



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival

Festival Daily

THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH DAILY OF THE 46TH KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

SPECIAL EDITION OF

PRÁVO



Monday, July 4, 2011

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DIVÁČKÁ CENA / AUDIENCE AWARD
DENÍKU PRÁVO

Vote for the best film of the 46th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival!
(Czech section: page 2)

Fuller never backed out of a fight

Widow recalls director's creative process and run-in with J. Edgar Hoover

Will Tizard

Once Sam Fuller decided to make films, he was probably destined to make them like no one else. The son of Jewish Russian immigrants who got his start as a New York crime reporter at age 17, and went on to fight on the front lines in WWII, could hardly have been a conventional director even if he'd wanted to.

Thus, the 11 films in KVIFF's tribute to Fuller, spanning 31 years, offer an incredible survey of his dynamism and irrepressible need to go against expectations.

The experience of fighting in both Sicily and Normandy with the First Infantry Division so affected the tough young man that he would never again much care what Hollywood wanted its directors to do – even as he labored to build up his filmmaking career. He managed it, of course, but clearly his combat decorations (a Bronze Star, Silver Star and Purple Heart) meant more than fat production contracts with major studios.

Fuller's service in the war is being honored today in the Czech town of Sokolov, where his division's role in liberating the west of then-Czechoslovakia will be honored with a plaque at a ceremony with his widow, Christa Fuller, daughter Samantha and granddaughter Samira present.

It's a fitting tribute – his first film was actually an account of the liberation of the Falkenau concentration camp in what's now the Czech Republic. Titled *V-E +1 May 9, 1945*, it has now been restored and is a prize for film archives around the world.

"The trauma of combat was with him all his life," says his widow, a French/German actress and editor of Fuller's autobiography *A Third Face: My Tale of Writing, Fighting and Filmmaking*, published by Knopf in 2002 with



Christa Fuller reflects on the life and work of her husband, legendary filmmaker Samuel Fuller.

a foreword by Wim Wenders (who, like Quentin Tarantino, has always said Fuller inspired much of his work).

Despite the combat trauma – for most of his post-Normandy adult life, Fuller hated swimming at the beach – the director was also inspired by Europeans, says his widow, and had a close friend who had fought on the German side during the war.

He also played recordings of Beethoven to calm and focus himself almost every day, she adds, "Because that was a German, not a Nazi thing." His other major artistic influence, not surprisingly, was the prickly and endlessly curious Mark Twain.

Fuller waged war not only with the Axis troops but with conven-

tional thinking in Hollywood. Even his 1953 studio production, *Pickup on South Street*, for all its 20th Century Fox trappings and the star power of leading man Richard Widmark, became in this director's hands, an erotically charged power play of sadism and manipulation.

This seminal director's iconic streak is evident in nearly all of his work, whatever the genre or budget. In 1951's *The Steel Helmet*, screening at KVIFF this week, the reality of soldiers' lives in Korea is so unromanticized that it got the filmmaker in hot water with FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover.

It was all about never shrinking from the artist's duty to explore, says Christa. "That's why you have a film like *Shock Corridor* –

the guy looking for the absolute truth and he becomes crazy. It's a great metaphor."

That film, which follows an investigative reporter's descent into the hell of a mental asylum, was shot in 10 days, Christa recalls, which is a good illustration of just how resourceful Fuller could be as a director who wanted nothing to do with the usual Hollywood movie machinery.

Fuller's "swan song" film, as Christa calls it, was the 1982 feature *White Dog*. The film centers on a woman who takes home a dog she has hit with her car only to discover it's been trained to attack dark-skinned people.

U.S. studios, although initially involved in developing the film – at one point Roman Polanski was

asked to take it on – got cold feet, fearing the central element of racism in the story.

The majors chose to simply shelve the film – although it was distributed in Europe and garnered critical praise and audience interest. These days U.S. audiences are finally gaining access to the film as organizations such as New York's Film Forum host screenings.

The Fuller films screening at KVIFF cover half a dozen genres, showing off nearly as many styles and approaches. But consistency was never a particular concern of the original indie filmmaker. More important, he always said, was that a director be driven by a good idea. Sadly, Fuller argued, 95% films are made for other reasons. ■

THE LOWDOWN

As KVIFF's opening week-end wraps, the tales of iniquity and hi-jinx among fest celebrants are building momentum. Those who politely hinted at being desirous of perhaps gaining access to well-stocked parties are now on the point of making enticing bribery offers.

