



A festival of discovery celebrating breakout acting in independent film

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Method Fest Celebrates Film Diversity

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Diverse Voices, Great Films

From Robert Patton-Spruill's "Turntable" (top) to the Jen Prince-Alyson Shelton (center with Festival Director Don Franken) produced "Eve of Understanding," Diversity in Film Night showcased great films and acting. One of those performances was turned in by Rebecca Lowman (bottom right) in "Eve of Understanding." At bottom left, Najla Zaidi directed "The Christmas Tree."



Calabasas, Calif., April 4, 2006 - For Najla Zaidi, Diversity in Film Night at the 8th annual Method Fest meant screening a short into which she not only poured her heart, but also her finances. For Rebecca Lowman, the night meant giving an acting performance so wide-ranging, it may lead to eyes being opened to her abilities.

Tuesday's lineup included Zaidi's short, *The Christmas Tree*. At just under 8 minutes, the short examines the issue of immigrants holding onto their traditions, while their children try to fit into their new culture. In this case, a Muslim father, played by Navid Negahban, whose *Jihad* won the 2005 Method Fest Award for Best Short, objects to his girl literally dragging home a Christmas tree from school.

"It's what I did in the 5th grade," said Zaidi. "Only in real life, my father handled the situation better. He let me keep the tree up through December 26."

If it was a long-time to wait until she could tell her story, it also was an effort in determination for Zaidi.



Pollak Receives Method Fest Career Achievement Award

Calabasas, Calif., April 4, 2006 - Kevin Pollak, whose performance in Gary Yates' *Niagara Motel* as a would-be porn producer screened the night before, was honored Tuesday with the Method Fest's Career Achievement Award.

"I've pretty much bluffed my way through some 50 odd films," said Pollak, a former standup comic who recalled the advice of a former acting coach in accepting the award.

the Method Fest 2006

In the Spotlight



Read about the good times created by *Niagara Motel* on the April 4 Home Page.

NEW! Access Daily Fest Home Pages

Our Home Page changes daily during the Festival, but you can access events for any day of the week by visiting the daily Home Pages via the links below:

- [» April 4](#)
- [» April 3](#)
- [» April 2](#)
- [» April 1](#)
- [» March 31](#)

Academy Award Director To Host

Paul Haggis - director of the Academy Award winning film "Crash" and writer of "Crash" and Oscar winning film "Million Dollar Baby" - will host the screening of "Love Is Work," Thursday at 9:15 p.m. at Louis B. Mayer Theatre.

Special Events

Get the details on [Indie Music Night](#), the Youth Workshops & Screenings, and the Actor-Director Conference on the Events Page. Just scroll through the table to the event in which you're interested, and click "access detailed description" for all the facts. [» Events Page](#)

Star Power

This year's Festival loaded with movie talent. [» Details](#)

Blog World

The Method Fest has reached the world of blogs. Woodland Hills resident Rayam Emrani's blog is focused this week on the Festival. [» Blog](#)

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"This is only 8 minutes long, but it cost \$21,000 to produce," she said. "It was all of my savings."

Less is more in acting, Pollak said the coach told him. "But," added Pollak, "nothing is best. This is my award for doing nothing."

Her story told, Zaidi now has another dream - to produce a feature-length film.

Pollak's credits include A Few Good Men, The Usual Suspects, and Casino.

Meanwhile, Eve of Understanding, which followed The Christmas Tree, was a full-length feature by talented directors/producers Alyson Shelton and Jen Prince. It traces the story of Donna, whom Lowman played beautifully despite the demands of a role that required her to be in virtually every scene in the movie.

"We were so glad this movie was going to be shown at the Method Fest because Rebecca Lowman turned in a career-changing performance," said Shelton.

Such acting performances, of course, go to the heart of what the Method Fest is about. They also speak volumes about the robust health of diversity in film.

The Festival continues today with American Independents Night, highlighted by the second Centerpiece film in 2006 - *The Gold Bracelet*.

Tickets for the Festival, which runs through April 7, are available online at brownpapertickets.com, or at the door of the Louis B. Mayer Theatre and the Carlson Family Theatre at Viewpoint School. Please see the [Event Schedule](#) and [Film Schedule](#) pages for more details. Some 23 feature films and 40 shorts from around the world are featured in this year's Festival.



Get Festival VIP passes

» See full story about the Festival lineup of films.
» See a synopsis of each film, short.

