



Czechoslovakia's greatest WWII coup, "Operation Anthropoid," gets a fresh look from English director-scribe Sean Ellis



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FREE

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SEAN ELLIS: INTERWEAVING DRAMA AND FACT

By Veronika Bednářová
and Will Tizard

KVIFF opener *Anthropoid*, which has its world premiere tonight, is the first feature film to take on the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich since 1975's *Operation Daybreak*. Director-scribe Sean Ellis recounts how he developed his characters using scraps of historic documentation from which much nuance was missing.

The film had a 15-year genesis, starting when you came across a TV story of the British-trained Czech assassins [Jan Kubiš (Jamie Dornan) and Jozef Gabčík (Cillian Murphy), who killed Heydrich in 1942. How did your version of the story develop in that time?

It was a file that kept growing – whenever I had some spare time, I would do some research. Then I remember doing some commercials in Prague around 2005, 2006 and 2007 and every time I came I was like, 'Take me to the church' [where the assassin paratroopers hid]. But I think it really became a project after

I finished *Metro Manila*, and I was looking for another film to make. And I felt a similarity in themes – because *Metro* is about a man who sacrifices himself for his family. But this is about two men – seven men – who sacrifice their lives for their country.

So this is a theme that's compelling to you – along with that of doing bad things with good intentions?

I think it's a theme that I'm quite obsessed about – which is: We're only here for such a short time and some people live in such extremes and it's like, 'What do you do? What's the human psyche and what's it capable of doing at extreme points?' You kind of know there's no way out and it's the end – it's kind of how you face the end. In *Anthropoid*, they face the end with such a roar of life that it's still resonating today.

So how did you choose to focus the story with so much material to work from?

It's a tricky story because it's so big. There's so much. And I think that's gen-

erally why it took 15 years. What part of that story do you tell? You could do an eight-part TV series about that whole thing.

And you portray Jan Kubiš as struggling to find his courage at the start – I suppose because otherwise you'd have two stale heroes.

Atentát (the 1965 Czech drama) did that. Stoic, stone-like soldiers. In *Atentát*, I didn't know which one was Kubiš and which one was Gabčík. When you've got two protagonists, they can't be doing the same thing. If you open a film with the Kubiš character, who can't shoot anybody – and then you find out they're there to assassinate someone – you go, 'This is not going to end well.'

But he's the one who comes good on the day. He's able to deal with his fear and complete his mission. Gabčík's arc is an interesting one as well. He's a man on a mission. Nothing's going to come between him and what he wants to do. And then he meets Lenka [Anna Geislerová; see interview on p.2]. And it upsets him. When Lenka dies, he spirals. And he be-

comes the one who's almost about to give everything up and just go out, guns blazing. There's an interesting crossover between the two.

What else did you want to handle differently than the previous films have?

In *Atentát*, the Kubiš character comes down from the nave and tells Gabčík that the church is surrounded. He goes down to the crypt and he says goodbye to him. I just thought, actually, I think it's stronger if they're not together, if they don't get a chance to say goodbye. Because then you really see that Kubiš is fighting for his life up there. And when he cries his name, you realize that anguish.

And where did you find the line between the requirements of film structure and the historical reality, which you painstakingly researched?

It's a very tricky line. You're weaving yourself between film structure and that particular set of rules that you can follow or break. And you're trying to be true to the historical facts. One thing that an-

noyed me at first was why they weren't together when they died, like in the 1975 film *Operation Daybreak*. But when I started to look at that, I thought each character is going to get his own ending. You get two pieces of cake in that respect.

Things start to just talk to you in a weird way. How did it happen? We were able to see through the interviews and through research – we had the Gestapo autopsy reports – and by reading those and going to the church you could piece together where they died and how they died.

And the development of the female characters and the romances are quite new in *Anthropoid*...