One notoriously randy foreign critic, while visiting the festival's Press Office to interview Canadian wunderkind director Denis Villeneuve, was heard making it known that he would happily consider sexual favors for good invitations. The remark was taken as a stab at fest-style humor, of course, but the stony silence that followed it was slightly troubling.

Another member of the international fraternity of the press was heard floating an even more devious scheme at a swanky gathering of *Variety* critics on Saturday evening, cosponsored by the European Film Promotion organization, the body that runs all manner of clever events to help local talent get more, um, exposure abroad.

"The trouble with countries presenting their films abroad," he said, "is that they need to be curated."

In other words, the media abroad are always interested in finding the next big talent to arise from the East... but get considerably less enthused about the prospect when they have to troll through a dozen mediocre films before finding that shimmering one that shows off talent, vision and soul.

The trouble, the collected cocktail sippers surmised, is that no national film promotion organization is willing to show favoritism toward one of its home-grown directors over the others.

"So why don't they only put subtitles on the good ones?" the scheming hack replied.

More innocent provocation just for provocation's sake, surely. Though the Lowdown has to admit that these cynics may just be onto something... ■

SEE YOU THERE

Brendan Fletcher

Director of *Mad Bastards*

There are a couple of films I really want to see today. One is Martin Donovan's first film, *Collaborator*. I've been a fan of Martin Donovan ever since he acted in Hal Hartley films like *Trust* way back in the nineties. I'm really interested in seeing what he does as a first-time filmmaker. Secondly, I'm also looking forward to *The Soul of Flies*, which is a Spanish film that's on tonight. It's a film about two brothers who only find out about each other when they hear from the father they never knew. It's also got a lot of music in it, so it's not too dissimilar to my own film *Mad Bastards*, which I'd better attend as well. If I can fit it in amongst all those movies, I'd also like to get a little spa, what with us being in a spa town and all.

Collaborator screens today at 8pm in the Grand Hall and tomorrow at 10am in the Espace Dorleans Cinema. You can catch *The Soul of Flies* today at 10pm in the Espace Dorleans Cinema.

Brendan Fletcher's *Mad Bastards* also screens today at 4pm in the Espace Dorleans Cinema. (COC)



EXPLAINER

The Thermal – what were they thinking?

Věra and Vladimír Machonin have, according to some, a lot to answer for. These are the two Soviet-era architects responsible for Kotva, the giant hexagonal pile of concrete in Prague's Old Town, haunted by the ghost of a shopping center. But the chances are you can see their

best known and most visible work from where you're standing right now; without the Machonins' Thermal Hotel, KVIFF as we know it wouldn't exist.

There's a reason that the architectural ideology the Machonins subscribed to is called brutalism. It's one of those names that explains itself (although originally coined from the French for raw concrete – *béton brut*). Brutalist architecture is built to survive, with stylistics determined by the function of the building and the realities of modern construction. But more than that, it reflects an era when the most inspiring and appropriate structure was the nuclear bunker. The Machonins used Amtotix weathering



spaces, making most sense if you compare the stark, military exteriors to the original interiors. They designed each building inside and out, and bright colors, expansive spaces and custom leatherette sci-fi furniture were the Machonins' trademark.

Architecture is crystallized ideology. And like it or not, in one stroke the Thermal transformed a charming little 19th century spa town into a place capable of hosting an enormous film festival like KVIFF. Like a gun emplacement in the heart of Disneyland, this imposing hotel reminds us of a reality very different from the brick-and-plaster chocolate boxes of the Hapsburg era, but one not so far removed. (PLC)

OFFICIAL SELECTION

**Collaborator –
Donovan debuts
with chronicle
of a meltdown**

Will Tizard

Martin Donovan's directing debut, *Collaborator*, puts two neighbors, each facing personal failures, into a hostage crisis to see what they're made of. While visiting his mother in Reseda, California, Robert Longfellow, the once-hot writer, gets caught up in the maelstrom of his neighbor Gus's antisocial meltdown.

Donovan says the film combines everything he's learned in two decades of acting under such directors as Hal Hartley and Jane Campion, and that it features one of actor David Morse's best performances yet.

■ So this story's kind of a polemic, isn't it? But based on real life events?

