



JODIE FOSTER

Outstanding Achievement in Acting

It's hard to deny that Jodie Foster is an innately talented actress. The 39-year-old has been gainfully employed in show business since age 3, and she has earned a wealth of accolades for her dramatic efforts, including two best actress Oscars (1988's "The Accused," 1991's "The Silence of the Lambs"). Now, Foster is being honored with the Hollywood Film Festival's Outstanding Achievement in Acting Award. However, as she explained recently to **Todd Longwell** for **The Hollywood Reporter**, she feels more temperamentally suited to be in the director's chair, a spot she has occupied on two notable occasions (1991's "Little Man Tate," 1995's "Home for the Holidays").

The Hollywood Reporter:

Given your early and continued success as actress, one would think that performing comes very naturally to you.

Jodie Foster: I guess so. I've just always wanted to be one of the storytellers on the movie, and acting was the one skill I had. I don't have an actor's personality, and I kind of never have, so I approach things slightly differently than a lot of people do. My head works very, very, very hard; in some ways, that's a liability as an actor, and in other ways, it's a good thing because you play people that are complex and are not just about vomiting their emotions.

THR: What's the difference between Jodie Foster on the set as an actress and Jodie Foster as a director?

Foster: Well, I'm definitely happier as a director or at least less stressed out; a lot of people think that's strange because being a director is supposed to be the most stressful thing you can possibly do. It is tiring, but it's not as stressful. I find performance much more stressful because you never know until you're doing it whether it'll work, so you're always trying to run after and accomplish something that's a very gray area. There's no "it was in focus" or "it was out of focus." I like things to be much more prepared and mathematical — on my end. I like being surprised by other people the way you're surprised by actors when you're a director.

THR: When did you first decide you

dialogue

with Jodie Foster

wanted to direct?

Foster: When I was 6, one of the actors that I was working with on a television series directed one of the episodes I was on. I was just shocked and amazed because I didn't know that actors were allowed to direct. So I thought, Oh, wow! Well, in that case, that's what I'm going to do when I grow up!

THR: You had the ambition even then?

Foster: Absolutely. Then there are all sorts of milestones or clicks that go off in your brain when you start realizing things. I think at 12, when I did "Taxi Driver" (1976), I realized that acting wasn't just sort of acting natural, it was building a character; that had just never occurred to me. I just thought, This is a pretty silly profession because all you really do is read what somebody else wrote and act as natural as possible.

THR: Your directorial debut was actually a 1988 installment of "Tales From the Darkside" ("Do Not Open This Box")?

Foster: I'm credited with that, but the truth is, my friend Bob Balaban knew I wanted to direct, and he very nicely brought me in to co-direct because he was DGA, and I wasn't. It was sort of a "ghost" kind of experience, but I got to be part of everything, from prep all the way



into editing. I realized there wasn't much for me to learn because I had worked long enough and had been paying attention long enough to kind of know everything, except for the editing process, which is very instinctual.

THR: So you didn't go in like a know-it-all and suffer a rude awakening?

Foster: No, just the opposite. I went in being very, very nervous, that somehow this was a mysterious foreign territory, and you realize when you're a part of the creative process — one of 75 people on a movie — that your contribution is just another piece of language. There's a language of props, a language of cinematography, a language of sound. It's just a different language to create this train that's moving on down the tracks.

THR: Do you plan to keep on going back and forth between acting and directing?

Foster: You know, I don't know. I can't imagine that I'll ever stop acting because it's such a huge part of my life. But it's always been a battle for me because I wasn't born to be an actor. I don't lie awake at night thinking, Gosh, I can't wait to act! ■

HFF SCHEDULE

Event highlights and screenings

Oct. 2, 7 p.m. Invitation or VIP pass-only opening-night premiere of "The Ring" at the ArcLight Cinemas, 6360 Sunset Blvd.

Oct. 3, 7 p.m. Invitation or VIP pass-only gala premiere of "My Wife Maurice" at the ArcLight

Oct. 4, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Opening of the HFF information/registration desk at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, 7000 Hollywood Blvd.

For additional information, call (323) 466-7000

Oct. 4, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Hollywood Conference

(running daily through Oct. 6), including the PitchMarket sessions, at the Hollywood Roosevelt. Registration is required.

Oct. 4, 1-11 p.m. Beginning of the Hollywood Film Screenings (running daily through Oct. 6) at the ArcLight. To purchase screening tickets, call (323) 464-1514.

Oct. 6, 1-5:30 p.m. Invitation-only Hollywood Humanitarian Symposium at the ArcLight, chaired by Nobel Prize Laureate Jody Williams

Oct. 6, 7 p.m. Invitation or VIP pass-only closing-

night gala premiere of "Narc" at the ArcLight

Oct. 7, 6-11 p.m. Invitation-only black-tie Hollywood Movie Awards ceremony and dinner at the Beverly Hilton, 9876 Wilshire Blvd. Scheduled presenters include Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz, Danny DeVito, Leonardo DiCaprio, Josh Hartnett, Lucy Liu, Garry Marshall and Matthew McConaughey

For complete details on all HFF events and complete screening schedules, go to www.hollywoodawards.com.