

"Christopher Columbus, the Enigma" is a highly Patriotic Portuguese movie!

By Manuel Luciano da Silva, Medical Doctor

My wife and I were invited by the Portuguese Embassy in Washington to travel to the capital of the United States on November 1st, 2007 (the All Saints Day) to see the premiere of the new film by Director Manoel de Oliveira (his 46th movie), adapted from the Portuguese version of our book "Christopher Columbus was Portuguese", released on May 20th, 2006, on the 500th anniversary of the Navigator's death.

When the movie premiere, shown at the Grand Theater of the American Film Institute located in Silver Spring, a suburb in Washington, DC, ended, I elbowed my wife and told her, in a very low voice, "I love it! I Love it!"

We were very satisfied with the movie! It is a story of love based on our married life, but in the meantime, it's an historical documentary which takes the viewer to places and monuments connected with the History of Portugal, more specifically to the period of Portuguese Discoveries.

Congratulations to the Director and his great team of actors and staff, as well as the sponsors because the production of this movie cost more than two million dollars. Congratulations are also in order to the European Union Portuguese Presidency, the Minister of Culture and the Cinema Institute, Audiovisual and Multimedia, the Ambassador of Portugal in Washington, D.C. and the Cultural Services attaché in the same Embassy for selecting this movie to represent Portugal at the 20th European Film Festival at the American Film Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland, a town next to Washington, D.C.

Opening Ceremonies

Prior to the showing of the movie, as part of the opening ceremonies of the <European Union Film Showcase> (with the participation of 27 member States and 33 movies) a reception was held for all the personalities in attendance, appetizers and Portuguese wine was served hence, relaxing everyone. This evening was an 'invitation only' gala sponsored by the EU Portuguese Presidency Delegation in Washington, D.C. and the American Film Institute. A public showing was scheduled for Sunday, November 4th, 2007 at 12:30pm.

The opening ceremony was initiated by the AFI Silver Theater Director, Mr. Murray Horwitz, explaining to the audience that since the Presidency of the

European Union is in the hands of Portugal, it is assigned with the European Film Festival opening honors.

Following, he yielded to the Portuguese Ambassador to Washington, D.C. Dr. João de Vallera, whom presented a Plaque-Tribute to Master Manoel de Oliveira and his wife for the production and acting roles in the movie "Cristóvão Colombo, O Enigma / Christopher Columbus – the Enigma", on behalf of the European Community Portuguese Presidency delegation in the US capital and also of the American Film Institute.

Next, Dr. José Pedro Ribeiro, President of the (Portuguese) Cinema Institute and ICAM (Audiovisual and Multimedia) of Portugal, came to the stage to present my wife and I with a Plaque-Tribute as an Award from the "American Film Institute" and the European Union Portuguese Presidency delegation in Washington, D.C. for the publication of our book in Portugal which became Master Manoel de Oliveira's inspiration for his new movie.

I confess that for us, this was a pleasant surprise. As I was being presented with this honor, I still had the chance to say in a very loud voice, *"What a surprise! You gentlemen do more here for Portugal than the Universities in Portugal."*

"SILVER LEGACY AWARD" – AFI's HIGHEST HONOR

This was followed by the most important event of the evening, the awarding of the 'American Film Institute's highest honor - "Silver Legacy Award" – to Master Manoel Cândido Pinto de Oliveira for being the oldest, active director in the world – he's going to be 99 years old on December 12th, 2007 – with a career spanning 80 years of cinematographic productions. He's currently preparing to shoot two more movies that will premiere in 2008 and 2009! Truly phenomenal.

This is only the second time this prestigious award, bestowed upon the Portuguese director, has been given by the American Film Institute. This great honor was originally awarded in 2003 to the internationally renown actor and director from Hollywood, California, Clint Eastwood.

The entire theater gave to the oldest Director a standing ovation as the distinctive award was presented to Master Manoel de Oliveira by the most prestigious American arts and cinema organization, the American Film Institute. Quite the honor for Manoel de Oliveira and family, all the Portuguese around the world and for Portugal on an international scale. Our sincere congratulations.



