canada by THINKfilm, and by Sony Pictures Classics in the USA. Summit Entertainment is acting as the film's international sales agent.

The box office opens for returning buyers and VISA cardholders beginning July 19, 2004. At this time passes and coupons may be purchased at the Official website www.bell.ca/filmfest or by calling the Bell Infoline at (416) 968-FILM. Starting July 26, passes and coupons go on sale to the general public and may be purchased online, by phone or in person at the Toronto International Film Festival Group Box Office, located at the Manulife Centre, 55 Bloor Street West (north entrance), Monday to Friday from 10:00am to 6:00pm.

The Opening Night Gala is made possible through the generous sponsorship of Astral Media. Gala Presentations at Roy Thomson Hall are made possible through the sponsorship of Famous Players, Paramount Pictures (Canada) Inc., and Showtime Networks Inc.

For more information, please contact Tonia Addison, taddison@torfilmfest.ca or Denny Alexander, dalexander@torfilmfest.ca, or call 416-934-3200.