Filmmaker Reception at Leonis Adobe Is a Hit



The 8th annual The Method Fest film festival got off to an early start on March 30 when the historic Leonis Adobe hosted the Filmmaker Reception. With beautiful lighting highlighting a great venue, the cast of *Nightmare* (left) stops for a photo. The party was hosted for the second year in a row by Leonis Adobe.

For more photos of the Reception, please [see the Gallery](#). Additional photos are on the [Events Page](#).

David Carradine Receives Maverick Award



David Carradine addresses the audience (center) after being presented the 2006 Maverick Award by The Method Fest on March 2nd for his outstanding contribution to cinema and his versatility as an actor, producer, director, writer, editor and composer. With Carradine in left photo is presenter and fellow *Kill Bill* star Michael Madsen. In right photo, Carradine and Madsen pose with Carol Washburn, president, Calabasas Chamber of Commerce.

» See full Carradine/Maverick Award story. | See Photo Gallery

All-Time Record 742 Films Submitted for Festival

An all time record of 742 films from American and international filmmakers have been submitted for the 8th annual The Method Fest independent festival. "Film submissions have increased spectacularly every year of the festival," said Don Franken, The Method Fest executive director. "We reached a significant milestone when we topped 500 entries for the first time in 2004. Last year we had 571 films, and this year we added 150 more. The new record of submissions shows our festival is growing every year and independent filmmakers look for The Method Fest as a premier festival to showcase their new work." » See [full Film Submissions story](#).



Michael Cavallieri of the short "Livewire."



Hudson Honored

Ernie Hudson, honored with the "Indie Supporter Award" on Feb. 16 for his contribution to independent film, poses with Elaine Wood, The Method Fest managing director, and Don Franken, executive director.

» See details



She's hot: Cameron Richardson, shown in the 2005 TMF screening of "The Good Humor Man" with Nathan Stevens, is among festival alumni getting noticed.

TMF Launches Career Breakouts

The Method Fest independent film festival, the only film festival in the United States that focuses on acting, is becoming more and more the place where talented new actors show their craft in memorable roles that help launch their careers. Read about the career-changing breaks for "discoveries" from 2005 Method Fest, as well as success for past alumni. » See Story.

Youth Program Information Posted

Get details about entering The Method Fest's annual Youth Program short film, screenplay, and actor competition. » See Youth Program.

Break Into Hollywood Now

"How To Get Arrested"® is a book about breaking into Hollywood and the business of acting. Loaded with inside hints and motivational tips that take "the tangles and terror out of the system," the book is the creation of Michael J. Wallach, a longtime Festival supporter. [Click for details.](#)



Fun photos, times: The cast of *East of Sunset*



The Lark Spa

Schedule of Events Announced

The events of The 2006 Method Fest began in January and are moving toward a culmination with the wildly popular Awards Ceremony on Friday, April 7. In between are a mix of receptions, parties, music nights, galas, and, of course, screenings of some of the finest Independent films hitting the market. See the [Calendar Page](#) for all the details and check back for updates.

Feature Films Added

Two Canadian films have been added to the 2006 Method Fest lineup. *Severed*, directed by Carl Bessai, will be screened on Sunday, April 2, 9:45 pm at the Louis B. Mayer Theatre. In *Severed*, a multi-national forestry company engages in genetic experimentation to increase logging yield in a remote section of forest. But the experimentation goes disastrously wrong ... see the [synopsis/buy tickets](#). Also added is *Love Is Work*, a feature that tells the truth about love. It will screen on April 6, 9:15 pm at the Louis B. Mayer Theatre. See [synopsis](#).

Landau Latest in Impressive List of Award Winners



Veteran actor Martin Landau, honored at the 2005 Method Fest Awards Ceremony in Calabasas, joins a noted list of distinguished honorees on the festival's awards lists. In fact, taking a scroll through the lists reveals how the Method Fest has contributed to the careers of emerging and established stars, producers and others in the industry. See the [Archives Page](#) for a look at the all-time list of Method Fest award winners.

celebrates, appropriately, with Corona beers, after being presented the Corona Maverick Award for Quality in a Low Budget film. It's one of the many fun photos in our 2005 Galleries.

Relive 2005 Fest Via Photo Galleries

Relive the fun and excitement of the 2005 Method Fest via an extensive collection of SONY Image Galleries. [» See Galleries.](#)

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