Manoel de Oliveira receiving from Murray Horwitz, Director of the "American Film Institute", the highest award of the American Film Institute!



Dr. José Pedro Ribeiro, President of the Portuguese Cinema and Audiovisual Multimedia presenting to my wife and I the Plaque -Tribute awarded by " the American Film Institute" and by the Portuguese Presidency of European Union.



Luciano and Sílvia da Silva holding the Plaque-Tribute bestowed on them at the "American Film Institute Theater", Silver Spring, contiguous to Washington, D. C.

“CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, THE ENIGMA” PART ONE OF THE MOVIE

The American Film Institute theater is very modern with two thousand capacity and a gigantic screen. This movie house possesses also excellent audio quality as well. We sat at the center of the first row. Therefore, we were able to appreciate the images in a very intimate way.

This movie has English subtitles

FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MOVIE’S SEQUENCE, THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE 19 SCENES

So that we don’t ruin the movie for the viewers, this summary does not include the movie’s speaking lines. Rather, our attempt is to clarify the objectivity of each scene.

Scene #1 – The movie starts with the Navigator’s original sigla on the screen. A strong and clear voice in Spanish is heard explaining in detail the way the navigator wanted his descendents to use it in future documents. There are English titles.

Scene # 2 - Departure from the seaport of Lisbon of both brothers: Luciano and Hermínio. Emotional goodbye from their mother, on January 9 1946. Entrance aboard the ship to America. Scenes from Lisbon of that time.

[Introduction of na Angel, a young woman dressed with a tunic with color of reddish and greenish holding a long ward, represent Portugal as a Nation. This is an icon used in the cinema.]

Scene # 3 – Crossing of the Atlantic in a small “Liberty” type of ship. With a rough Atlantic in the month of January. Dialog between the eleven boy and a man 60 years old from the Azores going to America to join his family. Discussion how painful is to be an emigrant. The voyage from Lisbon to New York took 16 days!

Scene # 4 – Arrival at New York Harbor. Dense fog. Could not see the Statue of Liberty, neither the skyscrapers. The passengers were transported to land on a Coast Guard boat into Pier No. One, in Manhattan.

Scene # 5 – Inspection of passports by the Immigration Authorities. Dialogue between both brothers and the Officers. The boys brought two passports. Portuguese because they were born in Portugal, and American passports because their father was already an American citizen before they were born. Luciano protested with the officials because they confiscated his popular musics to play mandolin and violin. The officers told him they had to be checked for espionage and then they will be returned to him.

Scene # 6 – Trip from Pier No. one to their new residence in Brooklyn. Both brothers starts observing the traffic was controlled by the traffic lights. (Which did not existed in Portugal). They also observed that the colors red and green were the national colors of the Portuguese flag. They had their first laugh in America. Arrival at 45 Cheever Place. Scene at the Silva's Restaurant to get their first job in America cleaning a factory at the 23rd street in Manhattan.

Scene # 7- Thirteen years later (1959) when Dr. Luciano da Silva is doing his internship at the Saint Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, Massachusetts. At a medical grand round, Dr. Da Silva explains how he has used the scientific methods to make medical diagnoses and how he has applied the same scientific methods to do his historical investigations. Revelation that he has a "mistress" called Dighton Rock.

Scene # 8 - Dr. Luciano da Silva goes to Portugal to marry Sílvia on September 17, 1960. Panoramic view of Oporto and the monumental front of the Se Cathedral of the old City. Scenes of the wedding in main alter, accompanied by the right kind of music and the fidelity dialogues of the marrying couple.

Scene # 9 – Honeymoon trip through Alentejo and Algarve. Traveling on the dry plateau of Alentejo the newly weds talked, while driving the Peugeot 403, about the contrast panoramas of north and south of Portugal. Silvia describes her life and education in the south.