It's well known that those boys...were being boys. Knowing that they would probably not come out alive, they had lots and lots of girlfriends. As a piece of entertainment, I think we can be protected from that. And we can make them a little bit more politically correct. A bit more heroic, in some respects.

It doesn't take away from what they did – and what they did is incredible. ■

SEE YOU THERE

KAREL OCH

KVIFF ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR

I'd recommend Roger Ross Williams' *Life, Animated*, an amazing documentary about the power of film; about an autistic boy whose father discovers, after years of no communication, that he's repeating lines from Disney movies only. The family learns to interact with him through them. It's an uplifting tearjerker and won Best Director at Sundance. Also, Pietro Marcello's *Lost and Beautiful* shows today at 6:30pm (KV Municipal Theatre), July 2 at 2pm (Drahomíra), July 4 at 11:30am (Grand Hall), and July 7 at 1pm (Congress Hall) ■

Life, Animated screens today at 1pm (Pupp), July 3 at 10:30pm (Cinema B), July 5 at 10:30pm (Drahomíra), and July 7 at 10pm (Národní dům). *Lost and Beautiful* shows today at 6:30pm (KV Municipal Theatre), July 2 at 2pm (Drahomíra), July 4 at 11:30am (Grand Hall), and July 7 at 1pm (Congress Hall) ■



KVIFF GETTIN' JINGLEY WITH IT

The first film of the 51st KVIFF screens at 8:30am today, but the festival will officially open at 6pm at the Grand Hall of Hotel Thermal preceded by the red carpet promenade welcoming honored guests such as Willem Dafoe, who will be awarded the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema.

The evening will be hosted, just as it has been for two decades, by actor, moderator and musician Marek Eben while the artistic design, scenography and choreography are again in the hands of creative brothers Michal and Šimon Caban. And what can you look forward to? "We're returning to the classical jingle this year, which is inspired by the latest technology but also reflecting the work of renowned British photographer Eadweard Muybridge," Michal says, recalling the pioneer of stop-motion photography.

A team of nine dancers will take the stage and the Caban



Photo: Petr Hloušek

Thermal, which is reserved for industry events this year.

But KVIFF's gala will not be rolling out only behind the closed doors of the Grand Hall. The opening film *Anthropoid* will screen at three other cinema halls tonight and celebrations will continue outside the Thermal, where a concert of famous film melodies organized in collaboration with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra kicks off at 10:45pm. And yes, fireworks will light up the sky to wrap it all up! (HG) ■

ANNA GEISLEROVÁ: 'WE STILL NEED HEROES'

Kateřina Kadlecová

A former model, the waifish ginger-haired Anna Geislerová made her silver screen debut at the age of 12, and over the past few decades has appeared in scores of Czech television series and feature films, including international hits such as helmer Ondřej Trojan's war-time drama *Želary*, which was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2004. She has won two Czech Lion awards as best actress. Geislerová is appearing in two films screening at KVIFF this year: the psychological horror *The Noonday Witch* (Jiří Sárdek) and the internationally-produced wartime drama *Anthropoid*, (Sean Ellis) about the daring mission to assassinate Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich, the principal architect of the Final Solution. Geislerová plays the girlfriend of Czechoslovak paratrooper Jozef Gabčík (Cillian Murphy), who along with warrant officer Jan Kubiš (Jamie Dornan) was dispatched in 1942 to kill the "Butcher of Prague." *Anthropoid* screens tonight in a world premiere (19:45, Thermal, Small Hall).

You play Gabčík's partner, Lenka Fafková. Who is she?

We don't have much chance to get to know her – she's basically part of a group unafraid to risk their lives on behalf of their nation; people who show enormous inner strength in their resolve and everything they do in the story of "Operation Anthropoid." The Czechoslovak heroes, their real

life models, put everything on the line to stand up to evil and fight for freedom from the fascists. This is all we know about Lenka. I think it's quite enough.

