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There are all kinds of laughter

Todd Solondz on making a 'tragic, reality version' of *Seinfeld*

Veronika Bednářová,
Cóilín O'Connor

American director Todd Solondz has carved out a niche for himself making offbeat, suburban dramas like *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *Happiness*, and *Storytelling*, which have shocked and delighted audiences in equal measure. He came to KVIFF this week to present his latest work *Dark Horse*.

■ *Dark Horse's* protagonist, Abe [played by Jordan Gelber], is an emotionally stunted adult male living at home with his parents. This kind of character has appeared quite frequently in a number of popular films and series of late. Are you tapping into a cultural meme in this sense?

It's certainly very popular, this whole genre. You have [*The 40-Year Old Virgin* director] Judd Apatow's movies, of course. There's these movies, and there're series and sitcoms that use this figure for very different ends from what I have here. I think my ends are a lot less sentimental. It's an alternative take on a subject that is very common right now, not just in the United States.

■ Some really bad and horrible things often happen in your movies, but usually in a low-key, almost banal, suburban way. Is that your take on American suburbia? Behind a veneer of bubble-gum respectability, there's all sorts of bad stuff happening...

I don't want to say bad, but I try to ground it in a kind of reality that is recognizable. [In *Dark Horse*] the parents when they're watching television, they're actually watching *Seinfeld*. We could never afford to license *Seinfeld*, so I had the actors from the show come to a studio and read lines



Photo: Jan Handrejch

Todd Solondz has brought his latest film *Dark Horse* to Karlovy Vary.

that I wrote for them so it sounds like *Seinfeld*, but it's not really like *Seinfeld*. Again, I was very fortunate. Jason Alexander, who plays George, the character who sometimes lives with his parents on that TV show, had them all come in. The idea was that that's a kind of sitcom version. And their life is the counterlife. George is the sitcom version of Abe who's kind of the tragic, reality version.

■ Your films are often hilarious, but in a really screwed-up

way. You can laugh at certain scenes in *Happiness* and *Storytelling*, in particular, and immediately feel guilty afterwards. Do you deliberately try to discomfort your audience?

When I go to the movies, I like to be provoked. I like to experience things in a surprising and a fresh way. I like to laugh, to be moved. All the things that others like, I suppose. And so I try to create that kind of experience.

■ How did you go about landing established stars like

Mia Farrow and Christopher Walken who played Abe's parents in *Dark Horse*?

They're obviously very well known; really iconic with a big history. Mia, I approached — I know she's been very involved with Sudan and has been turning down work and I wasn't very optimistic but we met. And when we met, she told me that she'd retired from acting. And she said she hadn't even read the script, but her son, Ronan, was a big admirer of my work and he im-

plored her and said, "Mom, you've got to do this movie!" So that's why she did it. She's a total delight. A very, very funny, very smart, pleasant woman to work with. And, as you can see, just preternaturally beautiful. No cosmetic work, nothing. She's a great beauty.

■ And Christopher Walken?

Chris was anxious to play "a human being," that's to say he's often been cast in roles that are not grounded so much in reality, let's say. My aim was to do something different for him, where it was all about making him very conservative and muted. I gave him a toupee. I changed his eyes. I dressed him very conservatively, very restrained, because that face is still very powerful, very iconic. It's all about restraint there.

■ *Happiness* is one of those movies where, if you were watching it in a movie theater, your responses would be more restrained. You wouldn't feel like laughing at certain things in front of other people. Do you think your films are best watched at home alone behind closed doors?

The best way to go to a movie is to go with an open mind and to experience it as honestly as you can. If you go with a group of people, your experience is compromised because there's a psychology of being in a group that is very different from the experience that you might have by yourself... It's only when you go alone to a movie that you have your most honest experience of the film. Audiences are not always honest. They are fickle and laughter is not a monolithic force. There are all kinds of laughter...

You can catch the final screening of *Dark Horse* tomorrow at 6:30pm in the Thermal's Small Hall.

THE LOWDOWN

Croaky-voiced master of the bittersweet cringe comedy **Todd Solondz** has an unexpected (and unwanted) big hit at the moment — his big, black, über geeky **hipster-chic frames**. These spectacular spectacles are getting compliments from all sides.

Solondz was just ruminating on **George Orwell's belief** that, "If you live to be fifty, you get the face that you deserve," when the glasses comments began flying thick and fast.

But though Solondz glumly accepts the fact the "people prefer not to see him without glasses," he was quite frank in an interview today about preferring to be photographed without them.

