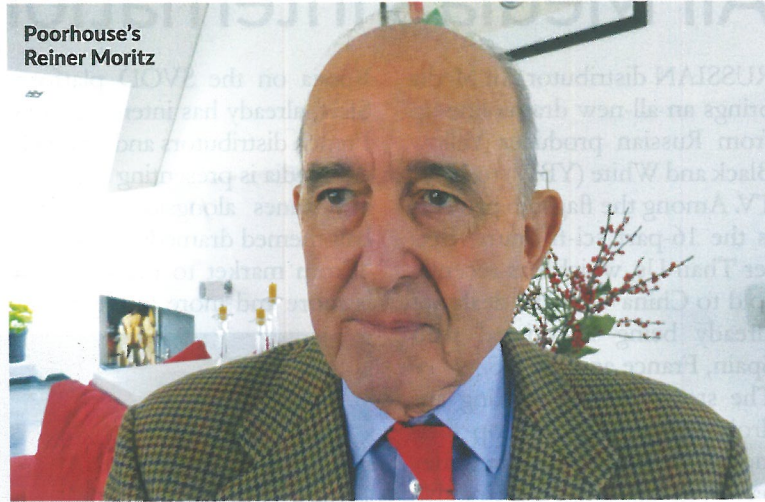


# Celebrating the genius of Zeffirelli

POORHOUSE is in Cannes with Chris Hunt's new documentary, *Franco Zeffirelli: Directing From Life*, which explores the experiences and influences that shaped the work of the Italian director and opera producer. Poorhouse founder and music-and-arts programming veteran Reiner Moritz is in Cannes to promote the 52-minute film, which features interviews with, among others, Richard Burton, Plácido Domingo, Dame Joan Sutherland, Dame Judy Dench and Robert Powell, who played Jesus in Zeffirelli's epic 1977 mini-series *Jesus Of Nazareth*. Zeffirelli, who celebrated his 95th birthday in February, was born out of wedlock into a chaotic family scene, marked by violent rows between his parents. During the war, he fought as a partisan and twice escaped



Poorhouse's  
Reiner Moritz

death by firing squad. He was a close friend of Maria Callas and had a long working relationship with the great diva, whom he first directed at La Scala in 1955. "Zeffirelli is arguably the greatest director of opera in the second half of the 20th century," Moritz said. "But he also

had some of the most dramatic movies to his credit: *Romeo And Juliet*, *The Taming Of The Shrew*, *Hamlet* and *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. They showcase the intensity of his feeling for Shakespeare and religion, while *Callas Forever* and *Tea With Mussolini* are biopics of his

friends and himself."

Talking about the changing dynamics of production in a global content market increasingly dominated by the SVOD platforms, Moritz said broadcasters would do well to "reconsider the remit" of BBC founder Lord Reith, whose mission was to enrich viewer's lives with programmes that inform, educate and entertain. In order to "reconquer an audience that has long turned its back on television", he urged broadcasters to refocus on music, arts and documentary programming.

"Mainstream entertainment is and always will be a commercial commodity going to the highest bidder with the deepest pockets," he added. "Who wants to compete with the few giants that will be left? On the other hand, a new golden age of television is not out of the question, provided the legacy broadcasters position themselves anew."