

# Sony Pictures Classics Co-President Presents Academy Award-Nominee 'The Teachers' Lounge' at 25th Anniversary Ebertfest

*Ebertfest is an annual film festival held every April in Champaign, Ill., named for legendary film critic, Robert Ebert.*



CHAMPAIGN, ILL., UNITED STATES,  
March 18, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ --  
Roger Ebert's Film Festival, also known

as [Ebertfest](#), announced today that Sony Pictures Classics Co-President Michael Barker is slated to present the Academy Award-nominated feature, *The Teachers' Lounge*, at this year's 25th anniversary of Roger Ebert's Film Festival.

Barker, who co-founded Sony Pictures Classics in 1992, is an entertainment leader and icon with his films receiving nearly 200 Academy Award nominations and 40+ wins.

Ebertfest will be held from Wednesday, April 17, through Saturday, April 20, 2024, at the Virginia Theatre, in downtown Champaign, IL.

*The Teachers' Lounge*, a 2024 Oscar nominee for Best International Feature Film, stars Leonie Benesch (of *The Crown*), who plays Carla Nowak, a young Polish teacher at a German secondary school forced to deal with her student being accused of theft. [Rogerebert.com](#) calls the film "glorious" and a "proper movie, with its own theme and distinct aesthetic and strong personality."

Writer and director Christine Swanson and her husband, producer Michael Swanson, along with acclaimed actors Lynn Whitfield and Renee Elise Goldsberry, will attend Ebertfest to discuss their film *Albany Road*. The film, which was partially shot in Champaign, Illinois, and produced by Shatterglass, centers around a New York executive forced to share a rental car with her former nemesis, her ex-fiancé's mother, due to a snowstorm. Christine Swanson is a multiple-award winning director of film and television for HBO Films, Lionsgate, and BET Films.

Michael Swanson is an Emmy Award-winning studio executive, film producer, and theatre producer responsible for *Parks and Rec*, *The Good Place*, and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. Whitfield is an Emmy Award winner for *The Josephine Baker Story*, *Eve's Bayou*, and has won two NAACP Image

Awards for Greenleaf. Goldsberry is the 2016 Tony Award winner for Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her role of Angelica Schuyler in Hamilton.

Writers Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski will join the distinguished guest panel to discuss their 1999 biography of Andy Kaufman, *Man on the Moon*, starring Jim Carrey. Roger Ebert described it as a film that “remains true to Kaufman’s stubborn vision.” Alexander and Karaszewski are known for writing unusual true stories together. Their feature film credits include the Oscar-winning *Man on the Moon*, *Ed Wood*, *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, *Big Eyes*, and *Dolemite Is My Name*.

Andrew Davis, director of *The Fugitive*, past Ebertfest guest, and a friend to Roger Ebert, with his brother, actor Richard Davis, guitarist for Chicago Catz and lifelong musician who has recorded with legends like Bobby Womack, Gladys Knight, and Mariah Carey, will also be part of the guest line-up to discuss their 1978 film *Stony Island*. The two teamed up to create the music-filled drama that tells the story of two struggling musicians from Chicago’s Southside who form an R&B band and take it on the road.

The Anvil Orchestra returns as an Ebertfest favorite, with the silent version of Alfred Hitchcock’s *Blackmail*. Roger C. Clark and Terry Donahue create magic with their homemade instruments.

Ebertfest welcomes director Rana Segal with her film *The Light of Truth: Richard Hunt's Monument to Ida B. Wells*. Renowned sculptor Richard Hunt, who passed away in December 2023, has more public artworks than any other artist.

The survey is out for the Audience Choice Film to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Ebertfest. We will announce the winning title shortly.

This year’s Ebertfest commences with an Opening Night screening of Bob Fosse’s critically acclaimed film *Star 80* with stars Eric Roberts and Mariel Hemingway in attendance and will showcase the 25th Anniversary of writer-director Malcolm D. Lee’s wedding-themed, reunion romantic comedy *The Best Man* as this year’s centerpiece film with Lee coming to celebrate.

Additional guests include Directors Lisa Cortes, Diane Moore and Conductor Roderick Cox.

Ebertfest passes are currently available to [purchase online](#) or by calling the box office at 217-356-9063. Individual festival passes to see all films cost \$200, which includes reserved seating. New this year are 4-film passes for \$70: choose between an Evening Pass or a Saturday Pass.

Ebertfest is a collaboration between Chaz Ebert and the University of Illinois College of Media. For more information, visit <https://ebertfest.com>.

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