You're an avid reader of Memory of the Nation project stories, the database of memories of survivors of great historical events, one of the sources from which we learned about the personalities of the paratroopers ...

Today we know Kubiš, Gabčík and other Czechoslovak soldiers and those who worked with them were heroes, and we admire them. But I still imagine that perhaps in those days it was more usual for people to be firmer, more thoroughly forged. They were raised with a firm hand, lived in accordance with their beliefs and values and were ready to take risks for the sake of truth. There wasn't so much benevolence and leniency then; people had firmer characters. If someone was suffering and they had the strength and ability to help, they did. They had their honor and morals, which compelled them to join the side of the good, not to stand in the middle or join the evil party, but rather actively side with the weaker ones. That's what we're missing now. We are so democratic, wishy-washy, over-civilized... We're concerned with the feelings and rights of delinquents and murderers. That is too much. It's not healthy either for the society or individuals.

Did you feel that *Anthropoid* screenwriters Sean Ellis and Anthony Frewin tried to



Leading lady Anna Geislerová says *Anthropoid* is no Hollywood film

"Americanize" the story of Heydrich's assassination? Isn't it another romanticized version of history, such as was *Pearl Harbor*?

Well, they're English and Irish, aren't they – and the production is Anglo-French-Czech. It's no Hollywood film. Even though it's an ambitious movie and has been sold to U.S. cinemas, no one felt the need to pander to the viewer. Sean Ellis had been thinking about the story for many years – and very thoroughly. In the

Barrandov Studios, he had photographs all over the place of miniaturized real-life models of all the settings where they were shooting. He had little figurines of the soldiers and all the characters, and he had the individual scenes planned frame by frame long before. How can it capture viewers around the world? I don't know. Are they at all interested that we were betrayed by the Munich Agreement? It's a great story of a tiny country, the story of one of the pivotal events of WWII. The

story is fascinating and the paratroopers' courage will carry you away wherever you are. We still need heroes.

The drama opens in U.S. cinemas in mid-August. Do you expect it will be a success?

Just to be clear, I don't have any expectations anymore. I did my job and if there is some follow-up, that's fine, but I've already done my bit. That's what's nice about acting – if it's a success, it's a bonus for me, and if

not, no big deal. I've benefited a lot as it is. I took part in the filming of something that had always intrigued me – we played soldiers as children all the time, shooting the Nazis. Now I have this powerful experience and I was able to meet incredible people on the set.

In the film, Kubiš is played by the Jamie Dornan, who's visiting Karlovy Vary for the second time. What about Cillian Murphy, the great Irish actor, who plays your partner Jozef Gabčík? What was he like?

Cillian and I play an older and more distinguished couple. He's quite introverted and commands great respect at first sight, but when someone like that smiles at you, you adore him forever... It was great how Cillian and Jamie got along, too, as though they've known each other for years; they forged a bond which in my opinion will remain strong for a long time. The Canadian actress Charlotte Le Bon, who plays Kubiš's girlfriend Marie Kovárníková, was also outstanding. She's incredibly lucky to have been bestowed with great beauty, intelligence, a sense of humor and talent – besides acting, she is also a photographer and painter. They're really interesting, competent people with inner freedom, and I'm grateful I was able to work with them, as well as with all the Czech actors – Václav Neužil, Alena Mihulová, Roman Zach – along with the great Polish actor Marcin Dorociński and Briton Toby Jones. ■

French Films at the 51st Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

FRIDAY / PÁTEK 1. 7.