"But they're so unique," the interviewers cried, "surely you had them made just for you!"

"No!" Solondz insisted, "I bought them in a regular glasses store! Other people have ones just like them!"

Suitably put in their places, the hounding journo's relented. And Mr. Solondz was just finishing his well-earned glass of water in relative peace when the photographer came up. "We're ready, for you now Mr. Solondz. Oh, and please can you put on your glasses?"

Courageously, Mr. Solondz stuck to his guns, flatly refusing to admit that now, being 52, he'd got exactly the glasses he deserves. He took off his archetypically hip nerd frames, put on his **photo poker face**, and braced himself for the flash.

NOTICE

Two public screenings of the Hungarian film *Dear Betrayed Friends* have been added to the program. The first take place today at 4:30pm in the Pupp Cinema and tomorrow at 12:30pm in the Čas Cinema.

SEE YOU THERE

Hüseyin Tabak

Director, *Your Beauty Is Worth Nothing...*

My film already screened [in the Official Selection competition] on Sunday, so since then I have been enjoying films from other colleagues here. There are quite a lot of good films, especially from more experienced directors. Today, I want to see the new film from Matteo Garrone, *Reality*, which screened at Cannes this year and won the Grand Prix. I loved his last film, *Gomorrah*. That was really authentic and I am very excited about his new work. Another movie I want to watch is the Japanese movie *Cut* [by Iranian director Amir Naderi] because the poster looks damn good! I'm surprised because there are a lot of good movies from the other competitions and it's just fun to watch them with an audience who are not filmmakers. That's quite a good experience here — to see how they receive the films and how they feel about them. This is what makes Karlovy Vary a special place.

Reality screens today at 11am in the Karlovy Vary Municipal Theater. Cut also screens today at 1pm in the Thermal's Congress Hall. (COC)



Photo: Jan Handrejch

EXPLAINER

A cobbled history of Karlovy Vary

People have been leaving their footprints in the fertile soils around the town of Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) since prehistoric times. However, the written history of Karlovy Vary (Charles' Spring) began in 1370, when Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor (pictured), granted the settlement here the privileges of a town and it has since thrived thanks to the renown of its thermal waters and their purported health-giving properties.

Of course, it has not all been plain sailing for this quaint conglomeration on the confluence of the Teplá and Ohře Rivers. In the 16th century it was lashed by floods. In the 17th century it was gutted by fire and then ravaged by the Thirty Years War. Happily, the 18th century was a boom time for



this little spa town, as the Habsburgs lavished it with attention and European nobility began to appreciate its charms. The 19th century saw more growth and the town gained its Art Nouveau appearance, having lost many of its Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque touches to frequent fires.

Naturally, KV was not left unscathed by the sweeping political changes of the 20th century. Crippling economic depression sandwiched between two world wars stunted cultural growth and brought dire poverty for the town citizens. KV found itself successively under the control of the Third Reich, then briefly in 1945 the Czech Revolutionary National Committee aided by the US Army, only to have the Red Army roll in just a few days later. Decades of communism followed. When the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, an unflattering light was cast on the austere esthetic of the communist years. It could be said that the last two decades have seen KV slowly return to its former glory as a chocolate box spa town in the heart of Europe. (GP)

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Boy Eating the Bird's Food – art is a primal need

Zbyněk Vlasák

The *Festival Daily* talked to director Ektoras Lygizos who is at KVIFF with his feature debut, which focuses on three days in the life of a gifted boy living on the edge of society in Athens.

■ **Do you see your film *Boy Eating the Bird's Food* as a political one?**

I guess everything that comes from Greece these days is doomed to be considered as political. You are planning to tell an intimate story in a very subjective and personal way, and then you realize that talking about a starving individual in times of crisis is in a way political. If my film sets a political question or issue, it should be this: what happens when you feel that the system and the society you live in consider you useless? When your gifts and talents are worthless? How do you build self-respect when you see your value reflected in nothing and no-one around you?

■ **For me the core of your film is the question of dignity. How difficult is it to maintain dignity in Greece today?**

It's difficult, indeed. We are brought up with a very distorted idea of dignity. We are brought up not to show our weaknesses, not to ask for help. And it's got worse with all this respect for rich people and strong people and successful people that global capitalism has brought. There is this new kind of shame, for being poor,



Photo: KVIFF

Ektoras Lygizos's Greek drama has a political edge.

weak and non-successful. A shame that leads you directly to self-isolation.