The original attempt at this began in 2003 when we were about to launch another war of aggression, and I was fuming about that. I was a young kid during the Vietnam War but I was old enough to know what was going on and to feel it, and I had older brothers and sisters. Here we were again, we'd already gone into Afghanistan and now we were going into Iraq and I was very much interested in the psychology and what is it about people who buy state propaganda and sign on.

■ So that perhaps gave rise to



Photo: KVIFF

There are no easy answers for the protagonists of Collaborator.

the character of Gus, the neighbor who always wanted to be a Marine but couldn't quite cut it?

The character Gus is based on someone that I knew in my neighborhood who lived across the street who actually died in a stand-off with the police. After I grew up and moved away he still was living at home like Gus, and probably would have been there today if he hadn't gotten into this thing. He had a criminal record and was in and out of jail. After I'd moved away my parents told me this story about how the cops were called to the house; a SWAT team surrounded it [and] there was this stand-off... When they finally got into the house he was dead. He'd overdosed on whatever drugs he was doing.

■ For an actor with your visibility in film, from the Hal Hartley films to *Insomnia* with

Al Pacino and lots of character roles on cable TV, was it still a challenge to get the funding for this film?

The problem was, with me playing the lead it was not an easy sell. What was shocking to find out was how names that you would think would get a small film like this financed don't mean anything. There's literally about five names that really are a slam dunk. Bang. You put that person in the film, it's financed.

First-time director, small film, not a genre film – there were a lot of things going against this movie. To just have a character-driven indie drama without names in it was a hard sell. I'm very lucky that I got the cast I wanted.

Collaborator screens today at 8pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall and at 10am tomorrow in the Espace Dorleans Cinema. ■

OFFICIAL SELECTION

**Heritage –
a modern-day
Eugene Onegin
from rural Poland**

Zdeněk Bělohávek

In *Heritage*, the Polish countryside resembles a can that was sealed in the 19th century and went bad in the second half of the 20th. Zbyszek, a failed law student, returns to it, having lost almost everything at the start of the film. But in coming home, he loses himself as well.

Andrzej Barański's film is based on semi-autobiographical short stories by young Polish author and screenplay writer Zbigniew Masternak.

The narrative thread of "prince Zbyszek" interweaves with a bleak portrait of early 21st century life in rural Poland, where the rigid and slow country life is marked by a shortage of jobs, recollections of the good old communist days, and faith, which has degraded into superstition and prejudice.

Zbyszek, something of an anti-hero, was once a promising athlete and law student. Prompted by his father, he sought to achieve harmony of the mind and body as a chance to progress further in his life, to move into the city and develop his skills as a lawyer or a professional athlete.

His actions are buttressed by a conviction of his exceptionality, rooted in the stories his father used to tell him about their fam-



Photo: KVIFF

In Heritage, Zbyszek discovers you can't go home again...

ily's princely origin and Zbyszek's destiny as the one who would restore the old family fame. Zbyszek's confidence outlives that of his father, who dies an alcoholic, leaving nothing to his wife but debt.

The whole story is marked by a tension in Zbyszek's relationship with his surroundings; the tormented young man partly belongs and partly does not. "Zbyszek hangs in a limbo between being a prince and a peasant," says Barański.

Both the director and author of the original story hail from the region east of Krakow where the film is set, but this does not automatically translate into respect for the native region. On the contrary, the film radiates contempt for the conditions defining local life.

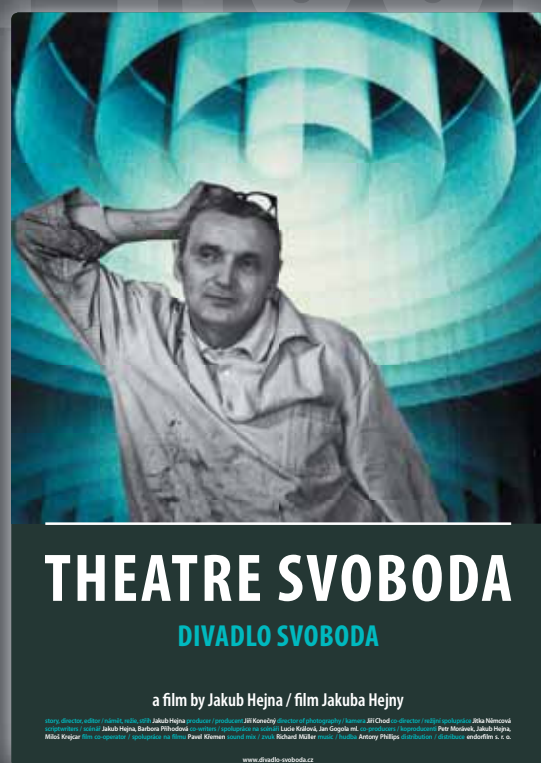
According to Barański, the shooting process reinforced his

