

## Hellenic Film Society's Virtual Greek Film Festival Was a Success-- Thousands of At-Home Streams During Greek Film Expo on Demand

New York, July 28, 2020—Greek Film Expo on Demand, the first-ever virtual Greek film festival in the US, ended its 10-day run on July 20. The Hellenic Film Society USA (HFS) presented a robust program and viewers from 27 states streamed 10 feature films, six film shorts, a series of webinars on filmmaking, and interviews with directors. Webinars were available worldwide via Zoom, while films streamed throughout the US, except California.

The Hellenic Film Society announced two awards presented at the conclusion of their annual film festivals. The Audience Award for most popular film went to *Meltem*, directed by Basile Doganis, a film that skillfully intertwines the story of a young woman coming to terms with her past against the backdrop of the refugee situation in Greece. The 2020 Alexis Mouyiaris Memorial Award for Best Performance in an Expo Feature Film went to Rena Morfi, making her feature film debut in *Fantasia*, a musical drama about a club singer's rise to stardom. Morfi is the popular lead singer of the Greek band, Imam Baildi.

"When we couldn't present our annual film festival in theaters due to the pandemic, we had to find another way to deliver movies and not disappoint our loyal Greek film fans," said Jimmy DeMetro, Hellenic Film Society president. "The silver lining has been that, for the first time, we could bring Greek films to audiences across the country, many of whom haven't had access to Greek films until now. It has been very gratifying to see how enthusiastically people responded to our streaming film festival and, based on the audience reaction, we are now exploring ways to continue an online film presence."

The 10 films presented, including many US premieres, offered something for every cinematic interest, from *Adults in the Room*, the latest by legendary filmmaker Costa-Gavras to *Madalena*, a digitally restored 1960s comedy classic. Most of the screenings were followed by greetings from the films' directors. In addition, HFS conducted live interviews via Zoom with directors joining from Europe, during which they discussed the making of their films and provided insights into the story. Two panel discussions on filming in Greece, including tax incentives available to producers, were also held. All interviews will be available on the Hellenic Film Society's [YouTube channel](#).

### About the Hellenic Film Society USA

The Hellenic Film Society USA (HFS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization rooted in the belief that Greek cinema should be part of the American cultural landscape. The organization presents high-quality, well-crafted feature films, documentaries, and film shorts made by Greek filmmakers and those of Greek descent, as well as films that depict the rich culture and history of Greece and Cyprus. HFS presents the annual New York Greek Film Expo film festival every spring. They also present Always on Sunday, a series of monthly Greek film screenings, at the Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, NY, as well interviews with filmmakers and panel discussions about filmmaking that inform, enlighten, and inspire audiences of all nationalities.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is the lead supporter of the Hellenic Film Society USA. The Greek Film Expo on Demand is made possible with support from the Onassis Foundation USA, the Kallinikeion Foundation, and the Queens Council on the Arts with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. For additional information, please visit [www.hellenicfilmusa.org](http://www.hellenicfilmusa.org) or call 646-844-1488.

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*Meltem*, written and directed by Basile Doganis, is the winner of the Hellenic Film Society's 2020 Greek Film Expo on Demand Audience Award. Starring Daphne Alexander, the film skillfully intertwines the story of a young woman coming to terms with her past against the backdrop of the refugee situation in Greece.



The Hellenic Film Society's 2020 Alexis Mouyiaris Memorial Award for Best Performance in an Expo Feature Film went to Rena Morfi, making her feature film debut in *Fantasia*, a musical drama about a club singer's rise to stardom. Morfi is the popular lead singer of the Greek band, Imam Baildi.