■ **Greek filmmakers tell us about the financial crisis in a very specific way. They do not focus on "flying cobblestones" but on intimate stories of individuals or families. Why is that, do you think?**

These kinds of stories can provide us with good allegories. Our parents and brothers and sisters are also our friends, our suppressors, our consolation, our biggest obstacles and our greatest enemies. The depiction of a family is a depiction of a whole society.

■ **How difficult is it to shoot a film in Greece nowadays? Are Greeks "in the mood" to spend their time on art?**

These days in Greece, art is considered to be a luxury. Well, I believe that art is a primal need.

There is a reason why even prehistoric societies practiced arts. It's a kind of nourishment that sex, food, education, love, religion, and whatever else cannot provide.

■ **Do you foresee a brighter future for Greece?**

I'm not an optimist. I believe that reality is even worse than the worst conspiracy theories. I believe that nothing can really change unless money and the monetary system are abolished, and people take their jobs in their own hands, and stop fighting for money and power but only for the joy of creativity, of giving and of helping. I guess I'm an old-fashioned anarchist.

Boy Eating the Bird's Food screens today at 8pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall and tomorrow at 10.30am in the Pupp Cinema.

OFFICIAL SELECTION

La lapidation de Saint Etienne – meditations on loneliness

Kateřina Kadlecová

The Spanish/French contender for the Crystal Globe this year, *La lapidation de Saint Etienne*, is a meditation on loneliness, aging, and the problem of seeking balance between this world and the next. Pere Vilà i Barceló's story of the shut-in Etienne, performed with disturbing authenticity by Lou Castel, considers his deteriorating physical and mental states in ways that leave us wondering whether he is already moving into the spirit world or just the one visible only to himself.

Ill and living in a claustrophobic apartment full of artifacts from his happier, younger days, the protagonist clings desperately to these shreds and won't consider leaving the flat, even though he has no legal claim to it.

Ignoring everyone who tries to remedy his downward spiral, including a social worker, neighbors and the owner, he shows more interest in the souls of his dead wife and daughter, who he believes inhabit the shabby shelter's walls.

Barceló admits that the film, confronts audiences with unvarnished truth, but says this is precisely his point.

"Some people maybe might find it even disgusting, but Etienne's story is not far from reality. I sometimes get the inspiration from the newspapers – in this



Photo: KVIFF

Lou Castel ponders the end in La lapidation de Saint Etienne.

case I remember having read about some firemen who found an old dead man after the neighbors complained of the bad smell coming from his home. I imagined the situation of this old man, at the end of his whole life, his loneliness and his last thoughts."

The main character is about more than that, however, according to the director, and personifies much of the neglect that is all too common with the old and infirm.

"I think that, in general, old people find it difficult to follow the current rhythm of society," he says. "It seems that they just don't fit anywhere and they are often set apart in care homes. I think that maybe it's true that we don't have the same respect for aged persons' memories and experiences that some cultures still have."

Étienne is no simplistic victim,

however, and has possibly done as much harm to others as he seems to be undergoing.

"None of these characters are absolutely good or bad," explains Barceló. "I didn't pretend to make a moralist film. They all have their reasons and guilt to behave as they do; they are human with human feelings."

He allows that Etienne can still be seen as a "contemporary martyr" but the doubts he feels about his life make this tale more complex. What's more, says the director, "he doesn't accept his fate easily. He feels that if he dies, all that he has loved and lived disappears with him." (WT)

La lapidation de Saint. Etienne screens today at 5pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall and tomorrow at 1:30pm in the Pupp Cinema.

FACES

Amateur astronomers have a treat today with the imminent arrival of **Susan Sarandon**, here to receive KVIFF's annual Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema award in the form of a coveted Crystal Globe. Czech acting legend **Josef Somr** is also expected today, here for the tribute in his honor, as is multiple Olympic gold-winning gymnast (and advisor to Václav Havel) **Věra Čáslavská**, here for *Věra 68*, the documentary about her tumultuous life. Also look out for lead **Kara Hayward** and producer and visual effects buff **Jeremy Dawson**, here to present Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom*, which is showing in Horizons this year.

There are many more well-known and respected locals arriving into KV today. **Tomáš Luňák** director of the groundbreaking animated drama *Alois Nebel* is here as part of the

Czech Films 2011–2012 selection, presenting his unique character study. Also look out for actors **Eva Vrbková** and **Jiří Vyorálek**, presenting *Long Live the Family!* a look at the amoral contemporary climate which won Czech Film Critics awards for Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Film. Also here for this section is actor **Patrik Děrgel**, the lead in *DONT STOP*, dramatizing the reality of trying to start a punk band during Normalization, and accepting no nostalgia for this troubled period.