9:00 / Kino Čas
Rocco et ses frères / Rocco a jeho bratři
(Luchino Visconti, 177 min) / **OP**
9:30 / Thermal, Malý sál
L'Hermine / Talár (Christian Vincent, 98 min) / **H**
10:00 / Národní dům
Wolf and Sheep / Vlk a ovce
(Shahrbano Sadat, 86 min) / **AV**
11:30 / Thermal, sál B
Family Film / Rodinný film (Olmo Omerzu, 95 min) / **CZ**
12:30 / Thermal, Malý sál
Aloys (Tobias Nölle, 91 min) / **AV**
15:30 / Kino Čas
Jay parmi les hommes / Jay (Zéno Graton, 28 min) / **PS**
15:30 / Kino Čas
People Are Strange / Podivíni (Julien Hallard, 20 min) / **PS**
16:00 / Pupp
Juste la fin du monde / Je to jen konec světa
(Xavier Dolan, 97 min) / **H**
19:00 / Národní dům
Underground Fragrance / Vůně podzemí
(Pengfei, 76 min) / **AV**
19:45 / Thermal, Malý sál
Anthropoid (Sean Ellis, 120 min) / **SE**
20:00 / Thermal, Kongresový sál
Anthropoid (Sean Ellis, 120 min) / **SE**
20:00 / Thermal, sál B
Anthropoid (Sean Ellis, 120 min) / **SE**
20:30 / Kino Čas
Abluka / Šílenství (Emin Alper, 117 min) / **H**
21:30 / Karlovarské městské divadlo
La Dernière femme / Poslední žena
(Marco Ferreri, 118 min) / **SCÉ**
22:00 / Pupp
Belgica (Felix van Groenigen, 126 min) / **H**
23:59 / Kino Čas
Blood Father / Ve jménu krve
(Jean-François Richet, 88 min) / **MS**



SATURDAY / SOBOTA 2. 7.

9:00 / Thermal, Velký sál
Fuocoammare / Fuocoammare (Požár na moři)
(Gianfranco Rosi, 108 min) / **H**
9:00 / Kino Čas
Rabin, the Last Day / Rabin, poslední den
(Amos Gitai, 153 min) / **H**
9:30 / Thermal, Malý sál
Aquarius (Kleber Mendonça Filho, 140 min) / **H**
10:00 / Národní dům
Divines / Božské (Houda Benyamina, 105 min) / **AV**
10:30 / Lázně III
Exil (Rithy Panh, 78 min) / **AV**
11:30 / Thermal, sál B
Tramontane (Vatche Bouglhourjian, 105 min) / **AV**
16:30 / Lázně III
Le Fils de Joseph / Jozefův syn
(Eugène Green, 114 min) / **H**
16:30 / Divadlo Husovka
Notes on Blindness / Poznámky o slepotě
(James Spinney, Peter Middleton, 90 min) / **I**
17:00 / Thermal, Velký sál
The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street / Vlk z Královských Vinohrad
(Jan Němec, 68 min) / **C**
19:30 / Lázně III
We Are Never Alone / Nikdy nejsme sami
(Petr Václav, 105 min) / **CZ**
21:30 / Karlovarské městské divadlo
Mimosas / Mimózy (Oliver Laxe, 93 min) / **AV**
22:30 / Kino Drahomíra
Ma Loute / Líná zátoka (Bruno Dumont, 112 min) / **H**
22:30 / Thermal, Velký sál
Pasolini (Abel Ferrara, 86 min) / **SE**
22:30 / Lázně III
Je me tue à le dire / Zemřít na smrt
(Xavier Seron, 90 min) / **VCC**



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ON THE TOWN



Ristorante Palermo features an open kitchen, a big main room and cozy romantic corners

Ristorante Palermo

Moskevská 44, Tel. 773 583 892,
palermonk.cz
Open Mon-Thu 11am-11pm,
Fri 11am-midnight,
Sat noon-midnight, Sun noon-11pm

It's well worth venturing beyond the main drag on T. G. Masaryka to this cozy pizzeria, where the pies are fired in an open kitchen before your feasting eyes. All the standard topping variations are covered and reasonably priced, from 109 CZK for a Margherita to 179 CZK for a Delicata, featuring bresaola (Italian air-dried beef). But the restaurant also features a wide array of authentic Italian dishes, and the dining area can accommodate boisterous parties or intimate gath-

erings. Outside there are also quite a few tables where smoking is permitted. If you're in the mood for pasta, Palermo also has an impressive choice (for example, *Penne all'Amatriciana* for 109 CZK or lasagna for 139 CZK). Or you can splurge on a *secondi piatti* (Black Angus rib-eye steak at 299 CZK per 100g) and a big glass of Lugana (187 CZK), perfect for the summer. There are daily lunch specials to keep things interesting.

