

ANDREW G. VAJNA PRESENTS

# CHILDREN OF GLORY

**Cast:**

Iván Fenyő  
Kata Dobó  
Sándor Csányi  
Károly Gesztesi

**Original Story by:**

Joe Eszterhas

**Writing Credits by:**

Joe Eszterhas  
Eva Gárdos  
Géza Bereményi  
Réka Divinyi

**Co-Producers:**

Clive Parsons  
S. Tamás Zákonyi

**Cinematography by:**

Buda Gulyás

**Production Design by:**

János Szabolcs

**Costume Design by:**

Beatrix Aruna Pásztor

**Original Music by:**

Nick Glennie-Smith

**Producer:**

Andrew G. Vajna

**Directed by:**

Krisztina Goda

**Website:**

[www.szabadsagszerelemafilm.hu](http://www.szabadsagszerelemafilm.hu)

## SYNOPSIS

The year is 1956. While Hungary is only a small slave nation within the massive Soviet Block, it is also a superpower – its national water polo team is invincible. Even locked behind the Iron Curtain, the players feel like kings. Thriving on success and enjoying the attention of every girl in the country, they stand self-assured and unified. The team has lost only once in 1955, when a referee in Moscow simply did not let them win. The team are now bracing themselves for a rematch due to take place at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne.

History, however, throws a major obstacle in team's path, and a revolution breaks out in Budapest and the young star of the team, Karcsi (Iván Fenyő) and his friend, Tibi (Sándor Csányi) get embroiled in the events occurring out on the streets. At first, they are only out for adventure, but a fiery student - Viki Falk (Kata Dobó) - from the Technical University catches Karcsi's eye and in following her steps he finds himself right at the heart of the uprising - the Kossuth square and the subsequent siege of the National Radio station.

This is no longer a game. The revolution sweeps him off his feet and he sacrifices his success in the sporting arena in order to fight for justice. Even though he is forced to let his team down, he finds new and faithful allies, the heroes of the streets. Even more importantly, he finds Viki.

At the end of October, the revolutionaries start to believe that their fight and all they have sacrificed has not been for nothing. Viki convinces Karcsi that it is time for him to return to his team and to represent the new Hungary at the Olympic Games. By the time he realises that the revolution is doomed, there is no turning back. He has no choice but to leave his true love behind and, since he cannot fight anymore, do what he does best in order to bring glory and victory to his country in the pool.

This is how he arrives at the Water Polo semi-finals on 6 December, 1956. While Soviet army T-34 tanks are tearing down barricades in his hometown, the Hungarian players are facing their Soviet opponents in the pool. It is now up to Karcsi and his team mates to show the world that this small nation will not be defeated.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956**

On the 23rd of October, 1956 a peaceful student demonstration formed the origins of a revolution, pitting Hungary against the communist regime and Soviet occupation. Protesters soon turned into freedom fighters and they proved to be successful in resisting the local regular and the occupying Soviet army. Very soon political prisoners were set free, a new, independent government was formed, multi-party rule was re-established and withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact was announced.

All these lasted for a very limited time. The vast Soviet army intervention (with 150,000 troops and 6000 armored vehicles) smashed the resistance, though freedom fighters defended Budapest in the streets from house to house. The multi-divisional offensive had 5000 Hungarian and 700 Soviet victims. Retaliation of the communists followed soon: approximately 12.000 revolutionaries were imprisoned and 300 were executed -- among them the legally elected prime minister. More than two hundred thousand people fled to the west.

The Hungarian revolution had no real chance to win. Nevertheless, this was the first armed uprising in the Eastern Block. It proved that the overwhelming Soviet power can be faced and may be overcome. It proved that no terror whatsoever can erase the notion of freedom. A still and slow process started here that achieved its goals in 1989 with the democratic changes of the communist countries.

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

*While the film was inspired by actual events, they served only as a point of reference. The historical events and locations are real, but the characters are fictitious.*

### THE ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

Andrew G. Vajna, film producer of Hungarian descent, lives and works in the United States, achieved the heights of success in Hollywood, but has never really severed ties with his homeland completely. In 1989, he produced the film **Music Box**, which, like CHILDREN OF GLORY also focuses on Hungarian historical questions; it was based on the screenplay by Joe Eszterhas, directed by Costa Gavras, and the lead actress, Jessica Lange, received an Academy Award nomination for her role in the film. Vajna left Hungary in 1956 at the age of twelve, and has been meaning to pay his respects to the memory of the Revolution through the medium of film for a decade now, but has never quite found a story that he felt was able to capture the spirit of the events in an exciting way.

“1956 was probably the most important turning point of my life,” the producer says of his personal motivation. “If I would have stayed at home, my whole life and career would have been vastly different. My parents sent me off bravely and unselfishly into the world. They gave up everything they had achieved here at home for the sake of a twelve year-old boy. I crossed the border alone; they followed 2 weeks later, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December. Coincidentally, December 6<sup>th</sup>, the day I set off from Hungary, was the same day the Hungarian water polo team fought its vicious battle with the Soviet team in the semi-finals in Melbourne. While personal experiences were a determining factor, I see now even as an adult: that particular month played an important role in the history of this little country. After all, we were the first to fight an armed battle against the Soviets, and perhaps in a small way, the long process which finally led to the collapse of the Communist regime thirty years later began then, thus contributing to the transformation of modern Europe. I want young Hungarian people to be proud of their country’s past, and I hope this film will help them to spiritually experience all that their grandparents went through.”

As referenced previously, Vajna had been preparing to adapt the topic for a long time, but the answer to the question of what form this visual experience might take was only made clear much later. In the end, the film **Miracle** provided the inspiration.

“The basis for CHILDREN OF GLORY was two parallel historical events: the Olympics in Melbourne, which took place at the same time as the outbreak and failure of the Revolution,” explains Andy Vajna. “*Miracle* served to show me that a film about athletes can be uplifting as well as exciting. The rest came out of the long discussions between my friend Joe Eszterhas and me.”

Eszterhas enriched Vajna’s conception with additional dramatic perspectives and it was his idea to incorporate a love story into the overall narrative. The author of the screenplay quickly persuaded the producer that the relationship between the athlete and the university girl would make the connection between the worlds of sport and revolution more personal and emotional. “After lengthy discussions and sequencing, Eszterhas wrote the foundation of the screenplay. I then asked three Hungarian script writers to refine the story,” Vajna says about the initial stage of the film. “We asked Géza Bereményi, Eva Gárdos – with whom we created the film *An American Rhapsody* – and Réka Divinyi.” The final version complete with dialogues was developed by Réka.

“I read the screenplay for the first time around November of 2005,” recalls Réka Divinyi. “Kriszta Goda recommended me to Andy, she was the one who called me, and naturally I said yes without any further questions. You don’t say no to a project like this. I wrote continually from November until the start of the first day of shooting. I even rewrote some sections during the shooting process. So far I had never met a producer who knew so perfectly clearly what he wanted. Andy and Kriszta had me rewrite the dialogues until both of them were satisfied. I’ve never rewritten something so many times before in my life!”

## **BUILDING THE TEAM**

Krisztina Goda, the film’s director, accepted the job in the autumn of 2005. By that time her first film, a comedy *Just Sex and Nothing Else* – which has gone on to great success since then – was completed, but had not yet been premiered.

“Andy asked me to direct the film,” Krisztina says. He had met several directors, Hungarians and Americans alike, he had shown the script to many people in the profession, until finally he decided to give me the job. This film was a real challenge for me, and also an outstanding professional opportunity to test myself on working on a production of this magnitude.”

