

*One voice, one people... how many fates?
A portrait film about the “Csángó Madonna”.
A Csángó fairy tale – portrait and historical documentary
about Ilona Nyisztor.*

2025. Hungarian- 88 min, Documentary

A poetic portrait and documentary about Ilona Nyisztor, the "Csángó Madonna" — a folk singer, teacher, and cultural ambassador living between tradition and modernity. Through her memories and everyday life in Pusztina, the film reveals the richness of Csángó heritage while raising a crucial question: can a fading language and identity be revived? Ilona's journey — from rural Moldavia to global stages — offers a powerful, personal perspective on cultural survival, resilience, and the hope for a new generation of Csángó voices.

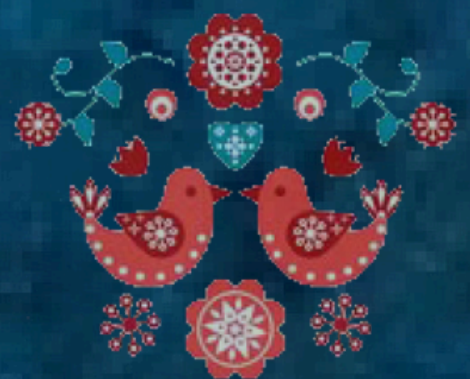


Synopsis:

A poetic portrait and documentary about Ilona Nyisztor, the "Csángó Madonna" — a woman who embodies the striking contrast between a glittering, modern, globalized life and the archaic, everyday reality of Moldavian villages cut off from the world. As an ambassador of Csángó culture, she has traveled — and still travels when she can — across the globe.

The film does not rely on scholars, ethnographers, or politicians to explain who the Csángós are. Instead, it builds on the self-definition of a wise Csángó woman. Through her memories, we explore the past — as far back as family photographs and archival footage allow — while her present-day life offers glimpses into the distinctive features of contemporary Csángó culture.

We witness Ilona's daily life in Pusztina and get to know the constantly active folk singer and dance teacher. The film captures the spirit of festive moments: Christmas preparations, a confirmation ceremony with the bishop of Iași (the capital of Moldavia), and the Csíksomlyó pilgrimage, which Ilona helps organize for her village. Her childhood and teenage memories are constantly paralleled with the events of her current daily life. A central question of the film is: has the language shift already occurred? Is language loss irreversible, or can it be halted — even reversed?



Our protagonist believes that one can find the way back to their roots and national identity, even if the language has faded. She believes in the possibility of a new generation of educated Csángós who will rise and fight for the survival of their mother tongue and cultural heritage.

[Watch the trailer](#)



Ilona Nyisztor in Csángó folk costume



Agnes Maksay the director

- In 1987, she graduated with a degree in Philosophy and History from Babeş–Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.
- Between 1990 and 1992, she worked as a television editor for the Hungarian editorial department of Cluj-Napoca Television.
- In 1993, together with Marius Tabacu, she founded the Video Pontes documentary film studio, which she has been managing ever since.
- She has been a contributor to Duna Television since its founding in 1992. She has produced around one hundred documentary and biopic films.



ÁGNES MAKSAI – director and screenwriter

TAMÁS LAJOS – producer

LEHEL DOBONDI – lead cinematographer

FARKAS FILEP – cinematographer

LÓRÁND LÁSZLÓ – cinematographer

ISTVÁN KÖMÍVES – cinematographer

GYÖRGY SELMECZI – composer

LEHEL DOBONDI – editor

JÁNOS SZÁNTAI – dramaturg

WHAL FRIGYES, DÓZSA PETER – sound engineers



Musical performance by Ilona Nyisztor



Production Company: Film Positive Productions

Format (shooting): Digital

Format (television): 16:9

Resolution: UHD

Length: 88 min

Genre: Documentary

Production company contact:

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view of Pusztina

