

L.A. Greek Film Fest's Orpheus Awards: Producers Anthony G. Katagas & Steve Nicolaides Honored

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👤 By [Karl Gibson](#)



[The Los Angeles Greek Film Festival's \(LAGFF\)](#) week of premieres, panels and events came to its 2014 close Sunday night at The Egyptian Theater in Hollywood, wrapping the annual fest's most successful and highly-attended year since its inception.

The closing night film was the drama *The Enemy Within*, followed by the Orpheus Awards, honoring the film festival's winners and producers Anthony G. Katagas (*12 Years A Slave*, *Killing Them Softly*) and Steve Nicolaides (*A Few Food Men*, *Boyz N The Hood*, *When Harry Met Sally*).



Aristotle Katopodis

Aristotle Katopodis, the Festival & Programming Director, told *SSN* that one of the festival's goals "is to bring in exciting and innovative films to fill the huge gap – think Grand Canyon, okay? –

between Hollywood and Greek filmmakers. The Greek film industry is a small one and has the same problems as the European film industry: more intellectual films than pure typical entertainment fare.” Add to the mix that many Greek films are subtitled – a marketing challenge for any foreign films in the U.S. – the LAGFF is also committed to “expose Greek filmmakers to how the Hollywood film industry works.” This year there were 23 filmmakers in attendance with 29 films.

Like most independent filmmakers, budgets are non-existent as film creators strive to convey a signature “innovative, unique look and feel in their directorial aspirations,” Katopodis said, adding that 2015 goals for the LAGFF will include “the expanded capacity and ability to attract filmmakers and mainstream independent cinema. We’re trying to bring the festival to cinephiles, people who love films, and younger audiences.”

The Orpheus Awards, held in the Lloyd E. Rigler Theatre after the closing night screening, included two Orpheus Awards honors to producers Anthony G. Katagas and Steve Nicolaides.

Fox Filmed Entertainment Chairman and CEO Jim Gianopulos came up to the podium after a reel of producers Larry Turman, Sarah Green, Sean Covel, Jim Burke and Georgia Kacandes discussing their roles screened. “It takes an enormous amount of talented people to make a movie...One of the key roles of a producer is to be a link to the studio. And we welcome that – depending on the producer!” Gianopulos said, before introducing director James Gray (*The Immigrant*, *The Yards*).

Gray, who presented the award to Anthony G. Katagas, said Katagas was the only one he knew who could prep a film in 5 days and remarked on their collaborations as one of loving admiration. When Katagas took the stage, he embraced Gray and turned to Gianopulos and said, “Thanks, Jim for coming down on a Sunday.” Gianopulos didn’t miss a beat, replying, “Thanks for the Oscar!”



Katagas spoke of working with Gray (“It has been great for a decade.”), thanked the LAGFF for their efforts and concluded with, “Cinema makes us all one as humans, regardless of origins and background. And for our colleagues back home in our country: keep at it – it only gets better.”

Steve Nicolaides took home the final honor of the night. “I’m not a good speaker, bear with me,” he began. “Those of us who make movies have to have a great team...I got into the film business because of films that would never get made today, like *Taxi Driver* and *Coming Home*... Now, it’s a whole new-world order. Today we have so much information at our hands...we know everything there is to know about everything – except how to get along with each other. The world is a dangerous place because everybody things everybody is fucking crazy.”

Nicolaides spoke of being adopted in 1948 and being raised in Los Angeles, adding that being honored at the Egyptian coincided with it being the theatre he saw his first film at 9 yrs old, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. He called his producing work on *Boyz N The Hood* “the best experience I’ve had in the industry,” recalling that “police chiefs all over the U.S. asked for copies of the film to further compassion and understanding” of a subculture they’d previously seen as bestial, at best. Nicolaides said he envisions a worrisome future where films won’t even need human beings as actors, “Something that more than a few 2nd AD’s I know would like.” His concluding advice to young filmmakers: “Move us and engage our hearts.”

The LAGFF will return next year, as well as holding events and screenings throughout the rest of this year in various communities in Los Angeles. They’re working with film departments and societies, with Emerson College, LMU, UCLA and USC in the mix. They added they are always glad for new sponsors, in addition to their current slate, and can be found via their updated website LAGFF.org, Facebook page, and on Twitter at [@LAGFF](https://twitter.com/LAGFF)

Full List of LAGFF Orpheus Award Winners:

Best Feature: *Miss Violence*, Directed by Alexandros Avranas

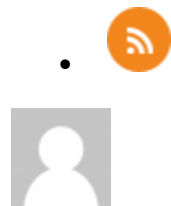
Best Documentary: *Crossed Lives*, Directed by Spyros Teskos

Best Short Film: *Red Hulk*, Directed by Asimina Proedrou

Audience Choice: *Crossed Lives*, Directed by Spyros Teskos

Special Jury Award: *The Eternal Return of Antonis Paraskevas*, Directed by Elina Psykou

Special Jury Mention: *Travel Express*, Directed by Natassa Xydi



By [Karl Gibson](#)

Karl Gibson (Editor, Studio System News) has worked in the Los Angeles media sector for over 15 years. His editorial experience encompasses over 1,400 printed daily, festival and special

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