determination to show the region's negative aspects: "Doing the screenwriting research, I had a few unpleasant encounters with models for the film characters... The awareness of the fact that behind the characters in the script were real, living people and we were on their territory somehow obliged us to stick to the truth and try to defend it."

Heritage resonates with the concept of a "cinema of moral anxiety" by taking an intimate, low-key look at a society marked by an immoral regime. Jacek Petrycki's camerawork is exquisite, but while the story unfolds in black-and-white, the complex issues confronted by Zbyszek are never so straightforward.

Heritage screens today in the Thermal's Grand Hall at 5pm and tomorrow at 1pm in the Espace Dorleans Cinema. ■

endorfilm

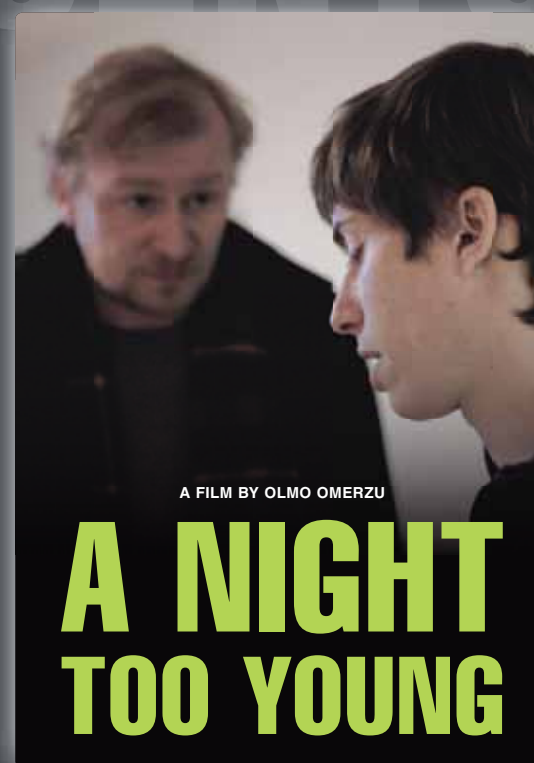
THEATRE SVOBODA
DIVADLO SVOBODA

a film by Jakub Hejma / film Jakuba Hejny

KVIFF INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

TODAY JULY 4 18:30 CINEMA B
TOMORROW JULY 5 12:30 CINEMA Bmatchmaking mayor
the heart can't be commanded

a film by Erika Hníková

written and directed by Erika Hníková director of photography Jiri Starnad editor Janka Věková sound master Petr Soltyš producer Jiri Konecny
co-producers Petr Moravský, Marek Čech, Ivan Hrdlička, Dagmar Hrdličková, Jindřich Štáhl
www.moravsky.czKVIFF Official Programme
Tagespiegel Readers' Prize
Best Forum Film BERLINALE 2011TODAY JULY 4 21:30 CINEMA B
TOMORROW JULY 5 18:30 CINEMA B

A FILM BY OLMO OMERZU

A NIGHT
TOO YOUNGKVIFF Works In Progress presentation
of the up-coming feature film
starring NATÁLIE ŘEHOŘOVÁTODAY JULY 4 13:30
CONGRESS HALL THERMAL HOTEL

www.endorfilm.cz

denicek@kviff.com

Around the world in 16 docs

Filip Šebek

Documentaries usually aim for more than just a faithful rendering of their protagonists; they are also able to convey the atmosphere of a location. That location is often crucial for the fate of the characters portrayed. The list of 16 films chosen from almost a thousand entries for this year's **documentary competition** reads like a veritable travelogue of places around the globe.

