



Romeo and Juliet actress Olivia Hussey dies aged 73 Free 060115

Description



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Actress Olivia Hussey, who shot to international prominence as a teenager for her role in the acclaimed 1968 film version of Romeo and Juliet, has died aged 73.

The Argentine-born actress, who grew up in London, died on Friday surrounded by her loved ones, a statement posted on her Instagram said.

Hussey won the best new actress Golden Globe for her part as Juliet, but decades later she sued Paramount Pictures for sexual abuse as she was aged just 15 when she filmed the movie's nude scene.

Her other most notable screen role was as Mary, mother of Jesus, in 1977 TV miniseries Jesus of Nazareth.

"As we grieve this immense loss, we also celebrate Olivia's enduring impact on our lives and the industry," the statement said.

Hussey was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1951, before moving to London aged seven and studying at the Italia Conti Academy drama school.

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She was 15 when Romeo and Juliet director Franco Zeffirelli discovered her onstage, playing opposite Vanessa Redgrave in the play The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie.

Zeffirelli was looking for someone who was young enough to be a convincing Juliet in what he intended to be the definitive cinematic version of the Shakespeare play.

He cast Hussey alongside British 16-year-old Leonard Whiting as Romeo in the film.

The film was nominated for an Oscar for best picture and director. Hussey missed out on an Oscar nomination herself in a strong year in which Barbra Streisand won the main award for Funny Girl.

But at that year's Golden Globes, Hussey won the award for best new star.

Decades later, she and Whiting sued Paramount Pictures alleging Zeffirelli – who died in 2019 – had encouraged them to film nude scenes despite previous assurances they would not have to.

The pair sought damages of more than \$500m (£417m), based on suffering they said they had experienced and the revenue brought in by the film since its release.

But last year a judge dismissed the case, finding the scene was not "sufficiently sexually suggestive".

In 1977, Hussey had reunited with Zeffirelli for Jesus of Nazareth to play the Virgin Mary, before appearing in Death on the Nile a year later based on Agatha Christie's novel.

Her roles in early slasher film Black Christmas (1974) and TV film Psycho IV: The Beginning earned her recognition as a scream queen. In the latter, she played Norman Bates's mother in a prequel

storyline.

In later years she also took on work as a voice actress, appearing frequently in video games.

But she did have one final reunion with her former Romeo – as she and Whiting appeared together in the 2015 British film Social Suicide, which was loosely based on Romeo and Juliet and set in the social media era.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQKpQJhRzRY&list=PLtnxlcx-lhIIKCgG4pZ4qpFN1A9WrdlxZ>

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Date Created

06/01/2025

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