

## Romania 100 – Classic Romanian films at TIFF 2018

The **Transilvania International Film Festival** celebrates the **centennial** of Romania's union by showcasing a collection of works representative of Romanian cinema's extremely diverse past. Popular films or rare gems from the communist period, genre productions, historical or contemporary dramas, the seven titles in the **Romania 100** section are sure to activate both nostalgia in those who grew up in that era and curiosity in the younger generation, who perhaps know only of the iconic stars of these films.

***Răscoala / The Uprising*** (1965), for which Mircea Mureșan received the debut prize at the 20th edition of Cannes, was also Romania's first proposal for the foreign language Oscar. A reference title for the most popular genre of Romanian film, the historic drama, the film delves into rural life during the first decade of the 20th century and reconstitutes an essential historic moment, the 1907 peasant uprising, using a cast of thousands. Five million have seen this adaptation of Liviu Rebreanu's eponymous novel.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, ***Gaudeamus Igitur*** (1965) is set in its own time and shot right in Cluj-Napoca by director Gheorghe Vitanidis. The story of young high school graduates with hopes of going to university in one of Romania's biggest academic centers is an opportunity to see what Cluj looked like in the 1960s, as well as a chance to see Anna Szeles, the recipient of a lifetime award at TIFF this year, in one of her less-known films.

A surprise for those interested in cinematic collectors' items is ***Șapte zile / Seven Days*** (1973), the debut crime thriller by Mircea Veroiu, who would come to be known for his adaptations of literary classics. Mircea Albulescu, Irina Petrescu, and Victor Rebengiuc play the anchors of a love triangle caught in an industrial espionage intrigue. The late Adrian Enescu, whose career was recognized at TIFF in 2013 with a lifetime award, signs his first film score here.

***Explozia / Explosion*** (1973) by Mircea Drăgan, the late director of the **B.D.** series who passed away last year, is another genre film that was extremely popular in its time. This action movie is suspenseful and spectacular without resorting to any special effects, and is inspired by a true

story: in 1971, a fire started on the Poseidon cargo ship risked triggering an explosion which would have devastated the city of Galați and destroyed its massive steel plant. The top-shelf cast is led by Gheorghe Dinică, who plays the anthological role of Gicu Salamandă.

Romantic comedies are represented in this selection by the restitution of one of the most popular films of the 1980s, Elefterie Voiculescu's debut feature ***Fata Morgana*** (1981). While following the strictures of the era by being unavoidably moralizing, the film has at least three points of interest that shine through to today: an atypical male lead—a party animal, a ladies' man, and an irresistible bad boy; the magnetic draw of its protagonists, who gave us one of the rare sex scenes in a communist era film—both elliptical and daring; and, last but not least, the pop hit *La fereastră* on the movie's soundtrack, which is nostalgically downloaded to this day.

Two collectors' items complete the program, both films about young people directed by filmmakers of different generations: ***Ultima noapte a copilăriei / The Last Night of Childhood*** (1966) by Cluj-based director Savel Stiopul and ***Muntele ascuns / The Hidden Mountain*** (1974), Andrei Cătălin Băleanu's debut feature. Both look into the psychological abyss of the adolescence, and both center on boys whose parents' divorce forces them into maturity. Their special visual style and ciné-vérité register, combined with the cast of young, non-professional actors, brought a breath of fresh air in Romanian cinema at the time.

TIFF 2018 will also host **Photo Historia**, a unique exhibition of photos from the first decades of the 20th century. The copies exhibited at the Art Museum in Cluj offer a special perspective on the life of the Romanian peasants and relevant places in the country.