The producer also remembers arriving to his decision of director after a long search. “I’ve known Krisztina for a long time,” says Vajna, “but I only truly realized what a talented director

she is when I had the chance to see *Just Sex...* sometime before the premiere. I thought a lot about who the ideal partner would be and it wasn't an easy decision, partly because I think this is a difficult, multifaceted film, where the delicate balance between the actors' performance and spectacular action scenes needs to be established and maintained, not to mention the fact that this is a very personal topic for me. As I looked at the list of possible directors over and over again, it finally became apparent that Krisztina was the best person for the job."

From the first moment on, the producer was sure that the film must be Hungarian. Even though he was advised, in the interest of future commercial success, to make the film with American actors in English, he insisted on working in Hungarian locations, with a Hungarian crew and actors. Before the actors were finally chosen, the candidates had to get through several rounds of casting callbacks.

"Over the course of the casting period, Krisztina and I consulted continuously," the producer relates, recalling the events of last year. "Krisztina and I made our decisions together. Though I had met Iván Fenyő previously in Los Angeles, and suggested to him then to take part in the casting of the film. I recommended Kata Dobó to her as well, but she was always going to be part of the production."

Though Iván Fenyő might have felt the contract was a sure thing last November, it turned out that the role demanded serious work on his part. "Andy phoned me while I was still in Los Angeles and told me about the Olympic water polo match of 1956, which, to tell the truth, I had never even heard of until then," reveals Iván Fenyő, who was in America playing a role in Academy Award-winning director Sam Mendes's film *Jarhead*. It was there that the actor received a copy of an early version of the screenplay. "That script differed in many ways from the final version," explains Iván Fenyő, "but even then I knew I had to be in it, because this could turn out to be an excellent film."

However, in order for him to actually play the role of Karcsi, the young star of the Hungarian team, Iván still had to get through two rounds of casting. He took part in screen tests in America, and based on these the director decided that she would like to meet him personally. They finally met in Hungary, and it was only then that the decision was made that the young actor from the Katona József Theater would play Karcsi Szabó.

“My thoughts were occupied primarily by the two leading male roles, the Tibi-Karcsi pair,” the director says. “It was very important for them to find a mutual tone, to complement each other, as well as making us feel that they have been friends for a long time. My colleagues and I called in at least forty young actors for tryouts for the roles of Tibi and Karcsi.”

“When we finished shooting *Just Sex*,” recalls Sándor Csányi, who plays Tibi in the film, “I told Kriszta jokingly, ‘let’s not say goodbye because we’re sure to work together in the future.’ Only I didn’t think we’d be working on our next film so soon.”

While Elia Kazan said that the film was 70% complete when the screenplay and the casting were done, the designated time in which the casting of CHILDREN OF GLORY had to be finished was hardly a few weeks.

“Since we want to release the film on the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution, we didn’t give ourselves too much time for prolonged brooding or hesitation even during the most important work phases; we did everything at an accelerated pace,” describes Krisztina Goda. Choosing and scheduling the numerous actors took two or three weeks at the most.

“Andy and I talked at great lengths about the questions of casting, but he pretty much gave me a free hand.”

Kata Dobó was very serious about her role. She prepared for it with the help of actress Kati Lázár and began rehearsals with the director a few weeks before shooting began. As the first day of shooting approached she spent time with Iván Fenyő, Sándor Csányi, Viktória Szávai and the other key actors every day: the group took the rehearsals as seriously as if they were preparing for a theater premiere. By the time the first day of shooting arrived, the group was already a closely bonded team. “I read several versions of the script, so I was witness to how the characters altered and became clearly chiseled,” the actress says. “The characters became truly fantastic. For me Viki is a dream role; it’s not often that an actress can show so many emotions, complex states, and transformations.”

The decision-making process to choose Viktória Szávai was also no longer than two weeks. The request to come to the casting in December became a contract by the beginning of January. “The production company called me and said that I would have to play Kata Dobó’s friend. I answered that I would gladly give it a shot, and the next day I met Krisztina, with whom I had been acquainted with already for a while. We did a screen test and then sat down to talk, and somehow I felt that I had done well and everything was on a good course.

It was only then that I received the script. After that they sent me each new version of the script and I read through all of them with great enthusiasm. I didn't even care that some of my scenes had been cut in the process."

Zsolt Huszár also accepted the request without thinking twice: he was captivated right away by the short summary of the film. After the very first phone call, Zsolt knew that he would enjoy playing the role immensely. "I'm a little older than the character was originally meant to be," confesses Zsolt Huszár. "During the casting, Krisztina and I discussed how this situation should be utilized instead of masked. This young man is more mature than the others, and when the Revolution breaks out, he becomes a leader of the group for exactly this reason. The solution was obvious: this is Jancsi Gál's third university degree."

Kata Dobó related to her character easily, while Viktória Szávai, the actress portraying her friend, plays a character vastly different from her real personality. "I think that if you are familiar with the events of 1956 and feel the significance of history, it becomes easier to evoke the impulses that spur Viki on," explains Dobó. "If you're impulsive, you want to change things, and won't settle for anything less. You want to do something, and you believe that the actions of one person can make a lot of a difference. These are the basic emotions that sweep Viki into the Revolution, where she is to live through even more than she imagined."

"In contrast, the reason I liked my role is that it is completely different from the type of person I really am," adds Viktória Szávai. "I'm not a revolutionary type. I usually don't stand up to voice my opinions and often stay silent when I know I should be speaking up. In contrast, Eszter – along with her friend Viki – is always among the first to speak out, to assess the situation with great sensibility, and take action. There's no way I could be that way in real life. I envy her courage." As an answer to the question of how she liked the screenplay, the young actress answered: "I basically cried the whole time I was reading it."

"I wasn't sorry I jumped right into the film," says Zsolt Huszár. "In my opinion, I play one of the most exciting roles in the film. Jancsi Gál is a complex figure because even though he is one of the leaders of the Revolution, he is constantly struggling with his doubts. He's not sure how all this will end and has a bad feeling about it, yet he can't say no. In the end, the events slip out of his hands, sweeping him and his friends along with it. His uncertainty and choices become clear in light of this, and that's why it was so exciting to play this role."

Although producer Andy Vajna believes that young filmmakers can create a stir and give the film a new kind of dynamic, he nevertheless asked a number of tried and trusted professionals to also work on the film. In addition to Vic Armstrong and Eva Gardos, this is how Beatrix Aruna Pásztor – the costume designer for *An American Rhapsody* and *Basic Instinct 2* – became part of the production. In *An American Rhapsody* her job was similar: this internationally renowned Hungarian costume designer had to evoke the world of the 1950s.

For Krisztina Goda, teamwork was the most important. “It was an amazing feeling to work with so many talented actors” she says. “Some are very well known, but the audience will get to see a lot of young talent, who up to now did not get too many chances to play in films. What I liked most about directing CHILDREN OF GLORY was the story of the water-polo team.”

## **THE KEY CHARACTERS**

### **VIKI FALK:**

The character of Viki Falk was a real challenge for Kata Dobó, who had up till now mostly applied her talent in the genre of comedy but had been waiting a long time for a similarly broad, dramatic role. “For me, Viki is exactly the type of person I wish I could be,” the actress says. She even dyed her striking red hair a shade lighter for the role. “Viki is the type of person who always speaks her mind, who believes that you can change the world around you. Of course she is sometimes hot headed and rash. She doesn’t hold back when criticizing herself or others around her; she’s got a sharp tongue. But taking into consideration her whole personality, I wish I could be like her. Things she’s experienced in the past make her the way she is: for her there’s no question that the Revolution is the most important thing in the world, because the world she lives in is dreadful.”