Scene # 10 – They stopped at the town of Cuba, Alentejo, to inquire about the house where Salvador Gonçalves Zarco (who later became Christopher Columbus) was born. His mother was Isabel Gonçalves Zarco daughter of Joao Gonçalves Zarco who discovered the island of Porto Santo in 1418 and Madeira in 1419. They visit a church where the priest advised them to go to the Beja Museum.

Scene # 11- At the Beja Museum they were very well received by the Director who show them the mausoleum of Dom Fernando, First Duke of Beja, the biological father of Christopher Columbus, but because of the Napoleonic soldiers the mausoleum does not have any bones inside. This was a terrible disappointment because of DNA paternity studies.

Scene # 12 – Visit to the old castle of Castro Marim in Algarve, to where the Knights of the Cross of the Order of Christ where transferred in 1319 by King Dom Dinis. Homage to the Portuguese flag together with the patriotic Angel.

Scene #13 – Visit to the Promontory of Sagres and its Nautical School. Impressive entrance into the fortress. Windy. Compass Rose. Prince Henry's bust abandoned on the ground. Nautical School completely empty! Both new weds go to the edge of the Promontory, facing the Atlantic Ocean and begin to recite the opening of "The Lusíadas". Patriotic scene:

*ARMS and the Heroes, who from Lisbon's shore,
Thro' seas _where sail was never spread before,
Beyond where Ceylon lifts her spicy breast,
And waves her woods above the wat'ry waste,
With prowess more than human forc'd their way
To the fair kingdoms of the rising day:
What wars they wag'd, what seas, what dangers pass'd,
What glorious empire crown'd their toils at last,*



Sílvia on the left. Isabel de Oliveira on the right. On the second part of the movie Isabel acts the part of Sílvia
Luciano on the left. Manoel de Oliveira on the right. On the second part of the movie Manoel de Oliveira acts the part of Luciano

“CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, THE ENIGMA” SECOND PART OF THE MOVIE

Scene # 14 – 47 years after their wedding, in 2007, when both Luciano and Silva are old citizens. Manoel and Isabel de Oliveira in the new movie perform instead of Luciano and Sílvia. Scene in front of Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor. They stated reciting the poem “The New Colossus” written by Emma Lazarus, Portuguese Sephardic Jew. This sonnet is dedicated to all the immigrants who come to America from all over the world. It is engraved on a bronze plaque inside the monument.

Scene # 15 – Manoel de Oliveira and his wife Isabel, as actors, in front of the Columbus Statue in the center of New York City. They analyze the various symbols that the statue presents.

Scene # 16 – Dialogue between the couple about the true and sincere love. Silvia (played by Isabel) wants to know if Luciano (played by Manoel de Oliveira) loves her more than his medical profession and his “mistress” Dighton Rock?

Scene # 17– Visit to the Dighton Rock Museum in Berkley, Massachusetts, U. S. A. Panoramic view of the Museum. Inside of the museum description to the Nau São Gabriel of Vasco da Gama, of Caravel Victória of Fernão de Magalhães (Magellan), of the Padrão – Portuguese discovery Marker – and the large face of Dighton Rock with inscriptions made by Miguel Corte Real in 1511.

Scene # 18 – Visit to the round Newport Tower, in Rhode Island, U. S. A. Comparison of the similar octagonal characteristics of the Newport Tower with the octagonal shape of the Charola (main altar) of the convent of Tomar, Portugal, which was the headquarter of the Portuguese Order of Christ. The Newport Tower could have been built by the Portuguese sailors in the early 1500s.

Scene # 19 – The last part of this movie takes place in the Island of Porto Santo, Madeira. Landing at the airport. Meeting Renato Barros. Going to the house of Columbus. Dialogue with the Director concerning the new dioramas for the museum informing the public that Porto Santo was the first discovery, comparison of the Portuguese Discoveries with the Outer Space Explorations. Portuguese as pioneers in the Atlantic as sailors and as aviators (Gago Coutinho and Sacadura Cabral in 1922 from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro).