Although Jes Benstock's entertaining look at The Alternative Miss World competition (*The British Guide to Showing Off*) and Audrius Stonys's depiction of a Lithuanian couple coming to terms with the loss of their home (*I Walked Through Fire, You Were With Me*) have already screened, the remaining films will transport audiences to a variety of locations.

Fittingly, this world tour starts at Prague Airport, with Czech electricians Milan and Tomáš, the protagonists of Martin Mareček's *Solar Eclipse*. We join them as they wait for a flight to Zambia, where they installed electricity in a small village some years ago. Slightly apprehensive, they are now traveling back to make sure their work is still intact. What follows is a frequently funny look at how difficult it is to overcome cultural barriers.

From Zambia, *Arab Attraction* takes us to Yemen where Barbara Wally, a firebrand Austrian feminist has seemingly turned her



Ex-millionaires on the edge of poverty in *The Good Life*.

back on everything by converting to Islam and becoming the second wife of a Yemeni driver 20 years her junior.

Our next stop is Peru, where Fernando Vilchez Rodríguez looks at the efforts of earthquake survivors to rebuild their lives in *The Calm*.

Moving to a colder, sometimes bleaker, climate, loneliness and old age are explored in Martina Carlstedt's *Claes*, which looks at the plight of a Swedish pensioner who is afraid to step outside his own home. Elderly Swedes also figure prominently in Peter Gerdehag's rather self-explanatory *Women with Cows*, which observes two septuagenarian sisters over several years, not only during their frequent spats but also in their common fight to save the family farm.

Staying in the Nordic region, *A Tall Man* takes us to Finland, where Jani Peltonen uses archive footage to tell the somewhat bizarre life story of Väinö Myllyrinne, who became the first international Finnish celebrity by virtue of being over eight feet tall.

Dizzy heights are also at the fore in Marcin Koszałka's *Declaration of Immortality*, which portrays Polish rock-climbing legend Piotr Korczak.

The documentary sidebar also offers a nice fat slice of Americana with three different but equally offbeat movies. Andrea Blaugrund Nevins's *The Other F Word* follows an aging punk rock singer on a yearlong tour, reluctantly going through the motions of a rock'n'roll lifestyle when he'd actually much rather be at home with his family. French di-

rector Florent Tillon's bewitchingly atmospheric *Detroit Wild City* looks at the decline of a former showcase American industrial city into an eerie place full of dilapidated ruins. With the help of a superb score by Michael Brook, Nick Brandestini depicts life in a slightly different kind of conurbation – *Darwin*, a town of just 35 (mostly eccentric) inhabitants in the arid landscape of Death Valley.

Quiet isolation is also evident in Polish director Michał Marczak's look at one of the last border stations *At the Edge of Russia*, operated by a handful of soldiers, hundreds of kilometers from any human settlement. A similarly desolate corner of Russia is the setting for Anja Strelets's visually impressive experimental documentary about *Natasha*, an eight-year-old girl growing up in a dilapidated village.

Such seclusion is a far cry from Tavros, the seediest shantytown district of Athens, where Christos Karakapelis provides a stunningly authentic depiction of the lives of scrap metal collectors, who eke out a living by harvesting this *Raw Material*.

Grinding poverty also hangs over the lives of two Danish ex-millionaires on the brink of destitution in the Portuguese town of Cascais. In *The Good Life*, Eva Mulvad observes their hopeless situation while looking back at the luxury they used to enjoy – and showing us how relative everything is.

FACES



Ahmed Imamović



Syllas Tzoumerkas



Andrea Molaioli

Expected in Karlovy Vary today is a team from **Martin Šulík's** Official Selection entry *Gypsy*. Šulík is accompanied by most of the cast; **Ján Mižigár**, **Martin Hangurbadžo**, **Martina Kotlárová**, **Miroslav Gulyas** and **Attila Mokos** all arrive today. Also competing is *The Jewel*, a reconstruction of an Italian corruption scandal directed by **Andrea Molaioli**, arriving today with co-producer **Francesca Cima** and actor **Remo Girone**. In the Official Selection but not competing, **Alberto J. Gorritiberea** (*Arriya – the Stone*) arrives today with producer **José María Lara**.

Look out for more hopefuls from the East of the West selection: we have *Nothing Against Nothing* director **Petr Marek**; **Ahmed Imamović**, the writer/director of *Belvedere*, with producer **Samir Smajić**; and also **Stas Yershov**, one of the production team behind *Generation P*.