### **KARCSI SZABÓ:**

“I think that Karcsi finds himself faced with typical conflicts,” explains Iván Fenyő, who plays the role of the celebrated young member of the Hungarian water polo team. “On the first day of the Revolution he thinks that he should probably continue on with his life as before. He’s afraid of losing his attained privileges and the life he is accustomed to. But as he gets closer to the flame, he becomes more enthusiastic. His conflict is resolved when he chooses the Revolution, but not because of his bravery, but because in taking one step at a time he slowly finds himself in this situation. But once he’s in the midst of it, he really *is* brave. Of course love helps to spur him on, a love he finds during the Revolution.”

## TIBI VÁMOS:

Sándor Csányi plays the role of another water polo player, Karcsi's friend Tibi. "Tibi is more rational than Karcsi," says one of the most popular young actors in Hungary. "While the whole thing is just a game, he takes part in every adventure, but he knows where to draw the line, and attempts to hold his friend back from taking drastic steps. From this perspective, one could say that Tibi is weak and cowardly, but perhaps he is just better equipped with the will to survive. He is surprised by how far Karcsi is willing to go, and at the crucial moment he is not willing to let his friend leave the group."

## HISTORICAL FACT: THE REVOLUTION

In certain respects, making a film about the Revolution of 1956 is easier than making one about any other fictitious story; after all, the participants and witnesses of this event still live among us today. Almost all of the actors and crew had a fair amount of previous knowledge on the topic from older family members. For the makers of this film, the story was much more than just any old, exciting historical event; all of them perfectly understood and felt how directly the events of the past affected and still affect our world today. Nevertheless, this sometimes hindered the effort as the wounds acquired fifty years ago are still not completely healed.

"All of us have our own Revolution of '56," explains Krisztina Goda. "There aren't two historians, who have the same opinion about what happened. Sadly there are a lot of self-proclaimed experts, but the majority of people relate emotionally to 1956. Beside the historical authenticity, we tried to make the film, so that it will grasp people emotionally."

"Over the course of this work, I realized that though we hear so much about '56 these days, in actuality we know very little," the dialogue writer, Réka Divinyi says. "A great revelation for me was that my generation is hardly aware of what really happened then."

Among the actors, Zsolt Huszár is the one who sums it up most resolutely: "We have been taught false history: they tried to get us to believe that '56 was a counter-revolution, while our relatives, older friends, and certain teachers told us something quite different. I was there at Kossuth Square on October 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1989 when the republic was declared. I remembered the delirious rapture we felt in '89 when we were shooting the Kossuth Square scene in the film."

I also recalled all the disappointments that followed that day. Likewise, staggering facts have been revealed about '56 since then.”

“I tried to talk to my grandfather about those times,” adds Kata Dobó, “but unfortunately his memory has faded, and he hardly remembers anything. I felt that he’d rather forget what he *does* remember. So instead I did some research in books and did my best to talk to as many people as I could about their experiences back then.”

For Viktória Szávai, her grandmother was the direct source. “A bullet sailed past a centimeter from my granny’s head. She lived near Pest, and came into the city to visit her girlfriend and got stuck here. She couldn’t or didn’t dare go home for weeks. In my childhood I recall her telling stories about her experiences from those times, and since then I think about the Revolution in the way she remembers it.”

Vic Armstrong, the director of the second unit, responsible for the action scenes, was perhaps the only one who could not rely on personal memories or family stories. He heard about the Revolution of '56 for the first time in connection with the film; hence, he prepared for the film with the help of several hours of history lessons from the producer. He complemented this knowledge with all the documentaries and news broadcasts he could get hold of, in addition to several written accounts of the events.

“My job was to make an action scene be as effective as possible,” says the man who worked together with Andy Vajna previously in the *Terminator* and *Rambo* films. “I generally walk out on location and let the place ‘talk to me.’ I compare it to what’s written down in the script, and then I develop the required method – where to position the cameras, what takes to use and so on. This time my task was a little different than usual. Like always, every frame we shoot has to be captivating, only this time, because we’re talking about a historical film, we had to stick to authenticity as well. Everything that we shot, no matter how breathtaking, had to be something that truly did or might have taken place on the streets of Budapest.”

Based on an 18-year friendship and their collaboration on *Rambo*, *Total Recall*, and *Air America*, producer Andy Vajna considered Vic Armstrong to be the specialist with the ability to direct action scenes for the film that were both authentic and thrilling. “It wasn’t Vic’s job to invent stories. His job was to create realistic situations. In actuality, he devised the action scenes based on documentaries,” the producer explains. “There was no need to enhance reality. What happened in '56 was quite exciting and terrifying on its own: the old photographs and footage show the shelled city. Two hundred tanks burned on the streets of Budapest.”

## **HISTORICAL FACT: WATER POLO**

Maintaining historical authenticity was not the only difficult task when portraying the streets of Budapest and the battles. Reenacting the water polo matches was also especially challenging; these included the 1955 match in Moscow (the only time when the national team lost) and the semi-final in Melbourne. Over the course of the shoot, the actors and the polo players spent 9-10 hours in the pool, in much warmer water of course (though subsequent reports claim that the water never quite reached the desired temperature). The professional training of the actors and the polo players acting in the film was led by Tibor Benedek and Rajmund Fodor, both of whom had to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the topic, since the sport is much different now than it was fifty years ago. Tibor Benedek talked to several members of the national team of 1956 before starting his task.

“These days we use rubber balls. They used leather balls back then,” explains Rajmund Fodor, two-time Olympic team gold medalist and world champion water polo player. “These leather balls acted like sponges, sucking up water over the course of the match and thus becoming much harder to throw. We had special balls made for the film which look like leather, but can be thrown much more easily. After the first few rehearsals we soon realized that even these balls needed to be waxed so everyone could catch them more easily.”

“In addition to this, we had to pay attention to endless small details,” adds Tibor Benedek. “The rules have changed a lot since then. There was no shot-clock, and in addition to the ball, the caps and equipment was also much different than the ones we use now. We did a lot of detailed work and received a lot of help. Rajmi was a great partner, and in the end everything worked out well.”

Nevertheless, the concepts of the director and the screenplay writer were still difficult to carry out. In order to make the matches look truly spectacular, the members of the national team had to become actors in the film. Gergő Kiss played one of the members of the Soviet team. The athlete had lines to learn, and on top of it all, he had to say them in Russian. Of course, his knowledge of water polo was essential. “We had a hard time with one scene,” Kiss recalls. “I had to shoot the goal post really hard. My job was to throw it so as to keep the ball from bouncing back. It had to bounce from the edge of the post down onto the goal line and make the whole goal almost topple over, and all this with a waxed ball, in one move, with my back to the goal with a sudden turn, but in a way that I jump up out of the water, intimidating the poor Hungarian players. Of course, since every move was shot several times, I had to repeat this whole sequence over and over in exactly the same way.”

A few little tricks were still needed to help out the actors playing the polo players. For instance, when Sándor Csányi jumps up out of the water to make a shot, he is really standing on a platform – invisible to the camera – placed on the bottom of the pool. Without the help of this little trick, he would not have been able to act out the sophisticated playing technique that a professional polo player takes years to develop.

