



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival

Festival Daily

THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH DAILY OF THE 43RD KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

SPECIAL EDITION OF

PRÁVO

Saturday, July 5, 2008

free • strana / page 9

Tomorrow's program

strana/page 8, 13, 14

Industry Office puts
KVIFF on the map

strana/page 11

day
2

Indie film sidebar gets
a makeover

strana/page 12

**DIVÁČKÁ CENA / AUDIENCE AWARD
DENÍKU PRÁVO**

Vote for the best film of the 43rd Karlovy Vary International Film Festival!
strana/page 2

Films can predict the future

Ivan Passer says Czechoslovak film's New Wave was a grand conspiracy

Honza Dědek

KVIFF Grand Jury president Ivan Passer is a Czech cinema legend. His wistful and melancholic films *A Boring Afternoon* and *Intimate Lighting* (both screening at the fest this year) are widely considered to be some of the finest works produced during the Czech New Wave of the 1960s. Like his close friend Miloš Forman, Passer emigrated to America after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He continued to make films, however, and has been responsible for critically acclaimed works such as the edgy post-Vietnam thriller *Cutter's Way* and *Haunted Summer*, a stylish examination of the friendship between Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

■ **Have you ever wondered why the communists let films from the Czech New Wave be made? They were quite subversive...**

Back in the 1960s, films like [Miloš Forman's] *The Loves of a Blonde* or *The Firemen's Ball* were critical of the political situation. The party eventually didn't like them, but neither the censors, nor the journalists, nor the studio people who saw the films said anything at first. It was a sort of conspiracy. No film then could be screened without the conspiracy of hundreds of people who pretended not to realize what the film was really about, pretending it was just a comedy. That means the majority of the nation went along with things and it kind of predicted the momentum within the country. This kind of momentum eventually reaches a point where change is bound to happen. That's my theory.



Intimate Lighting director Ivan Passer in Karlovy Vary yesterday.

■ **How do you think Czech cinema today compares with the golden era of the 1960s?**

I'm interested in contemporary Czech cinema. I don't know how to read it exactly. After 1989 the filmmakers first tried to copy the 1960s, which was nice. It was good training for them. I think now they have found their own film language. They are more

brutal than us in their grasp of characters, in the plot, in their narration. But I think they have it harder because there is so much commercial pressure.

■ **How do you feel about *The Guardian* including *Cutter's Way* on its list of 50 "Lost Movie Classics"?**

The film has many fans; it received a number of awards. In

Belgium it even got an award for best world movie of the year. I like it even though it is very depressing.

■ **How did you persuade Jeff Bridges to sign up for *Cutter's Way*?**

We sent him the script. He invited us to his log cabin in Malibu and just after we arrived one of his dogs bit off the produc-

er's cheek. You could see his teeth all the way to the ear. So the first thing Bridges said after "Hi" was "Oh my God." He ran into the house to get some towels and we rushed the guy to a doctor. Bridges felt so bad about it that he had no choice. He had to be in that movie. So that's how a German shepherd caused *Cutter's Way* to be made.

■ **Are you bitter about the fact that it was a box office failure despite the critical acclaim?**

The studio went bankrupt because of another movie. A new management was installed and because they wanted to prove that the previous management deserved to be fired, they didn't give any support to my film. The critics from major magazines who saw it loved the movie. Sony even created their Classics Department because of *Cutter's Way*. Later, by word of mouth the film started to be better known. I realized it was beyond my control. So I don't worry about these things. I make the movie as best I can and the rest is fate.

■ **Do you think film is simply entertainment or does it have a more important role to play in people's lives?**

I believe that films can anticipate the future – of a nation or a society, for example. Look at the way Czech film of the 1960s pre-conceived the Prague Spring. The same goes for Polish and Hungarian cinema in the 1950s. All that was halted by Soviet intervention. I think today's Iranian cinema is very interesting and I daresay that within five years there will be a revolution there. Chinese cinema quite precisely predicted today's developments in the country. If I were a film historian, this would be my main topic of research.

The Lowdown

Karlovy Vary officially launched last night with a suitably grand kick-off fete for the screening of *What Just Happened* at the Hotel Thermal's Great Hall. The film, about the intrigues and power plays of Hollywood, was presented, of course, by America's best-known tough guy, **Robert De Niro**, who portrays his friend *Art Linson*, a producer of some of his films.

KV Press Department director Alex Furtula, who interviewed him last night, was seen ruminating over De Niro's impressive career at the **Hotel Thermal bar** before the opening ceremony. Since De Niro started his career with people like **Brian De Palma**, **Martin Scorsese** and **Paul Schrader**, all of whom were starving filmmakers very much under the spell of **European New Wave films**, Furtula wondered whether things have now reversed course, with young European filmmakers desperately trying to emulate Hollywood blockbusters.

He thought it might be a good question to ask De Niro about (the interview should be up today on the festival website at www.kviff.com and should be fascinating stuff).

The opening KVIFF film was an appropriate choice, of course, because the business of movie making is as unpredictable in Hollywood as it is in Europe and the connections are often surprising – oddly enough, one of De Niro's first big breaks was playing a corrupt cop for KVIFF jury chair **Ivan Passer** in 1970's *Born to Win*, for example.

Today's big screening, sold out early yesterday, of course, is *Bathory*, the biggest-budget feature in Slovak history, about the legendary woman whose bloodlust and power made her a fearful and fascinating film subject.

SEE YOU THERE

Vanessa Farquharson

National Post, Ontario

I really want to see *My Winnipeg* with a Czech audience. Guy Maddin is basically the most beloved director in Canada, next to Atom Egoyan and David Cronenberg. And he always makes these very trippy films – he made *The Saddest Music in the World*, for example. He's very good at this black-and-white silent film. He's from Winnipeg, which is the coldest city in Canada. Everyone leaves Winnipeg and goes somewhere like Toronto. He has a love-hate relationship with Winnipeg. It has a lot of magic realism elements. You keep watching it and saying, "Wait - is that really happening?" The Czechs could love it – I have no idea. It'll be really interesting to see.

My Winnipeg screens today at 4.30pm in the Lázně III cinema. It also screens on July 7 at 1pm in the Divadlo Husovka theater and on July 10 in the GH Pupp cinema at 10pm



THE KNOWLEDGE

Lights, camera, festival pass...!

So now you've made it to Karlovy Vary you need to get organized and see as many films as possible, right? That means you need a festival pass, like the ones you can see most people around town wearing around their necks on an orange lanyard. By purchasing a festival pass you can get up to three free tickets to three different screenings each day until all the available tickets for screenings are sold

out. A festival pass will also allow you free access to screening halls without a ticket if the hall is not fully occupied before the start of the film.

You may also attend press conferences if the hall is not fully occupied by accredited journalists. And if cheaper movies aren't enough of an enticement, holders of a festival pass can get reduced prices for access to the swimming pool in the Thermal Hotel

and the Vodafone Fér Klub – Lázně I. You will also need a festival pass to get access to Tretter's Party Power Energy Drink Club in the basement of the Thermal, where seasoned KVIFFers continue the fun after a long day of watching movies.

You can purchase a pass at any festival box office. Your festival pass entitles you to get tickets for the screenings of your choice immediately, at the same box office. You may purchase a pass for one, three, or five consecutive days, or for the entire festival.

FESTIVAL PASS PRICES

	1 day	3 days	5 days	Entire Festival
Festival pass	200 CZK	500 CZK	700 CZK	1000 CZK
Discount pass	150 CZK	350 CZK	450 CZK	700 CZK

Students of secondary schools and universities, those with physical disabilities and senior citizens are entitled to buy a discount pass.