And from the Forum of Independents, *Vacuum* lead **Simonetta Ainaudi** gets into town today for the international premiere of this bleak depiction of the trials of motherhood under economic pressures. She's joined by its writer and director **Giorgio Cugno**, who also acted in this debut feature.



Susan Sarandon Věra Čáslavská



Giorgio Cugno



Tomáš Luňák

Josef Somr

Czech, please!

There was a time way back in the 1990s when *nakupování* (or shopping) was a bit of an ordeal for non-Czech-speaking expats. In those days, you usually had to go to a local *potraviny* or grocery store where all merchandise was kept behind the counter, hence buying provisions would involve a lot pointing and waving of arms. Since the advent of self-service supermarkets, however, the Czech shopping experience has become a lot easier. Nonetheless, you might still find some of these phrases useful in some outlets.

Co hledáte? (tso hle-dah-tay) – What are you looking for?

Sháním/ Hledám... (s-han-eem/hled-ahm) – I'm looking for...

Prodáváte...? (pro-daav-ah-tay) – Do you sell...?

Máte...? (Mah-tay) – Do you have...?

Kolik to stojí? (kolik to stoyee) – How much does it cost...?

Berete karty? (berettay kartee) – Do you take cards?

Můžu zaplatit kartou? (moo-zhoo za-plat-eet karto) – Can I pay by card?

Bohužel platební karty nebereme (bo-hoo-zhel platebnee karty neberemay) – Unfortunately, we don't take cards

Bereme jenom hotovost (beremay yen-um hot-o-vost) – We only take cash

Vezmu si... (vez-moo see) – I'd like...

Nemáte tašku? (ne-mah-tay tash-koo) – Do you have a bag?

Nemáte něco levnějšího? (ne-mah-tay nyet-so levnayshee-ho) – Do you have anything cheaper?

Nemáte menší (bankovku)? (ne-mah-tay men-shee bank-ovku) – Do you have a smaller banknote?

Bohužel nemám nazpátek. (bo-hoo-zhel ne-mahm na-zpah-tek) – I'm sorry, I don't have change

Můžu vám to vrátit v mincích? (moo-zhoo vahm to vrah-teet ve mints-eek) – Can I give it to you in coins

Můžete mi rozměnit? (moo-zhetay mee roz-myen-eet) – Can you break this for me?

Bohužel nerozměňujeme (bo-hoo-zhel ne-roz-myen-oo-yemay) – Sorry, we don't give out change (COC/PH)

SCREENING FRIDAY JULY 6TH
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A portrait by **Lluís Miñarro**

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à propos de **Manoel de Oliveira**

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Czech master shines in sidebar

Peter Le Couteur

Begun last year, KVIFF's new Out of the Past sidebar – named after Jacques Tourneur's 1947 classic – replaced the much-loved Treasures from the Archives selection. "Treasure is a word which grew too old; it's very old fashioned, and moreover there's not really stuff from the archives anymore," KVIFF Artistic Director Karel Och told the *Festival Daily*.

But Och is a big fan of the classics. If it were just up to him, he confided, he'd fill half the program with old films. And it's not hard to see the temptation; KVIFF is known for its excellent retrospectives of thoroughly deserving icons, this year's being actor Josef Somr, award-winning contemporary Turkish writer and director Reha Erdem, and master of French *noir*, Jean-Pierre Melville.

Last year, for the debut of Out of the Past, KVIFF programmed *Wanda* by Barbara Loden and *Deep End* by Jerzy Skolimowski, but, Och says, "I felt these two titles were a little hidden in the shadows, because we had 10 films by [Samuel] Fuller."

One difficulty for the visibility of the Out of the Past selection is that there is no theme or unifying concept. Instead, Och wanted the section to be as flexible as possible, similar to Cannes Classics, which uses the Cannes platform to present rediscovered works to today's audiences. When there are restored reprints of major classics like David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*, Miloš Forman's *The Firemen's Ball*, or legendary



Czech animator Jiří Trnka with some of his creations.

British satire *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* all released in the same year as the centenary of the birth of a Czech animation legend like **Jiří Trnka**, only a section like Out of the Past is flexible enough to incorporate all three.

Jiří Trnka is someone who ought to need no introduction, but unfortunately for many international film fans, he does. Trnka was perhaps the most innovative animator of his time, producing not only hand-painted cell animation, but radical stop-motion puppet work. Due to his early death and problems with who owns the rights to his extensive *oeuvre*, very few of his miniature epics are easily available, and restoring them

and releasing them is a complex legal challenge. Due in part to the rocky political history of the Czech Republic, but also to Trnka's singular feat of living with two separate partners and sets of children at once (on a kind of timeshare basis), there's no Trnka museum, no merchandising, and nothing like the kind of contemporary international reputation one would expect for a man known as the Walt Disney of Eastern Europe.