Most of the scenes, however, were not made with tricks and stunts. The actors and the water polo players – Bulcsú Székely, Zoltán Szécsi, and Gergely Kiss – acting with them were very serious about their task and learned quite a bit of each other's professions. The athletes appearing in the film had a hard time relaxing between takes and the breaks between scenes: it was a difficult task for them when compared to the strict schedules they are used to. The actors on the other hand, had to take part in practice and physical preparation in addition to lessons in theory, where they learned all the rules, customs, and routines of the game and poolside life.

Possibilities and abilities were assessed at the beginning of the two-month time period. A few scenes had to be re-written based on the reports of the coaches, Benedek and Fodor. In accordance, the training plan had to follow changes in the script. For example, in the original version, Krisztián Kolovratnik was to play the goal-keeper of the Hungarian team, but in the end he plays center. The coaches had to teach him new things at the last minute.

“This can only happen on film,” laughs Benedek. “In real life there's no way a goal-keeper becomes a center in two weeks. But we were given the task, and we began Krisztián's new training, and he really did learn his new position at record speed. I really envy him for the ease at which he managed to do it.”

For Iván Fenyő, training four days a week wasn't very demanding. He had been playing sports regularly since he was a child, trying out almost all fields. Even now he always makes time to exercise. If he had a little free time during the filming, he went swimming or jogging. “Working with the Olympic champion team was an unforgettable experience,” he says, and hopes the relationship between them will not end with their mutual work on the film. He plans to organize an actors' water polo team. Krisztián Kolovratnik, Kornél Simon, and Antal Czapkó have already signed up. Other members of the film's polo team have also promised to join the team in the future if their schedules permit it, proof of the good time they had during shooting.

“I never wanted to be an athlete in my life,” says Sándor Csányi, revealing his skeptical side. “Of course, I never wanted to be a fireman or a cowboy either. I was too preoccupied by dreaming about the theater. So I wasn’t too surprised when I found out that we would be working with polo players. I considered this to be a role for which I prepared and learned what I had to. Slowly it turned out that our polo partners are good guys, and it was great to work with them – meaning soaking in the pool!”

Antal Czapkó plays a member of the Soviet team in the film. He used to play a lot of sports too when he was younger, so it was easy for him to find a common language with the athletes. “I had a good time in the water, primarily because I had a chance to get out of the theater and work with tough athletes, who, I must admit, are more open and candid than we actors are. I’ve always been a fan of water polo, so it was an amazing feeling to play and work with Olympic champions, legendary sportsmen. We worked together with the Zidanes of water polo: world-class athletes.”

“We were very cautious when we first met the actors,” recalls Rajmund Fodor. “We didn’t know how we would be able to work together. By the end we became good friends. They didn’t tear us to pieces, and we didn’t either.”

Czapkó had to learn other things in addition to the tricks of the polo trade. He had to study the Russian language too. “At the beginning of shooting, Kriszta gave me a CD, on which my lines were read by a Russian man. I had to learn the lines and pronunciation based on this. Unfortunately, one month isn’t enough time to learn perfect Russian, but I did my best. The rest we’ll fix up in sound post-production.”

After much consideration, Andy Vajna, the producer, decided that though the screenplay was factual in every sense, the actors should not play the actual members of the former team. The characters in the script now are much more due to the imagination of the script-writers, than the visualization of the actual people.

From this perspective, ours is a fictitious story played by fictional characters, with honest respect for everything the real team accomplished in 1956,” says the producer.

## CREATING FACT ON FILM

An often mentioned cliché of the profession is that making a historical film is one of the most difficult tasks. Naturally, Budapest has changed immensely over the past fifty years; the locations have become altered, more buildings have been erected, old ones have been renovated, billboards, lamp posts, and electric wires fill up spaces around them. One of the most important locations of the story, the Crystal Palace – the swimming and water polo stadium of the Melbourne Olympics – has been torn down. The task was further encumbered by the fact that the events which took place in October and November were shot from March through the end of May: when shooting began it began to snow, but later spring set in, the trees sprouted leaves and the city became green.

However, the crew pressed on in spite of the difficulties. Every single scene, including some that take place in Australia and Moscow, was shot in Hungary. The Soviet-Hungarian semi-final match and the scene where the victorious Hungarian team sings the national anthem was shot at the BVSC stadium on Szőnyi Avenue while the scene that took place in Moscow was shot in the indoor area of the pool on Margaret Island.

The “foreign” locations were designed by Hungarian professionals. Only the pool and the players were used from the footage shot in Budapest; part of the grandstand was digitally expanded, and the structure of the building was also digitally replaced with a model constructed on computer. When watching the film in theaters, probably no one will recognize the original locations.

The majority of the scenes takes place on the streets of Budapest and were all shot at the original locations: Kossuth Square, Bródy Sándor Street in front of the Radio building, the Technical University, Margaret Bridge, the area of the statue of Bem, and the Alfréd Hajós Swimming Pool all appear in the film. Cinematographers János Vecsernyés, Buda Gulyás, and the film’s effects designer were able to recreate a perfect replica of how things used to look. Small mistakes that ended up on film were filtered out on the editing machine. Over the course of the 50-day shoot, the crew worked on 23 locations.

According to János Szabolcs, the film’s set designer, it is still easy to shoot a film about events that took place fifty years ago: there are enough areas and streets that are in bad enough shape to make the work of the set builders and dressers fairly simple. Only a few modern innovations, such as air conditioners, had to be covered, and the illusion was complete.

“We didn’t want to substitute the main locations with any other locations or film them in a studio. We wanted to shoot the scenes of historical importance in their original locations at all costs,” says Andy. “The rest of the locations were chosen by Kriszta and the set designer; the most I did was look at photographs or accompany them and consent to their choices. I trusted their choices and in hindsight I see that I was right to do so.” In the end, the scenic artists constructed seventy different backgrounds for the various scenes. Building twenty five to thirty of these required serious, considerable work.

Original implements of battle appeared in the original locations. Six contemporary T-34 tanks and two armored vehicles appear in CHILDREN OF GLORY: these were delivered one at a time to the location of next day’s shooting the night before on a huge trailer.

Of course historical accuracy must be upheld to the tiniest detail: more than five-thousand costumes were sewn or bought for the forty-two actors and seven hundred extras appearing in the film. The actors who played walk-on parts (e.g. the Democratic Youth Organization university student) received two sets of clothing, while main characters received five to six sets of everything. Iván Fenyő had five sweaters and six trench coats made, while Kata Dobó’s wardrobe assistant appeared on location with several quilted jackets so work would not come to a standstill if her costume became dirty or damaged.

“Some clothes were loaned to us by museums, and the rest we had made or found at various antique markets,” explains Beatrix Pásztor, who admits that she enjoys hunting for clothes mostly at second-hand shops. “Of course the athletes were given contemporary swimming caps, bathing suits, warm-up clothes, and bathrobes. Even the slippers they had matched the styles back then.”

The props team managed to get hold of fifty functioning and several hundred non-functioning weapons to use for the street battle scenes.

“There was a moment when I felt uneasy,” admits Viktória Szávai. “You get this fear that the details will be lost in a production of such enormity. Happily, I experienced quite the opposite. There was someone whose job was to watch every last detail. So you felt safe knowing that everyone was focusing on their own job. I am absolutely amazed by teamwork.”

The script writer had a similar experience when visiting the set.