Sladký život

Moskevská 3, sladky-zivot.eu
Open Mon-Fri 10am-7pm,
Sat-Sun 11am-6pm

"La dolce vita" is a lovely place to relax between film screenings.

This patisserie sells handmade truffles and chocolates in unusual flavor combinations, from dark chocolate with pink pepper to white chocolate with violet petals.

Republica Coffee

T. G. Masaryka 28, Tel. 720 347 166
Open: 7am-7pm

When only the best coffee will do, this is the ideal spot to recharge your batteries (literally and figuratively) and catch up on your email. There's free Wi-Fi, and the nooks and crannies have loads of plug sockets for laptops. If you've got no time to linger, all beverages can be packaged to go. (BK) ■

EVENTS

The delegation from KVIFF opener *Anthropoid* (including director Sean Ellis, actors Jamie Dornan, Cillian Murphy, Toby Jones and Czech leading lady Anna Geislerová) will be on the

red carpet to greet fans ahead of the Opening Ceremony, and ahead of the film's world premiere. After the ceremony, the Czech National Symphony Orchestra will give a free concert

of popular film music in front of Hotel Thermal, starting at 10:45pm. Starting about an hour later, at 11:45pm, also in front of the iconic hotel, will be a major fireworks display. (HG) ■

OTTO PREMINGER: ANATOMY OF AN EPIC AUTEUR

BOUNDARY-BREAKING DIRECTOR SPAT IN THE FACE OF CONVENTION (AND ACTORS)

By Will Tizard

It's doubtful that anyone but Otto Preminger could have talked Frank Sinatra into thrashing about a flophouse in 1955, performing a near-perfect rendition of heroin withdrawal. In fact, few but the Austro-Hungarian-born master director and auteur would have dared ask the "Chairman of the Board" to take on the role of the colorful card shark and junkie that *The Man with the Golden Arm* centers on.

But then again, many Hollywood stars put up with a great deal more from Preminger – one recent compilation by Conrad Doerr of actor accounts of working under him is titled *The Morning Otto Preminger Spit in my Face* – so why not, really?

And then there was Preminger's score with making box office hits to think about, which surely did not escape Sinatra's considerations. This last record, most film historians agree, is what allowed the director to break the almost universally accepted puritanical rules on taboo subjects, characters and moral outcomes known as the Hays Code.

"Preminger is on the list of the legendary directors who are almost unknown in the Czech Republic," as KVIFF Artistic Director Karel Och puts it. "The aim to fill this hole goes together with my impression that more and more filmmakers from our part of the world are trying to enter the field of sophisticated genre cinema. Preminger certainly



Laura: This leading lady could steal hearts from beyond the grave



The bombastic mogul became the terror of Tinseltown

ly is a perfect example to learn from."

Och personally curated this year's Preminger tribute with the unapologetic agenda of turning more Czechs on to the incredible range of work in his oeuvre.

"He was an outstanding and versatile storyteller," Och adds. "He was able to charm and engage with a romantic comedy, an epic big budget spectacle and anything in between."

It's true, of course, that even in the 1950s and before, there were outsiders and indies in Hollywood and beyond who weren't afraid to break with polite and decent depictions of morally upright characters. Ed Wood's cheap exploitation flicks were just one flavor of the fare that thrilled teenage

would-be rebels by skipping completely the established distribution system for proper, respectable film.