Here for the Forum of Independents sidebar is young

Norwegian writer/director **Mariken Halle**, whose thesis film *Maybe Tomorrow* is generating a lot of interest. She's accompanied by co-producer **Clara Bodén**. Also arriving today for this section is actor **Tom Cullen** (*Weekend*).

Writer/director **Claudia Buthenhoff-Duffy** (*Komeda – A Soundtrack for Life*), part of the 2011: A Musical Odyssey selection, arrives today with producer **Wojciech Szczudlo**. Other directors arriving are **Arni Ólafur Ásgeirsson** (*Undercurrent*) from Horizons, **Gust Van den Berghe** (*Blue Bird*) from Another View, Greek director **Syllas Tzoumerkas** (*Homeland*), and documentary maker **Erika Hníková** (*Matchmaking Mayor*). Veteran Czech actor and director **Jan Kraus** is visiting Karlovy Vary to present *Eugene Among Us* for the Out of the Past selection. He's joined by more local talent; keep and eye out for **Iva Janžurová** (*Man About Town*) and *Eighty Letters* lead **Zuzana Lapčíková**. (PLC)

REVIEWERS RECOMMEND

Alissa Simon

Film reviewer, *Variety*



Forty Guns

Director: Samuel Fuller, USA, 1957, 79 min
July 4, 9am, Grand Hall

Start the morning right and see imperious ranch owner Jessica Drummond (fiery Barbara Stanwyck) on a white stallion, leading her gang of 40 gunmen in one of the most delicious and deliriously strange Westerns ever made. In this crude Arizona outpost, Jessica's got the law in her pocket, but finds her rule challenged by newly arrived Griff Bonnell (Barry Sullivan), whose mastery of his gun is just the thing to tame "the high riding woman with a whip." Enjoy the black-and-white 'Scope visuals, outrageous sexual innuendo, and corny but catchy ballads.



Michael

Director: Markus Schleiner, Austria, 2011, 96 min
July 4, 7pm, Pupp

The less you know about this one, direct from competition in Cannes, the more involving it will be. Illustrating the banality of evil in an impressively controlled and sometimes darkly humorous fashion, the story unfolds over five months, and takes a coolly non-judgmental, non-psychological approach to a disturbing topic. Although certainly not to all tastes, it slowly reels viewers in with its strong lead performance, a creepy accumulation of ordinary detail, and suspenseful twists. Those who appreciate challenging material will want to check it out.



Hello! How Are You?

Director: Alexandru Maftai, Romania, 2010, 105 min
July 4, 10am, Small Hall

The antithesis of the grim naturalism of the best-known new Romanian cinema, this bittersweet romantic comedy feels like a breath of fresh air, proving that even more commercial films can deliver emotional epiphanies. Witty and stylishly crafted, it centers on a husband and wife whose 20-year marriage has long since lost its zing, making them vulnerable to the joys of intimate but anonymous online chat with a stranger. In humorous contrast to their staid, passionless lives, characters in a constant state of sexual arousal surround them.



Maelström

Director: Denis Villeneuve, Canada, 2000, 88 min
July 4, 7 pm, Richmond

I think it is great that KVIFF is doing a retro of the Quebecois director Denis Villeneuve who has been receiving well-deserved attention because of his most recent film, *Incendies*, a best foreign-language Oscar finalist and prize-winner at numerous festivals. I saw *Maelström* in Montreal during its world premiere and the story and images stayed with me for a very long time. It contains one of the most tender and well-shot film sex scenes that I've ever seen, and a talking fish. ■

GENERATION P

A VICTOR GINZBURG FILM

July 5

"A rare example of a Russian indie film..."

VARIETY

"This film was probably released due to some bureaucratic mistake, and will likely be shelved far too soon..."

ARGUMENTY NEDELI

Discover the film EVERYONE in Russia is talking about

★★★★★

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

"One of these gods was the lame dog *Pizdyets*, whose name means "everything is fucked". Legend says he sleeps in the snows up north and when he awakes, that's the end – Pizdyets..."

contact: info@generationp.ru www.generationp.ru www.facebook.com/GenerationP

Variety's slick flick picks click

Laura McGinnis

Variety isn't just a trade magazine; it's an institution – as is its sidebar at Karlovy Vary. For fourteen years, *Variety's Ten Euro Directors to Watch* has identified exceptional new films and directors, and presented them to KVIFF audiences.