“The filming of the Technical University scene was incredible. It was an unbelievable feeling to see so many extras in contemporary clothes on location. It was like traveling back in time.

My parents, or rather, my mother, told me a lot of stories about that day, since she lived in the neighborhood and knows quite a few stories about the October events and the university students. On that day of shooting, I felt like I had walked straight into the world of her memory,” says Réka Divinyi.

Part of the preparation for the actors was training for battle scenes.

“Before the shooting began we went to a hangar in Fót, where we could practice all day. The main idea was to get the feel of what it’s like to shoot a gun,” Kata Dobó explains. “It was here that I chose which gun would be mine. I used the same one throughout the whole film. A machine-gun with a large capacity magazine was the one that worked best for me, which is interesting, because this is the weapon that most of the revolutionaries had, because that’s what they could get from the army. It was easy to handle, but of course it was a very bizarre feeling to point it at someone, even if it was only loaded with blanks. We didn’t have any special training otherwise; we weren’t going to play action heroes but people who had also only held weapons in their hands for the first time, like us. The people on the street in 1956 didn’t have time to prepare. If you got hold of a weapon, you grabbed it and used it.”

Viktória Szávai also took part in the weapons testing. “In general, it went pretty quickly. We went out to the hangar with Kata and Iván and I tried out the guns to see which one suited us the best. It was a little scary, but we enjoyed ourselves anyway.”

Zsolt Huszár remembers the action scenes with great enthusiasm. “This is something you never experience in the theater: a speeding Csepel truck, exploding cars, flaming tanks, weapons... Sometimes we really felt like we were right there, experiencing with body and soul all that happened in ’56. I had a great time.”

“In one scene I have to knock Iván out,” Csányi explains. “We had a lot of tough scenes on the streets and in the pool, but I was most nervous about this scene. I couldn’t imagine that I could pretend to whack him hard enough to knock him out and have it look authentic. But I don’t think anyone will complain if they see the end result. Except Iván: I really did hurt him.”

All the actors in the film agreed that even though they were surrounded by technical and security people, weapons and pyrotechnical experts, their adrenaline levels shot sky high while shooting an action scene, just as if they were really involved in a street battle.

“When we were shooting at the Russians from behind a half-demolished building, for example, and then running from a tank that broke through an intact wall, I didn’t have to act,” recalls Viktória Szávai. “All I could think about was not being in the wrong place at the wrong time: surviving the next few seconds.”

Though his reasons are different, Vic Armstrong remembers this scene as one of his favorites too. “We shot one of my favorite scenes in March. I began my work in the film with the scene where the heroine, Viki (Kata Dobó) and her partners, among them Eszter (Viktória Szávai), try to escape from their hiding place. We did a lot of explosions and open fire. It was a very spectacular scene and I hope it’ll be the same on screen. My other favorite is a scene we shot on the very last day with Kata, when the Soviet troops break into her house and look for her and other survivors.”

Obviously there are situations that cannot be, or aren’t worth filming in the traditional way with a camera. These days, no film is made without the help of subsequent digital modifications. CGI technology had an especially important role in the final shaping of CHILDREN OF GLORY. This method helped Wolfgang Petersen create the breathtaking fleet of Greek ships in *Troy*, and aided Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Terminator 3*, to mention only a few. Digid Pictures, the Hungarian team of international fame, was commissioned to complete the post-production work, using their self-developed system for the task.

By the time shooting began, each member of the crew knew which details would require the help of the computer specialists. Digid Pictures created three-dimensional, moving diagrams, animated storyboards, so-called previsualizations, and were present at the shooting as well. They took endless pictures of each required shot; for the shot of the demonstration at Bem Square they even took photos from a helicopter. They digitalized the filmed sections and created 2048x1556 pixel pictures, which are seven times better than that of a TV screen. This became the raw material of their work. Since there could not have been as many extras at Kossuth Square or Bem Square as there were at the time of the original event, the crowd was added virtually.

“We created numerous virtual extras in 3D for the crowd scenes,” explains Gábor Marinov, FX supervisor. “We took several hundred photographs of contemporary props, costumes, and extras with characteristic features and physique. Based on the pictures we created the computer replicas of flags, signs, and pieces of clothing along with 3D people of varying shapes and features. They fill in the crowd. In the scene on Bem Square, when we get a bird’s eye-view of the events, the buildings and plants aren’t real either. This shot is entirely computer generated.”

The mixture of close-ups shot onto film material and computer animations was able to create a crowd of several tens of thousands if required; these could then be applied in almost any direction and light. Luckily the cinematographer of the second unit, Buda Gulyás is well acquainted with computer technology, so he was able to make sure that Digid Pictures did not have to face any subsequent unpleasant surprises.

To keep up the authenticity in the film, several effects were inserted that will seem natural to the viewers at first glance. The red star above the dome of the Parliament or Kossuth Bridge spanning across the Danube all praise the talents of the digital specialists.

## **THE TEAM COMES TOGETHER**

Filming CHILDREN OF GLORY was a real feat for the director, producer, actors, and crew, sometimes numbering 600. The result of the intensive collaboration was that by the time the work ended, the team became a closely-linked troupe. Work progressed on a tight schedule; deadlines were sacred and unalterable. The dates of the gala premiere and the dangerously oncoming spring had to be kept in mind constantly.

János Szabolcs and his team were constantly struggling with short deadlines; nevertheless the set designer was able to develop amiable work relationships. “One of the most memorable locations we built,” recalls the set designer, “was the headquarters on Nagyteplom Street where the heroines Eszter and Viki hide. I remember this fondly not only because we were able to complete quality work quickly, but also because that was the day that Vic Armstrong joined us. We pushed ourselves to the limits to be able to show him what we were capable of. He turned out to be an excellent partner. He saw right away that we were masters of our profession, and from then on he trusted us completely. It was great working with him.”

Kata Dobó has known Sándor Csányi for 8 years. They met at the Academy of Theater and Film. “We’re not part of each others’ every day lives, but if things work out that way or if we work together, we’re able to pick up right where we left off. I love his sense of humor and know that acting means everything to him; his mind works fast and you can learn a lot from him.” Kata Dobó worked with Iván Fenyő, however, for the first time. “I consider Iván one of the most talented actors of his age-group. He was able to focus on his scenes 100%. But they’re not the only ones who are important to me. I made a lot of friends in the past few months. Time will tell if these friendships will last.”

Viktória Sávai reinforces the words of Kata Dobó. “This was a great team. I became close friends with Kata and Zsolt, and there are quite a few others I hold dear to my heart. According to the story, we revolutionaries all attended the Technical University together, and after a while I felt like we really had known each other for years.”

“Kata and I have been pals since our auditions to the Academy,” says Csányi, “but by now I think of the whole cast as I would of long-time, close friends. I’m sure these feelings will fade with time as we become involved in new work. Nevertheless, I’m still happy I was able to be a part of the film, if only for this reason.”

In addition to his co-actors, Iván Fenyő became good friends with the director too. “It feels like we’ve always worked together,” he says. “This is the first time we’ve worked together, but we found a common language from day one. Luckily, this doesn’t just pertain to work; we really became good friends.”

Zsolt Huszár had only previously worked with Sándor Csányi in an examination performance at the Academy. He remembers their work in the film saying, “The cast, without make-up, really was fantastic! I became very fond of those I worked with directly. Special thanks to Balazs, the make-up artist, who endured my hyperactivity for 21 days with infinite patience.” Kata Dobó gladly remembers working with Krisztina Goda too: “She instructs her actors with mastery. She knows how to bring out your maximum performance, things you never thought you were capable of! I’d work with Krisztina again without a second thought. Shooting this film was a real challenge, and I can only hope that my character will be honest and authentic.”