But it was Preminger who showed what big-budget, studio films with stars could get away with. From the hard-drinking detective who falls in love with a dead woman in *Laura* to the rape victim's panties that Jimmy Stewart fondles in court in *Anatomy of a Murder*, to the cutting depictions of anti-Semitism among the British command in *Exodus*, Preminger seemed to delight in causing ulcers for producers and studios worried about scandals with Middle American audiences.

Stewart himself encountered a thorough shaming from his fa-

ther, he confesses in *Preminger: Anatomy of a Filmmaker*, the documentary screening as part of KVIFF's tribute this year, over a scene in *Anatomy of a Murder* – also known as "a dirty movie" to many Midwesterners, including Stewart's family – in which he plays a defense attorney examining rape evidence.

"I have always been attracted by the complexity and incredible charisma of his characters," Och observes about such roles.

And Preminger's willingness to embrace controversial subjects holds an important lesson even today, Och adds. "Once I started to read books about him, I realized how determined he was in attacking the rules. That is something people should realize while

watching his films, to look at the year of production. He had a plan and a very modern way to approach the taboo issues."

Preminger's origins in Eastern Europe – he was born to a Jewish family in Vyzhnytsia in what is now Ukraine but was then called Wiznitz in a province of the Habsburg Empire – surely influenced both his toughness and his passion for real, human stories that disregarded polite American conventions.

His father, a prominent attorney, inspired Preminger's love for courtroom dramas, he later admitted, long after abandoning his own law school studies to become an actor. Many would have guessed that having performed on stage and screen himself would

give Preminger a unique sympathy for the actor's plight.

Instead, as the legendary director once put it, "I do not welcome advice from actors; they are here to act."

Credited with dozens of films spanning from 1931 to 1986, including three Oscar nominations, Preminger was regarded as a force of nature in Hollywood – to the extent that he alone could not only hire blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo during the Red Scare but give him full on-screen credit for *Exodus*.

The 1960 classic followed a smart, sophisticated political intrigue film known as *Advise & Consent*, which depicted a gay nightclub scene that proves to be the undoing of an otherwise clean and well-scrubbed senator from Utah – in 1959.

Even the posters for Preminger's films have become iconic – from the segmented Picasso-esque arm for *The Man with the Golden Arm* to an equally disjointed primitivist body for *Anatomy of a Murder*. The distinctive look of the *Psycho* title sequence was created by graphic artist Saul Bass, whom Preminger first took under his wing for 1953 romantic comedy *The Moon is Blue* (which also made censors dyspeptic with its casual discussion of virginity by the main characters).

All these films and more are screening this week – a rare chance to catch such boundary-breaking classics on the silver screen. ■

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OFFICIAL SELECTION

MAIN COMPETITION SHOWCASES NEW VOICES, TOP TALENTS, AND A MASTER'S FINAL FILM



Jan Němec's FAMU protégés finished his swan song, *The Wolf of Royal Vineyard Street*



Following on his Sundance short doc success, director Grzegorz Zariczny make his feature debut with *Waves*

By Brian Kenety

KVIFF has a proud tradition of helping emerging, innovative filmmakers advance their work. Artistic Director Karel Och and his colleagues look far and wide in hopes of discovering little-known talents embarking upon the cinematic road less traveled, as well as seasoned helmers exploring new avenues. Hundreds of films are submitted for consideration, and it can take the Program Department the better part of a year to decide which to will vie for the festival's main prize – the Crystal Globe.

Since the Official Selection category is not limited to first or even second films, among the 12 contenders this year representing 17 countries are also established voices – including a director now with us only in spirit, Jan Němec, a founding father of the Czech New Wave, to whom this year's festival is dedicated.

"We've always looked for filmmakers courageous enough to go their own way, to redefine

their own cinema. The cinema of Jan Němec is exciting, unpredictable, and very complex, in style but also – no matter how experimental his films were – he always made emotional contact with the audiences," Och says. "Dedicating this year's festival to him is to embrace his ethos: to love movies absolutely and follow your own path."

