



EUROPE

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Venice Golden Lion for Alexander Sokurov's Faust

Russian director Alexander Sokurov's take on the German legend Faust has won the film a Golden Lion - the top award at the Venice Film Festival.

The classic tale explores the corrupting nature of power as scholar Faust sells his soul to the devil.

German-born Irish actor Michael Fassbender was named best actor for playing a sex addict in British director Steve McQueen's *Shame*.

The best actress award went to Hong Kong's Deanie Yip in *A Simple Life*.

Best actor

Fassbender, 34, previously worked with McQueen in the filmmaker's Bafta-winning debut feature *Hunger*, playing jailed IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands.

Accepting his acting honour, he said: "It's just really nice when you take chance and you do something that you think is relevant - you hope is relevant - and people respond the way they did."

Fassbender also starred in another Venice competition film - David Cronenberg's *A Dangerous Method* - in which he plays psychoanalyst Carl Jung.

The film will show at the London Film Festival next month.

Golden Lion winner Faust was praised by US director Darren Aronofsky - head of the Venice jury - who presented the award.

He said: "There are some films that make you cry, there are some films that make you laugh, there are some films that change you forever after you see them; and this is one of them."

At a news conference following the award ceremony, Sokurov appealed for governments to continue funding the arts.

"Culture is not a luxury! It is the basis for the development of the society," he said.

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