

Special

A SHINING

STAR!

Kathleen Gati (Obrecht) shares her experience as one of Hungary's most popular leading ladies!

STEVEN BERGMAN

GENERAL HOSPITAL fans know Kathleen Gati as mad doctor Leisl Obrecht. But the soap is actually just a small part of her long and illustrious showbiz career. In fact, in Hungary, she's a superstar!

"I was made in Hungary but born in Canada," she explains with a laugh.

However, her heritage brought her back to Hungary many times over the course of her career, and the more films she shot there, the more films Hungarian directors *wanted* her to shoot. In the end, "they adopted me," she says. "I felt loved and appreciated by the entire country. That speaks volumes."

So do the mementos on the following pages. "These posters remind me that, yes, I have something to say, and yes, I have this beautiful career," Gati explains. "It's about doing the work and having people appreciate what you're saying to them and taking them on an emotional journey."

At one point, the actress was so popular that not a day went by that there wasn't a newspaper article written about her. So narrowing down her clippings was actually hard to do. "These that I'm sharing now," she says, "are some of my favorites."

— Rosemary A. Rossi
(section continues) ▶

General Hospital



“The Wondrous Voyage Of Kornel Esti is about a young writer who looks back on his life,” Gati says. “If I could spend the rest of my life acting in period pieces like this, I will die a happy actress.” Of note is that this was one of five films Gati shot aboard a moving locomotive. “It’s such a romantic feeling — the movement — it’s melancholy,” she says. “It was just gorgeous.”



▲ You want to talk an acting stretch? How about Gati playing an 80-year-old Russian fortune teller who leans towards the macabre? “Lifeline is a horror film, which is not particularly my genre,” Gati grins. “But it’s a comic horror film with pathos and humor mixed in with the gore.” The plot: A palm reader who wants to live forever hacks off the hands of clients with longer lifelines and sews their hands onto her wrist so she can live longer and longer.

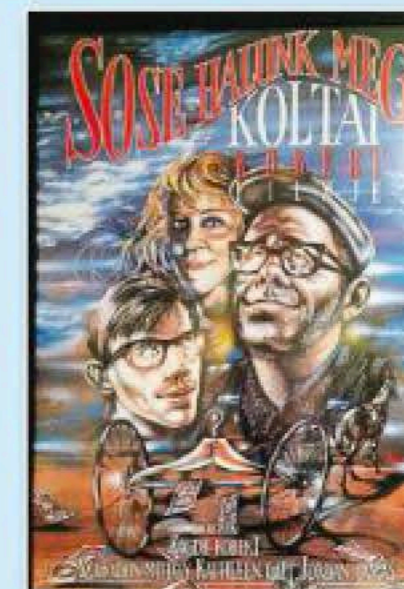
A few years back, Gati did an interview in this magazine about a documentary she did about the emotional journey she took with her mother, who passed away after fighting a terminal illness. “My mother and I talked every day, all day about this experience of accompanying someone to their death,” Gati tearfully recalls. “Sharing this story was a profound experience.”



▲ After Gati appeared in a feature film and multiple movies of the week in Hungary, this popular fan magazine did an interview with the popular actress. “I felt truly appreciated by the warm reception,” she recalls with a smile. “I put my heart and soul into everything, so the magazine covers were like gifts to me saying ‘Thank you, we appreciate you, we respect you, the audience loves you.’”



While most of Gati’s notable films were dramatic, there was one that stood out to her Hungarian fans because of its humor. “We Never Die was a very popular film, and it was a comedy,” Gati smiles. “That



was the country’s favorite movie for at least 10 years, and people still watch it. It’s about a young boy coming of age in the ‘50s and ‘60s in Hungary. The entire country fell in love with the character, with me and with the film.”

Gati’s standout performance in *Retrace* brought her many awards and accolades. “It’s a very touching, beautiful story about a woman who had to leave Romania as a child during the war,” Gati explains. “They killed her family, and there were terrible atrocities. She returned to her childhood home because she buried her little doll there, so they wouldn’t take it away. She retraces her steps, trying to find any memory of her childhood.”