Returning to his homeland after the 1989 Velvet Revolution, Němec went on to teach a generation of filmmakers at FAMU – and beyond – to embrace the unconventional. Knowing he wasn't long for this world, Němec, who died in March aged 79, entrusted four protégés to complete his swan song, *The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street*, a comedic biopic loosely based on his experiences in the Prague Spring, forced exile in the U.S., and appearances at Cannes and KVIFF (as rising star and veteran helmer, respectively).

A Czech-Slovak coproduction in the running is *The Teacher*, by prolific helmer Jan Hřebejk and

longtime scribe partner Petr Jarchovský (classmates at FAMU). While an exquisite portrayal of a specific time and place (1983 in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia), it's also a universal tale of what Václav Havel once called "the power of the powerless." How far will parents go to oust a manipulative teacher who, as a minor communist party official, wields power not only over their children's futures, but their own?

Polish entry *Waves*, meanwhile, though set in the present day, is evocative of Czech New Wave classics, if not of Němec's work specifically. The story of boisterous teen girls training to become hairdressers, it marks director Grzegorz Zariczny's full-length feature debut, along with cinematographer partner Weronika Bilska; their short documentary *The Whistle*, drawing on his days as a soccer referee in a farming community, won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance in 2013.

Four other entries from post-

communist Europe are all family dramas – but that's where the common thread ends. As Tolstoy put it, "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

Romanian director Cătălin Mitulescu's third feature, *By the Rails*, is the story of a young man who finds work abroad to support his family but returns to a wife who acts like they had never been together. Then there's renowned Hungarian director Szabolcs Hajdu's spectacularly inventive indie film *It's Not The Time of My Life*, which, channeling the likes of Cassavetes and Bergman, spins a tale of two families forced by circumstance to share an unusual apartment.

Nightlife, by renowned Slovenian filmmaker Damjan Kozole, is a compelling small-scale drama about a woman in a stale marriage whose husband ends up in intensive care after a terrifying attack by a dog. Shot in an observational cinema style, we watch as she tries to protect him from what may be an orches-

trated attempt to defame him (he was found bloody, naked and holding a dildo; the police report points to a bestial act). "People are more vicious than dogs," she says. "People will rip him apart." Then there's Russian director Ivan I. Tverdokoskiy's fantastic, surreal *Zoology*, which also revolves around a lonely, middle-aged woman. An administrative worker at the zoo who lives with her mother, her life is turned upside down – after finding she's grown a tail – but finds the courage to be different.

From Germany comes *Original Bliss*, Sven Taddicken's adaptation of renowned Scottish author A. L. Kennedy's hugely successful book of the same name, about an unlikely romance between a woman who has lost her faith in God and a radical charismatic psychologist who claims to be able to control reality through "cybernetics" yet has a compulsive sexual obsession that could be his professional undoing. From Italian director Roberto Andò comes *The Confessions*,

a philosophical and stylized drama of a different stripe, where an equally magnetic man of God, a monk, is invited to a meeting of G8 finance ministers at a luxury hotel on the Baltic coast.

Rounding out the Official Selections are Turkish debut director Kıvanç Sezer's *My Father's Wings*, about an aging construction worker diagnosed with a malignant tumor, as new life (in the form of construction), promises to fill a literal and figurative void in the modern urban landscape; Spanish co-directors Isa Campo and Isaki Lacuesta present Spain's *The Next Skin*, a compelling mystery centered on a teenage boy who appears to have been reunited with his family after being lost for years but is suspected of being a calculating imposter; and Canadian Jesse Klein screens *We're Still Together*, an offbeat bromance (of sorts) about an alienated, tubby teen who is rescued from a gang of bullies by a mysterious stranger who gets more than he's bargained for (good and bad). ■