"What really characterizes *Variety* and sets us apart is that we have experienced, savvy film critics at festivals all over the world, really scouring not just the main festivals, but festivals of all sizes, looking for new filmmakers to write about," says Steven Gaydos, executive director of *Variety*. This puts *Variety's* critics in a unique position to identify emerging talents.

Longtime fans of the sidebar will notice that the title has changed this year, from *Variety Critic's Choice*.

The change "puts a stronger focus on the filmmakers' potential," says *Variety* critic Alissa Simon, in her second year as the sidebar's liaison. Nonetheless, the ultimate objective of the sidebar remains the same: "to showcase European films by first and second time directors notable for their freshness, invention and passion."

The sidebar – organized by KVIFF, *Variety* and European Film Promotion (EFP) – is once again highlighting 10 fledgling helmers and their works, six of which are feature debuts. *Variety* reviewers selected the films, all produced in 2010 and 2011 in EFP's 32 member countries.

The sidebar "is a journey from Iceland to Romania, from the East to the West, from the North to the South," says Jo Mühlberger, EFP project director. "It's fascinating to



She Monkeys director Lisa Aschan is one of ten rising European directors delighting KVIFF audiences.

look at the topics being addressed in Sweden and Norway and Romania and see that there are similarities as well as differences."

As always, this year's crop includes a medley of nations, genres, styles and themes.

From Scandinavia come two unconventional coming-of-age dramas and a quirky, lovable nut ensemble feature. In Lisa Aschan's *She Monkeys* (Sweden), a young teenager tries out for a local horseback acrobatics group and befriends a strong-willed girl on the team. Their relationship is quickly swept up in competitiveness and sexual attraction that pulls and pushes them toward their physical and psychological limits.

Turn Me On, Goddammit also focuses on female sexuality and the fantasies of a teenager suffering the indignities of adolescence in a small Norwegian town. Janicke Systad Jacobsen treads fa-

miliar ground in a coming-of-age tale, but captures a wit and depth in her young stars that's absent from many teen flicks.

In *King's Road* (Valdís Óskarsdóttir, Iceland), 30-something Junior returns to Iceland hoping for some financial assistance from his father, and is surprised to find him living in a trailer park chock-a-block with zany eccentrics. Savvy editing and a clever screenplay make for a charming journey.

Ben Wheatley's *Kill List* (UK) and Claudio Cupellini's *A Quiet Life* (Italy) are creepy, compelling thrillers with strong casts and thoughtful direction. The former is a dark and twisted tale that's sure to please horror fans, even as it bends genre rules. The latter is a sophisticated psychological drama about a man whose quiet life belies a violent and powerful past – until the day two young men come to town...

Both *Hello! How Are You?* and

Flowers of Evil explore the challenges of love in the information age. *Hello!...* (Alexandru Maftai, Romania) is a poignant and visually compelling portrait of a marriage whose foundation is being chipped away by boredom and the enticements of online chat rooms. In *Flowers...*, an Iranian college student falls for a charming Parisian hotel clerk, but their romance is undermined by the violence of Iran's 2009 Green Revolution, a constant presence thanks to the immediacy of the Internet. David Dusa (France) mixes grainy Internet footage and social media text with romantic shots of modern Paris to create a story of love both supported and destabilized by the timelessness and placelessness of the information age.

Where is my home? The question that opens the Czech national anthem lies at the heart of Slovakian Zuzana Liová's *The House* and German Yasemin Samdereli's

Almanya. The former is a quiet, moving film about a teenager desperate to escape her hometown even as her father takes steps to keep her at home. The latter is a sprawling ensemble comedy about immigration, cross-cultural confusion, and national identity. Both offer insight into the meaning of home, nation and self.

Finally, the protagonists of *Oxygen* are teenage brothers fighting the limitations of cystic fibrosis, a disease that affects them both. Belgian Hans Van Nuffel eschews scrappy sick kid clichés in favor of clear-eyed portraits of two young men facing mortality with humor and defiance.

With so much diversity, the sidebar is bound to have something for everybody, Simon says. "Yet the chosen films also play off of each other in provocative ways, so that the exhibition program adds up to something greater than the individual titles."

WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

Sergey Azimov

Producer, *Mother's Paradise*



■ What are you doing here?