Finally the importance of new stature of Christopher Columbus in Cuba, Alentejo and the Fort of Saint Joseph's at the entrance of the port of Funchal, which Joao Gonçalves Zarco transformed into a fort in 1419 when he discovered the Island of Madeira. This discoverer is the grandfather of Christopher Columbus. The final scene in the horizon is the ship "Lobo Marinho" that make daily trips between Madeira and Porto Santo.

International awards given to the "Christopher Columbus, the Enigma"

At the international premiere of this movie on September 7th, 2007, its director, Manoel de Oliveira, received the "*Bisato D'Oro/Golden Medal*" at the Venice Film Festival in Italy.

At the Toronto Film Festival in Canada, during the second week of September, the President of the Pennsylvanian Film Institute, Bryn Mawr, said the following about the movie:

"Manoel de Oliveira succeeds in convincing me that Christopher Columbus was a Portuguese Sephardic Jew, and not an Italian."!

The American premiere in November of 2007 in Washington, D.C. is the third one in foreign countries.

In spite of the great results in Venice, Italy and Toronto, Canada, I confess that I had some reservations prior to watching the movie because often times they're not loyal to the original contents of the book which inspired it.

So I must hereby confess that both, me and my wife, found no flaws throughout the movie, rather the contrary, this film reaches way beyond our expectations. We returned to our place of residence in Bristol, Rhode Island as two very pleased individuals with the successful cinematographic creation of Master Manoel de Oliveira.

As a result we – whether emigrants or not – should be very pleased and feel honored to have this movie recognized at the highest level, Portugal's contribution to world globalization which began during the time of the great Portuguese navigators!

This Manoel de Oliveira's movie is inspired by three true loves.

The First Love

Based on my wife and I's true love for the past 47 years and throughout this period we've worked together not only for the well being of our family but also (doing)) original historical discoveries and publishing them with our names.

The Second Love:

It's the true love between Manoel de Oliveira and his wife, Isabel for the past 67 years, for the well being of his family and for the international success of his 46 movies as well. Hence the reason why Manoel de Oliveira, as well as his wife, Madame Isabel, as actors playing my wife and I with all the sincerity, because deep down they feel as if they're living the scene as if it was their true love story.

Third Love:

It's the true love that we, my wife and I and the love that Manoel de Oliveira and his wife, that we have for the History of Portugal. While in Washington, D.C and during a conversation with Manoel de Oliveira, he told me: *"I consider this movie about Columbus to be my master piece. I did it with all the pleasure and love!"*

Hopefully this film will stimulate everyone to visit all the historical places the cameras used by Manoel de Oliveira captured to be shown on the big screen. If that happens, our book and now the

movie will bring a greater historical impact for the benefit of the Portuguese heritage worldwide!

THE PREMIÈRE (OF THIS MOVIE) IN PORTUGAL

There's a movement in Portugal that wants the première of the movie "Christopher Columbus, the Enigma" in Portugal to be on the 12th of December, 2007, because it'll coincide with the celebration of the 99th birthday of Master Manoel de Oliveira. The première on December 12th, 2007, will be only for invitees. On December 13th, 2007, will be the première for the general public. At this time we do not know if the both premiers will be in Oporto or Lisbon, Portugal. We will keep you posted.

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH

During three days my wife and I were in the same hotel in Washington, D.C. as well as Manoel de Oliveira, his wife Isabel and their daughter Adelaide. We had an opportunity to become better acquainted with each other. It was excellent!

We were also very well received by his Excellency, the Ambassador of Portugal to Washington, D.C., Dr. João de Vallera and his wife, Margarida de Vallera, as well as Dr. Manuel Silva Pereira, the Cultural Attaché of the Portuguese Embassy who assisted us in many different ways. We are most grateful to all of them.

Here is a photo taken at the TAVIRA, the only Portuguese Restaurant in the Washington, D.C. area.



Ladies from the left: Adelaide Tropa, mother of the actors Ricardo and Jorge Tropa (who perform in the movie for Luciano and Hermínio), Sílvia and Isabel Oliveira.

Men from the left: Manuel Silva Pereira, Cultural Attaché of the Embassy, Luciano da Silva and Manoel de Oliveira.