

The Museum of Modern Art

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DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA: FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE

ELAINE MAY, November 17

LOUIS MALLE, December 8

Elaine May and Louis Malle will be honored by The Museum of Modern Art as part of the ongoing DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA: FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE. Ms. May, film director, playwright, actress, and comedienne, is the subject of a tribute on Monday, November 17, at 6:00 p.m., when her 1976 revisionist buddy-movie Mikey and Nicky will be screened. Mr. Malle, a provocative director of sensual images who has experimented with a variety of film forms, will present his 1980 film Atlantic City, starring Burt Lancaster and Susan Sarandon, on Monday, December 8, at 6:00 p.m.

In Mikey and Nicky Ms. May tailors the framing and dialogue to the personalities of the actors John Cassavetes and Peter Falk. Convinced that a contract is out for him, Nicky (Cassavetes), a small-time hood, calls his childhood friend Mikey (Falk), a syndicate man. Their one night encounter is the focus of the film. A seemingly casual approach cleverly disguises a tight, carefully-planned structure.

From a screenplay by John Guare, Mr. Malle's Atlantic City uses the transitory character of the boardwalk town as a backdrop for a tale of decay and corruption. Mr. Lancaster plays the aging friend and protector of an ambitious nightclub croupier, played by Ms. Sarandon.

As a child Ms. May appeared on stage and radio with her father, Jack Berlin. After collaborating with Mike Nichols on stage, radio, and television through the mid-sixties, she made her film acting debut in Clive

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Donner's Luv (1967) and Carl Reiner's Enter Laughing (1967). In 1970 she wrote and directed her first feature, A New Leaf, in which she costarred with Walter Matthau. Her 1972 The Heartbreak Kid, a satire about a young couple's crisis after their honeymoon, was written by Neil Simon and starred Ms. May's daughter, Jeannie Berlin, as well as Cybill Shepherd and Charles Grodin.

Mr. Malle made his first feature, the documentary The Silent World/Le Monde du Silence (1956), while an assistant to Jacques-Yves Cousteau. His other documentaries include the French-produced Phantom India/L'Inde Fantome (1969), a six-hour examination of that country's uniqueness; and, in the United States, God's Country (1985), a study of changes in an American farming community over a six year period. His fiction features produced in France are as varied as the western parody Viva Maria (1965), the 1971 film about incest Murmur of the Heart/Le Souffle au Coeur, and the portrait of a young Nazi collaborator Lacombe Lucien (1973). In 1976 he made his first American feature, Pretty Baby, in which the twelve-year-old Brooke Shields plays a prostitute in a lush New Orleans brothel. Mr. Malle eavesdropped on a table conversation between two urban intellectuals in My Dinner with Andre (1981). A group of inept safecrackers provides the comedy in his 1984 Crackers. Alamo Bay (1985) centers on the conflict between Vietnamese immigrants and local fishermen on the Texas coast.

The Directors Guild of America, which has 8,000 members in film, television, and radio, began with the formation of the Screen Directors Guild in 1936. King Vidor was the first president, and the original members included Rouben Mamoulian, Frank Borzage, Howard Hawks, Henry King, and William Wellman. In 1960 the Screen Directors Guild of America merged with the Radio and

Television Directors Guild to form the Directors Guild of America, Inc. In the sixties other skilled professionals, such as assistant directors and unit production managers, became members of the DGA.

Ms. May and Mr. Malle are the tenth and eleventh directors to be honored by the Museum during the DGA's golden anniversary year. The DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA: FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE is organized by Stephen Harvey, assistant curator, and Adrienne Mancina, curator, Department of Film, with the collaboration of George Wallach, director of special projects, Directors Guild of America.

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For further press information and photographic materials, contact Howard Feinstein, film press representative, The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9752.