We are presenting our movie here. It's a Kazakh film based on a script by a famous Iranian dramatist, shot by a similarly famous Kyrgyz director. It's typical of the tendency toward integration and international cooperation that we can see these days.

■ Is it not a bit unusual for a Kyrgyz to shoot a Kazakh film?

Actually, it's a very normal thing, because Kyrgyz and Kazakhs are very close nationalities, and Aktan Arym Kubat [the director] is a very good friend of mine. It's the same as Czechs and Slovaks, so it's normal.

■ Why are you screening at KVIFF?

First of all because our film was chosen by the selection committee. This movie was shot without any penny from our [Kazakh] government, because nowadays it mostly supports films that don't create problems and only promote the country [not difficult social dramas like ours]. So we see being accepted by an international festival like this shows support and a real understanding of the film itself. We actually had our world premiere here. (COC)

ON THE TOWN

Fresh Boulevard – Lázně III

Mlýnské nábřeží 5

No phone

10am-midnightish

It's not exactly haute cuisine, but the food at this tent comes fresh and hot, and you couldn't ask for a better spot to watch the crowds stroll along the promenade – shielded from KVIFF's inevitable yet unpredictable cloudbursts. Friendly, bilingual staff serve dishes that are simple, but satisfying. For a midday break, Fresh Boulevard has all the standard coffee options and a selection of tempting desserts, including homemade cakes. Salads (85 CZK) are basic, but arrive on a springy bed of greens, and daily meal specials are reliable and reasonably priced at 110 CZK. The grill serves up sizzling sausage, pork, beef and chicken from noon to closing, as well as an assortment of sandwiches.

Fresh Boulevard closes with the festival, so duck in for a meal while you still have the chance. You won't regret it. (McG)

James

Vřídelní ulice 51

☎ 774 488 339

10am-1am

James has all the hallmarks of a Karlovy Vary restaurant: a reliable selection of pastas, pizzas and meats; Czech beer (a little pricey, at 69 CZK) and stellar views. Relax under the red awning of their outdoor patio and watch the steam rise off the Teplá as you nibble on a crisp pizza. If you're feeling adventurous, you might even consider the "James," a 340 CZK pie loaded with cheese, smoked meat, ham, salami, cucumbers, mushrooms, sour cream and oregano. Or content yourself with a steak from the grill.



Fresh Boulevard – a perfect place to people watch.

James offers many cuts of pork, beef and chicken for 360-580 CZK. The scenic view is one of James' best selling points, but if

the nasty inclement weather holds, you can avail yourself of their comfortable indoor seating upstairs. (McG)

Čajovna 1000 a 1 noc

I. P. Pavlova 19

☎ 608 466 947

8am-midnight

The cozy "1001 Nights Tea House" brings a little eastern promise to KVIFF. As its name suggests, tea is the real draw here. There are dozens of varieties on offer, from Chinese green tea (65 CZK) and Indian Darjeeling (95 CZK) to Japanese Kyoto (135 CZK). Food options are limited, but a very reasonable fest menu offers staples such as a chicken burger, sausage baguette and a choice of lavash for just 37 CZK. Besides the free Wi-Fi, many of this establishment's hipster clientele seem to be drawn by the hookah pipes. Black tobacco goes for 75 CZK, but there are plenty of takers for the "Superior" (250 CZK), which helps make this one of the most pleasant and fragrant smoke-filled rooms at the festival. (COC)

Well, it's the 4th of July! And in honor of another kind of independence, KVIFF is unveiling a plaque to Samuel Fuller today in the nearby town of Sokolov. The plaque celebrates his WWII service in the First Infantry Division, which liberated both the town and the concentration camp of Falkenau in 1945. Fuller – then in his early 30s – shot 16mm footage of the camp's liberation, which was later used in a documentary.

And tonight at 9pm at the Mlýnská Colonnade there is a free concert celebrating the contribution of Polish composers to 20th century film. Conductor Peter Vrábel, soprano Lucie Fišer Silkenová and the BERG Orchestra play scores from classics such as *Dracula*, *Three Colors* and *The Karamazovs*, accompanied by big-screen projections of memorable scenes from those movies. (PLC)

DAILIES



David Morse arrives at the Pupp.



KVIFF president Jiří Bartoška (left) with Goran Bregović.



Collaborator director Martin Donovan.