Only months after his funeral with state honors, Trnka's final work, *The Hand* – about a sculptor hounded by an enormous hand demanding he make a statue in its honor – was banned by the

authorities, who confiscated all copies and locked them away for 20 years. But, as Trnka said, "Puppet films are truly unlimited in their possibilities: they can express themselves with the greatest force precisely when the realistic expression in his cinematographic image often faces insurmountable obstacles."

An unbelievably prolific workaholic, Trnka made six full-length animated features, nearly 20 shorts, and illustrated over a hundred children's books. Most of the puppets in his astonishing, dynamic stop-motion work he made himself, carving them from wood before covering them with intricately stitched leather and woolen clothing. Even today, many remain in perfect working order; they're solid, expressive, infinitely posable, and capable of standing upright, balanced under their own weight. He opted never to change the facial expressions, remaining true to his training in the traditions of puppet theater, but through posture, lighting and camera angles, the carved and painted faces imply an infinite range of powerful interior emotion.

The strangest fact about Trnka's films is that most are not for children, though many Czech children have grown up with them. His interpretations of tales from literature including Shakespeare, Chekov, and Czech folklore – like the programmed *Old Czech Legends* – are complex, uncompromising, and conceptually unsettling fables of patriotism, social responsibility, and personal desire.

WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

Meenakshi Shedde
Festival consultant, India



■ So, what brings you to the Karlovy Vary festival?

I'm the India consultant to the Berlin and Dubai film festivals, but I'm also a freelance curator for a number of festivals worldwide, including Toronto, Locarno, and Pusan. There's also the IFI festival in Goa, and the Mumbai festival – I've been a curator for them at various points. So people are always jumping on me and saying: "Get us the best films!" "Tell us what you have," etcetera, etcetera. So, I'm just keeping my eyes open.

■ Do you like what you've seen so far?

I'm very excited to be here because I've never been here before, so I'm going around with big Mickey Mouse eyes. It's very special to be here. I'm scouting like mad, but it's nice, because it's not like a high-pressure thing.

■ You think this festival is pretty relaxed...?

KVIFF is a little bit laid back and I think this is a terribly precious quality that it has. It should guard this fiercely like a tigress because I think festivals in general are becoming huge industrial machines. It's just wonderful here with all the backpackers, and I love these huge beanbags with everyone sprawled out all over the floor, which is very nice!

■ Anything else you like?

The Thermal meetings on the terrace have been good. This is one of the few festivals where

I hardly know anyone, as I'm sort of totally parachuting in and I don't know many people. But it's been quite good. Even if people don't know me, when I explain what I do, they're like: "Oh, can we give you a screening?" "Yes, please!" That's been really, really good.

■ What about the movies?

I've seen some very, very strong films. I'm still here for a few more days, so I'm going to be watching out for stuff, particularly for Berlin and Dubai.

■ Is there any interest in the films here back home?

Tastes in India are becoming much wider. We are still the biggest consumers of Bollywood, but by seeing a lot of world cinema, people's tastes are opening up. It's kind of deepening the market at home.

(COC)

REVIEWERS RECOMMEND

Damon Wise

Contributing Editor, *Empire* magazine



Grabbers

Director: Jon Wright
UK, Ireland, 2011, 94 min
July 5, midnight, Cas Cinema



Horror and comedy rarely work together, but this charming Irish creature feature delivers laughs and scares in equal measures. Set in a sleepy island town, *Grabbers* stars Richard Coyle as Ciarán, an underachieving cop with a drink problem whose life is turned upside down when a new *garda* is transferred from the mainland – not just because his new partner is an uptight workaholic but because the town is about to be overrun by aliens. Finding that these monsters are allergic to booze, Ciarán faces his worst nightmare: he must stay sober while ensuring everyone else around him gets steaming drunk.

Paradise: Love

Director: Ulrich Seidl
Austria, Germany, France, 2012, 120 min
July 5, 12:30pm, Small Hall – Thermal



Ulrich Seidl's films aren't known for their warmth and humanity; nevertheless, this is a much more sympathetic study of loneliness than it might first appear. Teresa (Margarete Tiesel) is an Austrian *hausfrau* who, encouraged by her much more worldly friend, takes a holiday to Africa, where she begins a string of affairs with the local men. But what begins as simple sex tourism soon becomes something much deeper: who is exploiting whom here? Teresa finds out the hard way, and though the nudity is a little uncomfortable at times, this is an accessible and surprisingly non-judgmental drama.