“We got along very well,” says Viktória Szávai about her work with the director. “Kriszta isn’t hard to get along with anyway. She’s great to work with. She’s intelligent, precise, and knows exactly how to handle the actors. She had to pay attention to a thousand things at once, yet I never felt her abandon us for a single moment.”

The essence is summed up most perfectly by the director: “This was an important period in my professional development. I learned a lot, I worked together with fantastic professionals, and last, but not least I made a few true friends.”

Shooting this film was a beautiful time in my life, which doesn’t mean it was easy. Quite the contrary. But I learned a great number of things and came into contact with excellent individuals. Over the course of working together we truly became very good friends. Perhaps more mutual work lies in store for us in the future.”

## FILM-MAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**ANDREW G. VAJNA** (Producer), one of the motion picture industry's most experienced and dedicated executives, is an expert in the financing, development and marketing of films for worldwide audiences. Vajna launched his career in the entertainment industry with his purchase of motion picture theatres in the Far East. He founded Panasia Films Limited in Hong Kong, a highly profitable venture in the distribution, acquisition and representation of films. After Vajna negotiated the sales of Panasia to Raymond Chow's Golden Harvest Company in 1976, he and Mario Kassar formed Carolco, specializing in sales, financing and distribution of films worldwide. In less than four years, Carolco became one of the top three foreign sales organizations in motion pictures.

In 1982, Vajna was a founder and then president of the American Film Marketing Association. During that same year, Vajna and Kassar made their film production debut with "First Blood." Starring Sylvester Stallone, "First Blood" became a phenomenal success, grossing \$120 million internationally. It also rocketed Carolco into the forefront of independent production companies. "Rambo: First Blood Part II" was released in 1985, generating more than \$300 million worldwide, making it one of the most profitable films in the history of moviemaking.

Vajna was executive producer with Mario Kassar on such films such as Alan Parker's "Angel Heart," and "Rambo III." Other projects include "Music Box," "Mountains of the Moon," "Total Recall," "Air America," "Narrow Margin" and "Jacob's Ladder."

In December 1989, Vajna sold all his interest in Carolco and formed Cinergi Productions, Inc. Cinergi Productions, Inc. was founded in December 1989 by Andrew G. Vajna to engage in the financing, development, production and distribution of major event motion pictures. As part of its business plan, Cinergi has formed an alliance with The Walt Disney Company for distribution of Cinergi motion pictures in the United States, Canada and Latin America. Vajna's strategy is to develop long-term relationships with certain talent and produce a steady supply of two to four event motion pictures per year.

John McTiernan directed Cinergi's first production, "Medicine Man," starring Oscar winner Sean Connery. Christmas 1993 saw the release of "Tombstone," the Wyatt Earp/Doc Holiday legend starring Kurt Russell, Val Kilmer, and directed by George Cosmatos. In 1994, Cinergi released "Renaissance Man," starring Danny DeVito and directed by Penny Marshall and "Color of Night," starring Bruce Willis and Jane March, directed by Academy Award nominee director Richard Rush. The summer of 1995 saw the release of two Cinergi productions. The first was "Die Hard With A Vengeance" which is the third installment of the highly successful

“Die Hard” series. The film stars Bruce Willis, Jeremy Irons and Samuel Jackson and was directed by John McTiernan. To date, the film has grossed over \$365 million worldwide. The second summer release was “Judge Dredd” starring Sylvester Stallone and directed by Danny Cannon. Also in 1995, Cinergi released two more highly anticipated films. The first was “The Scarlet Letter” starring Demi Moore, Gary Oldman and Robert Duvall. Based on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s story of an illicit love in Puritan New England, the film was directed by two-time Academy Award nominee Roland Joffe. Next to be released was “Nixon” starring Anthony Hopkins as the beleaguered president. The film chronicles the life and controversial career of Richard M. Nixon and was directed by Academy Award winner Oliver Stone. “Nixon” was released in December and received four academy award nominations. Another Cinergi release, “Evita” starring Madonna and Antonio Banderas, won the Golden Globe for Best Picture of 1996. Alan Parker directed the story of Evita Peron, the wife of Argentina’s former dictator Juan Peron.

In 1998, Andrew Vajna took Cinergi private by buying out the public stockholders. Thereafter, he reteamed with his former partner, Mario Kassar. Their first venture into big budget Hollywood fare again was “I, Spy” starring Eddie Murphy and Owen Wilson. In 2003 they produced a film again that is the kind of movie they are so well known for: “Terminator 3 – Rise of the Machines” with Arnold Schwarzenegger was a mega budget action adventure and became a world wide box office success. In 2005 Andy Vajna was – together with Quentin Tarantino and Lucy Liu – the executive producer of a feature length documentary called “Freedom’s Fury” created by Colin Keith Gray and Megan Raney Aarons which showed his renewed interest in the story of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956.

### **KRISZTINA GODA (Director)**

Graduated in film directing at the National Film and Television School in England, and later, as an HBO’s scholarship holder, she studied screenwriting at UCLA in the U.S. In England, the United States, and Hungary she directed several award-winning commercials, worked on sit-coms and serials. **Playtime** (*Játékidő*, 1985) and **Car Story** (*Autós történet*, 1986) were her directorial debuts in 1995, followed by the television film **Croatian Syndrome** (*Horvát szindróma*) in 2000. **Just Sex And Nothing Else** (*Csak szex és más semmi*) (2005) was her first main feature film as director, and she also co-wrote it with Réka Divinyi. The film became the most popular Hungarian comedy of 2006, more than 430 000 people have watched it since its premier.

Krisztina also tried her hand in theatrical directing, putting David Auburn's Proof on the stage at Merlin International Theater Budapest. In 2006 she and Réka Divinyi jointly received the Best Original Script Award at the 37th Hungarian Film Week.

### **JOE ESZTERHAS (Screenplay/Screenwriter)**

Eszterhas was born on 23 November in 1944 in Csákánydoroszló (western Hungary). He was 6 years old when he moved to Cleveland with his family. He graduated at Cathedral Latin High School and started to be engaged in writing. He inherited his love for words from his father who was the author of more than 30 historical novels (in Hungarian). His articles appeared in Rolling Stone magazine as well, and wrote about films into Cleveland Plain Dealer, which was the first step in his movie career. In 1975, his non-fiction book "Charlie Simpson's Apocalypse" was nominated for the National Book Award. He wrote his first story for the screen, F.I.S.T. in 1978. The movie, which was helmed by Norman Jewison, starred Sylvester Stallone, Rod Steiger and Peter Doyle. This was followed by **Flashdance** in 1983, which he co-scripted with Thomas Hedley Jr. His list of stories and screenplays has 15 other entries and he is also the author of a number of highly successful books, among them **American Rhapsody**, which tells the "tale" of the liaison between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky.

Eszterhas has been credited with Andy Vajna a number of times. They first worked together on **Music Box** in 1989, which was followed by the hit **Basic Instinct**, which brought real fame and success for Eszterhas. The sequel to the story was conceived by him and Vajna in 2006. Eszterhas was paid 3 million US dollars for the screenplay of **Basic Instinct**, which was an unusually large amount of money at that time. He started working on the script for **Children of Glory** in 2004. He wrote the original script, which was adapted and spun around by his Hungarian peers.