FACES

The gates of the 51st KVIFF open today and a warm welcome is prepared for audiences, filmmakers and honored guests of the festival. **Willem Dafoe** will appear on the red carpet tonight to receive the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema at the opening ceremony and will remain to present two of his films, *Pasolini* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*. **Charlie Kaufman** will be here the whole week during which he'll present his latest film *Anomalisa* and will receive the Festival President's Award at the closing ceremony on July 9. **Ivan Passer** is coming to see the restored version of his *Intimate Lighting*. The cast and crew of the opening film *Anthropoid*, including director **Sean Ellis**, actors **Jamie Dornan**, **Toby Jones**, **Václav Neuzil** and **Marcin Dorociński**, along with actresses **Anna Geislerová** and **Alena Mihulová** are also coming. **Jesse Klein**, director of the main competition film *We're Still Together*, is also arriving, as is **Sven Taddicken**, who will present *Original Bliss* in the same section. Documentary filmmakers **Manuel Abramovich** (*Solar*), **Mohamed Siam** (*Whose Country?*) and **Leire Apellaniz** (*The Last Summer*) are here to compete for the Grand Prix for the best documentary, while **Alexei Krasovskiy** brought *Collector* to compete in the East of the West section. **Radek Bajgar** is bringing *Tiger Theory* starring KVIFF president Jiří Bartoška in the lead role. Horizons welcome director **Zrinko Ogresta** (*On the Other Side*) and Another View greets directors **Asaph Polonsky** (*One Week a Day*) and **Elite Zexer** (*Sand Storm*), **Agnieszka Smoczyńska** (*The Lure*), and screenwriter of *Lost and Beautiful* **Mauricio Braucci**. **Philippe Lesage**'s *The Demons* was chosen for the festival by the *Variety* critics. Actress **Adriana Ugarte** arrives to represent Pedro Almodóvar's new film *Julieta*. From the Official



Leire Apellaniz

Jamie Dornan



Zrinko Ogresta

Elite Zexer



Otto Bell

Victoria Franco

Selection – Out of Competition films, directors **Otto Bell** (*The Eagle Huntress*) and **Pepe Diokno** (*Brotherhood*) also arrive today. Mexican filmmakers **Betzabé García** (*Kings of Nowhere*) and **Victoria Franco** (*Through the Eyes*) are the first in the spa town to open the sidebar section A Female Take on Mexico. ■



CRITIC'S CHOICE

BOYD VAN HOEIJ, FILM CRITIC, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Alain Delon is mesmerizing in pretty much any movie he's ever been in, but alongside *Purple Noon* and *Le Samourai*, Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* offers the actor at his most entrancing. Though Delon's Rocco is but one of five brothers of a poor family from the south trying to survive on



ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS

Director: Luchino Visconti
Italy, 1960, 177min
July 1, 9am, Čas Cinema

odd jobs in the Milan area up north, his good-hearted character stays with you because he's the

kind of kind sibling who puts everyone else's happiness before his own.

Canadian director and Cannes favorite Xavier Dolan is no spring chicken, having turned 27 this year. That said, he's no slouch either, having directed six features since *I Killed My Mother*, his 2009 debut. *It's Only the End of the World* is his second adaptation of a play after *Tom at the Farm* and has an all-star French cast that in-



IT'S ONLY THE END OF THE WORLD

Director: Xavier Dolan
Canada/France, 2016, 97min
July 1, 4pm, Pupp Cinema

cludes Léa Seydoux, Marion Cotillard and Vincent Cassel. An explosive family drama shot in

claustrophobic close-ups, this is the kind of film that's meant to make you uncomfortable.



BELGICA

Director: Felix van Groeningen
Belgium/France, 2016, 126min
July 1, 10pm, Pupp Cinema

brim with drama, flying glasses and great music (by Soulwax), this is the kind of film that pro-

vides an instant rush and leaves you just as exhausted as the characters at the end of the ride. ■