Searching for Sugar Man

Director: Malik Bendjelloul
Sweden, UK, 2011, 83 min
July 5, 10am, Drahomira Cinema



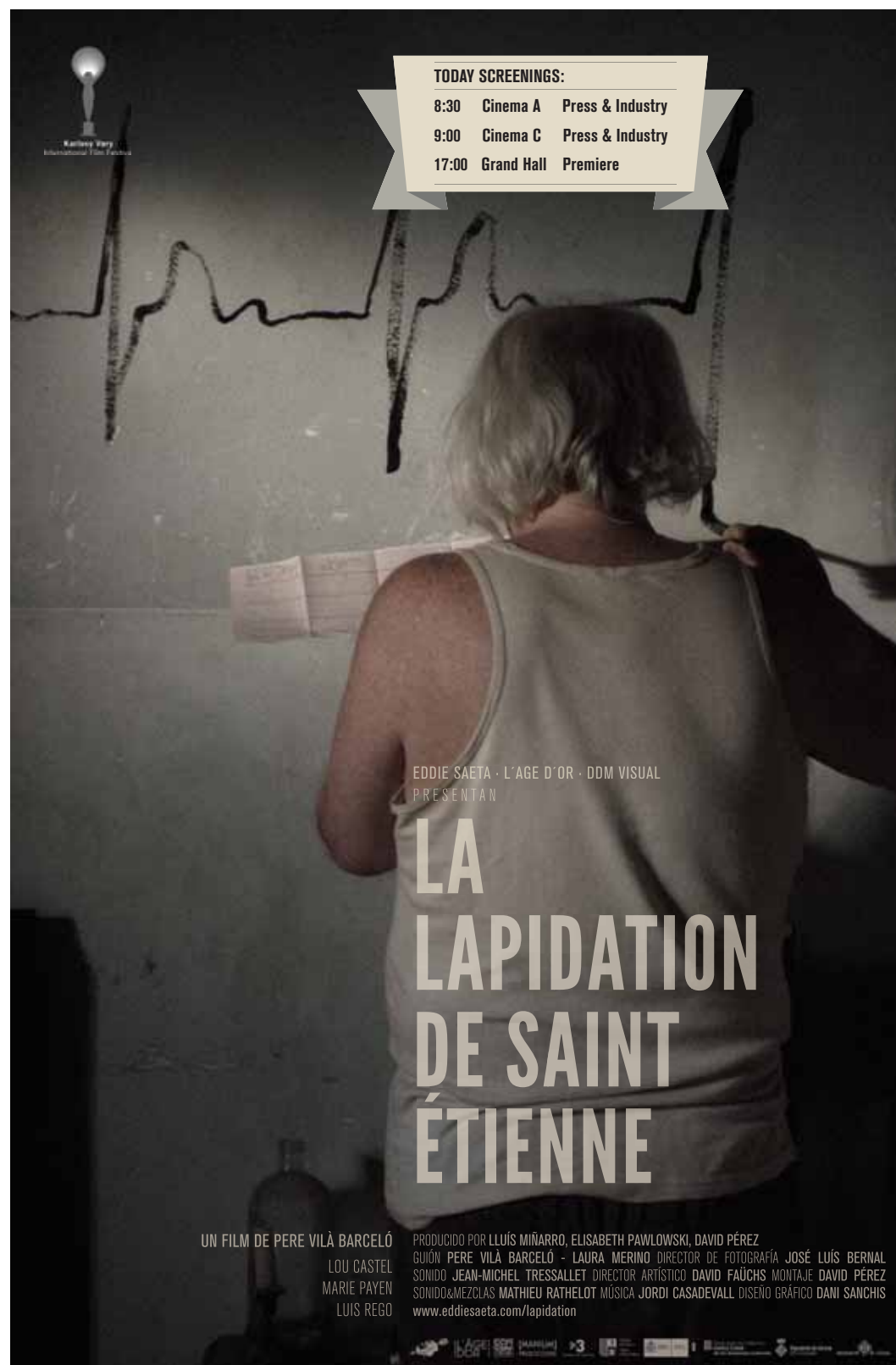
Before Prince there was Sixto Rodriguez, a psychedelic, Dylan-like troubadour, whose acerbic lyrics were somewhat at odds with his peacenik appearance. Rodriguez made two indelible albums, then seemingly disappeared from the face of the earth, but not before they became a smash hit in, of all places, Apartheid-era South Africa. Though it's not really much of a search – Rodriguez's fate doesn't require a great deal of detective work – this heartfelt documentary makes an engaging study of the way music, and by extension art, can have a life independent of that of its creator.