### **ÉVA GÁRDOS (Editing /Screenplay)**

She arrived to the United States as a Red Cross refugee and learned the trade under the wings of such magnificent professionals as Hal Ashby or Francis Ford Coppola. She ended up a much sought after editor in the business. She took part in the making of the following productions: **Bastard Out of California**, **Agnes Browne**, **Barfly**, **Valley Girl**, **Mask**, **Under The Cherry Moon** and **Out of Order** (*A miniszter félrelép*). For her work in HBO-produced Murderers Among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story she won the Cable ACE award (an award to honour excellence in American cable television programming).

Gárdos' latest work was **In the Time of the Butterflies**, which starred Salma Hayek. Gárdos debuted as a director in 2002, when Andrew G. Vajna executive produced **An American Rhapsody**. The film, which was based on her own, award-winning screenplay, had Nastassja Kinski and Scarlett Johansson in the leading roles.

### **GÉZA BEREMÉNYI (Screenwriter)**

Writer, screenwriter, lyrics-writer, film-director, stage-director. He is the art director of the Sándor Hevesi Theatre in Zalaegerszeg, and also the life member of the theatre. He graduated in Hungarian and Italian from the Lóránd Eötvös University, and in that year he also published his first book **The Swedish King** (*A svéd király*), which contained short-stories. His first novel, **The Legendarium** (*A legendárium*) was published in 1977. In the early 70s, he met Tamás Cseh, and they wrote many legendary songs together, which were played only in underground clubs, and were only published in

1978. These songs have become legendary amongst many generations. The same happened to many of the films, which were written by him, like **Time Stands Still** (*Megáll az idő*, 1981), **The Great Generation** (*A nagy generáció*, 1985), **Meteo** (*Meteo*, 1989). He also achieved success and received many awards with his own movies, which were both written and directed by him. Movies like **The Disciples** (*Tanítványok*, 1985), **The Midas Touch** (*Eldróadó*, 1989), **On Tour** (*Turné*, 1993) and **The Bridgeman** (*Hídember*, 2002). He received the Attila József Award in 1984, the Béla Balázs Award in 1989 and the Kossuth Award in 2001. With **The Midas Touch** he received the Award of the Film Critics and the Main Prize of The Hungarian Film Week in 1989. He also won 'The Best European Film Award' with the same film.

### **RÉKA DIVINYI (Screenwriter)**

Divinyi graduated from stage scriptwriting at the University of Film and Drama in 1999/2000. She made her trial at Új Színház where she turned up as an assistant in *Woyzeck*. During the University she wrote the script of the TV-film *Szerencsi fel!* and the serials **Among Friends** (*Barátok közt*). After graduating in 2000 she presented her play (as a writer) *Prince Árgyélus and Tündérszép Ilona* at Theatre Zsigmond Móricz. During the year of 2005 she was an assistant at performance *Prince Rigócsőr* at Theatre Gyula Gózon and she also wrote the screenplay of **Just Sex And Nothing Else** (*Csak szex és más semmi*, 2005) with Gábor Heller and Krisztina Goda, who was the director of the movie. So, **Children of Glory** (*Szabadság, Szerelem*) is their second film together. In 2006 she and Krisztina Goda jointly received the Best Original Script Award at the 37th Hungarian Film Week. Divinyi also took part in other movies like **Argo** (*Argó*, 2004) as a scriptwriter and **Young, dumb and full of love** (*Tibor vagyok, de hódítani akarok*, 2006) as a screenwriter.

### **NICK GLENNIE-SMITH (Music Composer)**

Glennie-Smith is a composer and conductor who is mainly known as film-music composer. He took part in famous movies from the early '80s like *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is dead* or *The Lion King*, but his first success was *The Rock* (directed by Michael Bay) where he was Hans Zimmer's assistant as a composer, conductor and music producer. Besides, he took part in several big hits, like the action movie, *Con Air* or in the second part of the biggest hits of recent times, *Pirates of the Caribbean*. As a chief composer he made the music for *A Sound of Thunder*, *Laura Stern* or *We Were Soldiers*. Glennie-Smith is also known as the master composer of the music in the French theme park *Le Puy de Fou*.

### **JÁNOS SZABOLCS (Production Designer)**

For several years Szabolcs worked for the most important and most tarnished firm, Mafilm Szenika. It has had a Design Studio and Janos Szabolcs worked there. Nowadays he is a freelancer. He designed the set for the **Close to Love** (*Közel a szerelemhez*) in 1999, **Jadвига's Pillow** (*Jadвига párnája*) in 2000, **Gold City** (*Aranyváros*) in 2001, *Mix* in 2004 and *Stammbuch* in 2005.

Szabolcs was one of the Art Directors on Steven Spielberg's **Munich** (*München*) in 2005, on a series of well-respected short movies (**Táltosember vs. Ikarus**, **They** (*Ők*)) and on the Cannes Film Festival-

nominated **Virus** (*Vírus*). He is also a regular collaborator on a number of successful television productions.

### **BEATRIX ARUNA PÁSZTOR (Costume Designer)**

Pásztor was born on 2 March in 1958. Her first American debut as a costume designer was Gus Van Sant's **The Drugstore Cowboy** in 1989. She has worked with Matt Dillon, Kelly Lynch and Heather Graham. She was the costume designer on the following movies: **My Own Private Idaho** (1991), **Good Will Hunting** (1997), **Wonder Boys** (2000). In 2004, Pásztor worked on both **Vanity Fair** and also the remake of **Alfie** with Jude Law. Pásztor has worked with Andy Vajna on a number of projects including Eva Gardos's **An American Rhapsody** and **Basic Instinct 2**.

### **BUDA GULYÁS (Cinematographer)**

After graduating from the University of Film and Drama, Gulyás was cinematographer on many successful Hungarian movies, TV-films and commercial as well as a Visual and Special FX-techniques supervisor. Gulyás was the special effects supervisor on two of the most successful Hungarian movies in recent times, the **Fateless** (*Sorstalanság*) and **Bridgeman** (*Hídember*). From the late '70's, he was the cinematographer on many popular Hungarian TV-series such as **In Uniform** (*Angyalbőrben*) and **Private Cop** (*Privát kopó*). Gulyás was also involved in **A három testőr Afrikában** and **Just Sex and Nothing Else** (*Csak szex és más semmi*).

### **VIC ARMSTRONG (Action Unit Director, Stunt co-ordinator)**

Victor Monroe Armstrong, the world's most famous stunt co-ordinator and action sequence director, was born on 5 October 1946 in Farnham Common, England. According to the Guinness Book of Records, he is the world's most prolific stunt double. He doubled in the saddle for Gregory Peck in **Arabesque** in 1966 and also for Sean Connery in the dangerous scenes of **You Only Live Twice** in 1967. Since then, Armstrong has completed stunt work on more than 50 movies, doubling for Harrison Ford in the **Indiana Jones** series among others. He also took part in the shooting of **Superman**, **Brazil** and several James Bond films.

