



15 Years without Melina

Melina lost the battle with cancer 15 years ago. (October 18, 1920 – March 6, 1994). "Melina" foundation initiated a memorial ceremony that took place in Athens first cemetery. PASOK president Giorgos Papandreu as well as top socialist party members attended the ceremony.

15 years ago the news about her death was spread around the world, from Memorial hospital in New York, the Atlantic Ocean and Europe to her home Greece. Melina Merkouri is no longer among us as she would want to be. Melina was worshiped by many people by her first name. She was not an actor, not a politician. She wasn't only that. She was and she still is the Greek symbol, the only one that was buried under state leaders' honors.

Her most unforgettable moment was in the movie "Never on Sunday" where she sang probably the most well known song abroad "The Children of Piraeus". Melina Merkouri loved Greece like nothing else. Even when colonels of the military junta forbid her to be Greek citizen, she answered: "I was born in Greece and I will die in Greece".

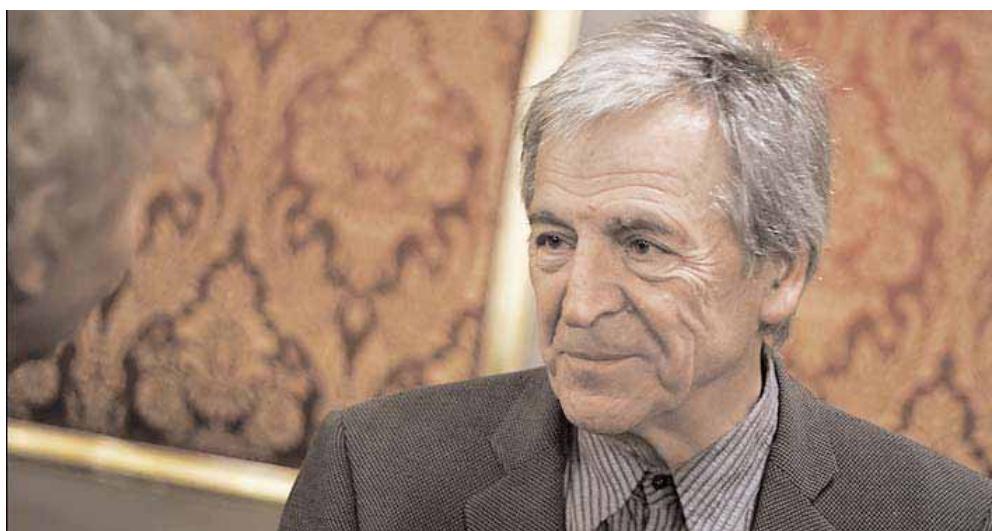
Costa-Gavras lends touch of magic to immigrant tale

By Deborah Young

BERLIN - An illegal immigrant comes to Europe to find a better life in "Eden Is West," a familiar story distinguished by its healthy \$9 million budget and the Italian star power of Riccardo Scamarcio as a noble, handsome young immigrant from an unnamed country. Directing the French-Italian-Greek co-production, veteran Costa-Gavros avoids a strictly realistic treatment in favor of a more symbolic approach, with mixed results.

The filmmaking is fluid and the imagery is strong, offering "Eden" — which premiered as a noncompeting selection of the recent Berlin International Film Festival — a chance with audiences where more impassioned but less polished pictures have failed.

A French-nationalized Greek, Costa-Gavras has always been strong on social commitment, directing memorable films like "Z" (winner of the foreign-language Oscar), "Missing" (Cannes Palme d'Or) and "Music Box" (Berlin Golden Bear). So it's not surprising he



would choose to explore Europe's current gigantic sociopolitical problem, though at this point the immigrant genre is so overworked in European cinema it should probably be banned for the next five years.

Searching for a fresh vantage point, Costa-Gavros and co-scripter Jean-Claude Grumberg opt to mythologize their hero, turning him into a cross between the noble, wandering Ulysses and a Charlie Chaplin perpetually on the run from the cops — though truth to tell, teen idol Scamarcio ("My Brother Is an Only Child") bears an eerie resemblance to big-eyed mop-top Jackie Coogan.

The story begins at dawn over a stunning Aegean sea, introducing a mythic note that will underlie the entire film. Like Gianni Amelio's "L'America" or the 3rd-class steerage of "Titanic," the vessel that bears him to an unnamed European shore is packed with desperate but hopeful faces. When the Coast Guard confiscates the tub, Elias (Scamarcio) is one of the brave lads who jumps into the dark waters and swims ashore.

He awakens on the beach of a nudist colony, part of the luxurious Hotel Eden. Mistaken for a hotel employee, he mutely wanders around, fighting off the sexual attentions of the hotel manager, until a lonely lady from Hamburg (Juliane Kohler) takes him into her bed. Though it sounds like farce, this is all played straight to show the decadent West assaulting the shocked innocent.

With the police hot on his heels, the good Elias leaves this artificial Western paradise and strikes out for a mythical Paris, where with his smattering of French, he hopes to find the Wizard of Oz — in this case, a stage magician who has befriended him. On the road to Paris/paradise, he passes through gypsy camps and the inferno of a toxic factory exploiting workers without papers. Simplifying to the max, the film shows how poor people generally lend Elias a helping hand, while the middle class literally shove him down toilets and treat him like a sex toy.

Scamarcio is endearing enough in a derivative role, probably his best to date, but a little Chaplinesque comedy and a little less Ulysses-like angst would have gone a long way toward lightening up the film's last hour.

Chinese universities participate in Greek Education Exhibition

ATHENS, — Twenty universities and institutions from China participated in the 11th Hellenic International Exhibition on Education that opened here.

Chinese universities made their debut in the Greek exhibition and provide direct access to Greek students, said Li Jianmin, head of the Chinese delegation and deputy secretary-general of China Scholarship Council.

He said Chinese universities have started in recent years to conduct teaching in English, especially for courses at the graduate level, thus making things easier for foreign students.

"Compared with other European countries, far fewer students from Greece come to study in China, and this is what we come here for," said Li.

The Chinese government is reportedly considering raising the sum of scholarship for students from Greece.

Under the Sino-Greece education cooperation agreement of 2007-2010, China will provide seven full-year scholarships for Greek students each year and 21 scholarships for language training in summer courses.

Athanasis Kiriazis, special secretary for higher education in Greece, said the Greek ministry of education welcomed the Chinese universities and hope their participation will help build direct links between education communities of the two countries.

The ministry will pass on the information about Chinese higher education to Greek universities and students, said Kiriazis.

Greece also plans to set up a special department on Chinese studies in Greek universities, he added.

The three-day education exhibition drew the participation of more than 250 educational institutions from Greece and 14 other countries.