In the Fog

Director: Sergei Loznitsa
Germany, Russia, Latvia, Netherlands, Belarus, 2012, 128 min
July 5, 7:30pm, Karlovy Vary Municipal Theater



Sergei Loznitsa's follow-up to his grueling debut *My Joy* is a much more straightforward but no less masterful or bleak look at Russia's violent history. A wonderful companion piece to the gripping *Army of Shadows*, showing here as part of the Jean-Pierre Melville tribute, *In the Fog* is a poetic study of defiance and destiny, following the fortunes of three men working for the resistance movement in occupied Belarus. It begins and ends with death, and no clear moral emerges, but Loznitsa creates something deceptively profound from such dark and somewhat depressing real-life material.



TODAY SCREENINGS:

8:30	Cinema A	Press & Industry
9:00	Cinema C	Press & Industry
17:00	Grand Hall	Premiere

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Holmes spreads good vibes at KV

Cóilín O'Connor

David Holmes is a DJ, composer, and musician from Northern Ireland. He has composed music for several Stephen Soderbergh films, including *Out of Sight* and the *Ocean's* trilogy. He was at KV-IFF with the festival's opening film *Good Vibrations*, about Belfast record shop owner and godfather of the Northern Irish punk scene, Terri Hooley.

■ You've known Terri Hooley for a long time haven't you?

I've been buying records from Terri Hooley since I was 10 or 11, so it was a very involving project for me. And everyone who was involved really [in the film] – we've all been buying records in that shop for a long time. To be perfectly honest it's a dream to do music in something like that. It's set in a record shop in 1978. So 1978 back to about 1959 is a wonderful time period to take music from. You've got the music in the shop, you've got the bands, you've got their live performances and you've got them in the recording studio. There's music in every single medium captured in one film. You hear it on the radio. You hear it on the TV. You've got archive, you've got live performance, you've got the soundtrack to Terri's life. You've got the score. It was a bit like "whoa!" But, here's the thing that made it really difficult. We had no budget! This movie was made for under 2 million quid. I think what they've done for that money is phenomenal. I find [*Good Vibrations* directors] Glenn [Leyburn] and Lisa [Barros D'Sa] to be two incredibly inspiring people. I think they have a really great future as filmmakers and I just wanted to be a part of that.

■ You said you were involved the whole way through with this film. Is that normal or are you usually just parachuted in at the end to pick songs for a finished movie?

Every film's different. Sometimes that's the case but on a movie like this where the



Photo: Jan Handrejch

Northern Irish DJ and soundtrack maestro David Holmes.

soundtrack is such a huge part of it, it's really beneficial to be involved as the script's developing, when you're working on a draft. It's great to get a feel of something without actually seeing it. The great German band Can did soundtracks. Irmin Schmidt would be the only person to watch the film and then he would describe to the rest of the band the atmosphere they were trying to convey. And then they would jam, they'd get into the headspace of his descriptions. I always think that's a really wonderful approach.

■ Obviously you have eclectic tastes. Are there any Czech bands you've encountered that have made an impression on you?

Funny you should mention that. Andy Votel, a very good friend of mine and part of the B-Music collective has a record label called Finders Keepers, which put out three of the most extraordinary [Czech] film soundtracks – *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* – it's a beautiful film, the whole look. It's a different level, another world that you haven't seen before and an

extraordinary sound track. And *Daisies*, which was banned. Now I believe it's getting a re-release and they're showing it in the cinemas. And *Malá Mořská Věla* [The Little Mermaid] and that was my introduction to Czech music and I've got to say, I'm working on two projects at the minute. One is with this band called Unloved. It kind of grew into this 5-piece girl group but not like Girls Aloud / Spice Girls; it's The Shangri-Las, it's, you know, tough sluts, with chewing gum. It's got a real Jack Nitzsche/Phil Spector style

of production. But *Malá Mořská Věla* was a huge influence on this album. I've also been producing Primal Scream's new record and there's a song on it that was definitely inspired by *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders*.

■ Why did you move to L.A.?

I had an opportunity. I was doing a movie there called *Haywire* with Stephen Soderbergh. Sadly, my last Stephen Soderbergh movie ever, because he's retiring. I'm sure when he comes back from retirement, which he will, he'll come back with a completely different game. He'll want to work with different people and he'll absorb a lot of other music when he's having his sabbatical, but I owe that guy so much.