Armstrong received his first assignment as a stunt co-ordinator in 1979 in British-Canadian adventure movie, **Bear Island**. Since then he has been picked 2<sup>nd</sup> unit director in over 40 films. He directed the opening sequence of **Terminator 2 – Judgement Day** and his unique vision is manifested in the action sequences of **Red Sonja** (1985), **Total Recall** (1990), **Universal Soldier** (1992), **The Last Action Hero** (1993), **Tomorrow Never Dies** (1997), **The World is Not Enough** (1999), **Charlie's Angels** (2000), **Die Another Day** (2002), **War of the Worlds** (2005) and **Mission: Impossible 3** (2006), just to name a few. Armstrong won the Technical Achievement Academy Award in 2001 "for the refinement and application to the film industry of the Fan Descender for accurately and safely arresting the descent of stunt persons in high freefalls." His wife, two sons and a daughter also work in the field of stunts.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### IVÁN FENYŐ (Karcsi Szabó)

Iván Fenyő was born on June 15, 1979 in Budapest, Hungary. He graduated from the Budapest Academy of Film and Drama in 2003, taught by Gábor Máté and István Horvai. He is a member of Budapest's prestigious József Katona Theater.

Fenyő's theatrical roles include Moliere's Tartuffe, Dostoyevsky's The Idiot, Chekhov's Ivanov and Platonov, Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream or contemporary playwright Péter Eszterházy's She loves me (*Egy nő*).

Fenyő made his film debut in Péter Gothár's 2003 film **Hungarian Beauty** (*Magyar szépség*), and in 2004 he appeared in Krisztina Deák's movie **Who the Hell's Bonnie and Clyde?** (*A miskolci boniésklájd*). In 2005 Sam Mendes gave him the role of Pinko in his war movie **Jarhead**. During the shooting Ivan developed a good relationship with the English born director and now he is considering pursuing his acting career in the U.S. He also stars in the new Hungarian movie **Pumpheads** (*Kútfejek*, 2006) directed by Iván Kapitány.

### KATA DOBÓ (Viki Falk)

Kata Dobó was born on February 25, 1974 in Budapest, Hungary. As a child, she lived with his parents in the former Soviet Union (Kiev, Ukraine) for three years. Later she studied in a bilingual secondary school (Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Gimnázium) and speaks Russian fluently.

She landed her first role in the Hungarian hit teen series **The Immature** (*Éretlenek*), and a film on TV called **Rose and Violet** (*Rózsa és Ibolya*), but it was **Out of Order** (*A miniszter félrelép*) in 1997 that brought her fame and nationwide recognition. In the film she co-starred with such renowned Hungarian actors as Róbert Koltai, András Kern and Sándor Gáspár, and it became one of Hungary's highest grossing comedies ever. The same year she also started her acting studies at the Budapest Academy of Film and Drama. In 1998 Dobó re-teamed with actor/director Róbet Koltai in his new movie **Mr. However** (*Ámbár tanár úr*) (1998). The action comedy **Europa Express** (*Európa Expressz*) was Kata's last film shot in Hungary before she moved to Los Angeles in 1999.

In her new homeland, Dobó continued her drama studies under famous acting coach Larry Moss, who coached the Academy Award winning star Hillary Swank and Helen Hunt amongst other famous Hollywood stars. Later she went to Jack Stehlin's Circus Theatricals, where she appeared in several Chekhov plays, and also took the Shakespeare-course.

On the big screen, Dobó's credits include such projects as Robert De Niro's **15 Minutes** (2000), **An American Rhapsody** (2001) directed by Éva Gárdos and John McTiernan's sci-fi action film **Rollerball** (2002). In 2003 she played Steven Seagal's on-screen wife in the action movie **Out for a Kill**, and on TV she also appeared in an episode of CBS's popular series **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation** as Chloe Samms.

In 2005 she starred in Goda Krisztina's immensely popular comedy **Just Sex And Nothing Else** (*Csak szex és más semmi*). In 2006 he will also be seen in the upcoming projects **Basic Instinct 2** and **Blood and Chocolate** with Oliver Martinez.

She is a devoted advocate and supporter of the Hungarian Hospice Foundation.

### **SÁNDOR CSÁNYI (Tibi Vámos)**

Sándor Csányi was born on December 19, 1975. Studied at a technical school but his main interest was drama and later he began acting in minor roles at the Csíky Gergely Theater in Kaposvár, Hungary. Eventually he succeeded in going on to the Budapest Academy of Film and Drama, where he went to the class of László Marton. After earning his diploma he joined the Chalk Circle Theater and then the Radnóti Theater in his native town of Budapest.

Csányi's screen roles include Ágnes Incze's **I Love Budapest**, **Jadвига's Pillow** (*Jadвига párnája*) (1999) directed by Krisztina Deák, Kornél Mundruczó's **Desire I Have None** (*Nincsen nékem vágyam semmi*), [uristen@menny.hu](mailto:uristen@menny.hu) directed by Zoltán Kálmánchelyi and Angéla Stefanovics, Nimród Antall's **Control** (*Kontroll*), **Stop Mother Theresa!** (*Állítsátok meg Terézanyut!*) directed by Péter Bergendy, **The Porcelain Doll** (*A porcelánbaba*) and **The Real Santa** (*Az igazi mikulás*) directed by Péter Gárdos, and **Paths of Light** (*A fény ösvényei*) from Attila Mispál. Recently he starred in one of last year's hit comedies **Just Sex And Nothing Else** (*Csak szex és más semmi*) also directed by Krisztina Goda, and he played the main role of the latest film, **Relatives** (*Rokonok*), of the world famous director István Szabó.

During his career Csányi has collected several prestigious accolades: Comet Award (*Üstökös-díj*) from the Hungarian daily *Népszabadság* (2001), Sűgő Csiga Award (2004, 2006) and the Hungarian Film Critics Award as Best Actor for his performance in **Control** (2005). The same year the latter film also won him a Best Actor Fringe Report Award and the Order of Merit of the Hungarian Republic, and he also got an Award as the most popular Hungarian actor from movie magazine Vox in 2006.

### **KÁROLY GESZTESI (Béla Telki)**

He graduated from the University of Film and Drama in 1988. First he appeared on stage. He's been a freelance since 1998. He got a role in **Close to Love** (*Közel a szerelemhez*) in 1998, and since that time he's made many movies, and has become an emblematic figure of the contemporary Hungarian mainstream. He appeared in **A Kind of America** (*Valami Amerika, 2002*) **Getno** (*Getno, 2004*) and **Relatives** (*Rokonok, 2006*). Besides, he is well known as a TV-film actor and dubbing-actor, and he still plays on stage in Székesfehérvár, Debrecen and Vidám Színpad in Budapest.

## CAST LIST

<b>Character</b>	<b>Actor</b>
Karcsi Szabó	Iván Fenyő
Viki Falk	Kata Dobó
Tibi Vámos	Sándor Csányi
Béla Telki	Károly Gesztesi
Karcsi's mother	Ildikó Bánsági
Karcsi's grandfather	Tamás Jordán
Eszter Hanák	Viktória Szávai
Jancsi Gál	Zsolt Huszár
Imi Ács	Tamás Keresztes
Feri bácsi	Péter Haumann
Józsika	Dániel Gábori
Compó, waterpolo player	Róbert Marton
Báró, waterpolo player	Kornél Simon
Frank, waterpolo player	Krisztián Kolovratnik
Prokop, waterpolo player	Antal Czapkó
Béci, waterpolo player	Zoltán Szécsi
Peták, waterpolo player	Bulcsú Székely
Misurin, waterpolo player	Gergely Kiss
Borakov, waterpolo player	Viktor Paján
Pizsov, waterpolo player	Attila Vári
Poljakov, waterpolo player	Péter Biros
Lukics, waterpolo player	István Gergely
Zurov, waterpolo player	Attila Bárány