■ What happened with *The Good German*? Didn't you compose a score for it that wasn't used?

One of the brilliant things about Soderbergh is that he's always trying to do things differently. With *The Good German* he asked me to do a kind of early-60s score, like Ennio Morricone-style crime scores. Almost film *noir* in a 60s sense and with muted six-string bases. So I did it and it was one of my favorite scores ever. And he loved it. But I think they did test screenings and people were distracted because it was a movie set in 1945 and it had a very obvious early-60s score. But I always thought that visually it worked fantastically well. And you know, ironically, Tarantino did it several years later with *Inglourious Basterds* to beautiful effect. He actually licensed some Morricone, whereas I was heavily influenced by him. You just have to take it on the chin. I was gutted, but that's because you care. But ultimately, when you work in the movies – it's not your gig. You're working with a director. It's his baby. He's working on every single aspect of his movie. The music is another cog in that wheel that has to be tailored to suit the film.

Good Vibrations screens tomorrow at 7pm in the Thermal's Congress Hall. ■

ON THE TOWN

Om Shanti Om

Moskevská 20 (entrance from Bělehradská)
☎ 353 892 773
www.omshantiom.cz

Named after an Indian meditative chant, Om Shanti Om is certainly a pretty Zen place to get a bite to eat. As you'd expect from a restaurant with enough Eastern paraphernalia to put George Harrison's living room to shame, there are plenty of subcontinental delights to be had in this quiet establishment, about 5 minutes' walk from the top of T.G. Masaryka. We had a slightly runny, but delicious, *channa masala* chickpea curry (109 CZK) with some fresh *chapati* bread (35 CZK). Vegetarians are well catered for here: for the same price as the *masala* they also have gingery *aloo palak* potatoes with spinach and a veggie *vindaloo*,

which is a welcome change to any non-carnivore who is sick of eating *smažený sýr* (fried cheese – the only meatless option in many Czech eateries). You can also get chicken variations of some of these dishes for around 10 CZK more. Besides spicy Eastern cuisine, the menu covers lots of other bases and the friendly staff can offer you a range of pasta dishes (115 CZK) and pizzas (135-270 CZK), including some with Indian themes. (COC)

Venezia

Zahradní 60
☎ 353 229 721
www.venezia-pizzeria.cz
Open 11:30am-11:30pm

Yes, you *could* have a pizza here, certainly...but in this chandelied, baroque terrace restaurant overlooking the river just opposite the Thermal, you'd be



Photo: KVIFF

Om Shanti Om is a pretty Zen place to grab a bite to eat.

missing the boat on the signature dishes such as the squid ink pasta with salmon (230 CZK) or the aromatic risottos (170-190 Kc).

Then again, there's the delectable grilled sea bass (490 CZK) or trout (195 CZK), all done to tender perfection by the able culi-

nary maestros, and best when nestled against simple roast potatoes (50 CZK).

But before rushing into the mains, there's plenty to linger over with a delightful selection of starters such as veal *pâté* with cranberry sauce, chicken livers doused in balsamic vinegar (both 150 CZK) or the hearty fish soup (195 CZK), all served up by the foxy wait staff on decadent white china.

Just be sure to reserve a table if you're hoping to hit Venezia any time around the usual lunch or dinner hour – it's an old-guard festival hot spot, to be sure, all overseen by owner Claudio Boglio, who never misses a thing, and it's invariably full to bursting around then. But the upside is that you're bound to find the company in the plush olive-toned seats around you as entertaining as the seafood and pasta platters. (WT)

Don't miss the chance to attend a **Master Class with Todd Solondz today at 2pm in the Jameson Lounge**. Held in English and moderated by Czech film scribe Tomáš Baldýnský, this is a rare opportunity to hear a Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner talk about their work.

If all that film-watching has left you with a taste for something more physical, you could go to the **KV Arena at 3pm for the European Women's Volleyball Finals!** After the two semis, the final itself will start at 6pm, with both teams going on to compete in the World Grand Prix later this year. This is a world-class sporting event right on your doorstep, so get down there and cheer on the fantastic finalists, especially the Czech team. (PLC)

DAILIES



Photo: Milan Malíček

Dedicated KVIFFers pull out all the stops to get tickets.



Photo: Milan Malíček

Snapping the stars in the Thermal's Grand Hall.



Photo: Jan Handrejch

KVIFF President Jiří Bartoška meets an adoring fan.