



Photo: Milan Malíček

Ged Doherty says he got into the film business to make films about important subjects, and finds that the industry still has a lot to learn

4

4/7 2016
FREE

INSIDE

Official Selection: *The Teacher, The Next Skin*
English Section, page 2

Amazon's Ted Hope returns to KVIFF
English Section, page 3

East of the West, and actress Adriana Urgate
English Section, page 4

MAKING A FILM IS A MINOR MIRACLE

GED DOHERTY, CO-FOUNDER OF RAINDOG FILMS WITH COLIN FIRTH, ON THE FILM AND MUSIC BUSINESSES

Michael Stein

After 30 years in music, Manchester native **Ged Doherty** was looking for a new challenge. So he called up longtime friend Colin Firth and they decided to start a production company, now called Raindog Films. Their first film was the British thriller *Eye in the Sky* (2015) starring Helen Mirren about military personnel facing legal, ethical, and political dilemmas presented by modern drone warfare against terrorists, and civilians endangered by it. In his first interview since entering film, he talks about Raindog's mission, how the biz should learn from the music industry's mistakes, and the minor miracle of a finished film.

You started out in the music business. Why did you get into film?

I was in the music business from the age of 16 when I was playing in bands. I was a drummer, but by the time I was 18 I realized I was terrible – but I love music, so I became a promoter. This was when punk exploded in 1977, so I booked all the big punk bands of the day – Siouxsie And The Banshees, The Damned, The Adverts,

whoever it might be – and then I got into the music business for 30 years. I wanted to go into something completely different but also something involving a team. I enjoy putting teams together, and to me that was exactly the same. You need to find a good script then put the right team around it; that's what I enjoy doing.

What are the big differences between the film and music businesses?

Well, that's an excellent question. How honest do you want me to be? *(laughs)* The difference obviously is the scale and speed of things. Film is so unbelievably slow. In music, you and I could be in a bar tonight and find a band... and six months after finding them, you're starting to build an audience, to build awareness. In film, you'd have had two meetings in those six months. I also think the film industry has learned absolutely nothing from [the decimation of] the music business.

What is the film biz doing wrong?

The audience wants their content when they want it, from the device they want it, now. They don't want to wait four or five months. It seems to me there's a model

where all the money is spent on the marketing leading up to the opening weekend of that film, and often a lot of films won't be in the theater in three weeks' time. To spend all that money to get only a small percentage of the audience who can actually see it at that time, then the only option if it's not available on Amazon or Netflix, iTunes, or whatever the platform may be, then the person has to wait four months to see it. They can't remember anything about it. Then you have to market it all over again. It's a lost opportunity. I'd rather pay to see a movie right when it comes out. In the music business, you'd get a song on the radio and you couldn't buy it for eight weeks because it was all about advanced promotion, [so] you'd drive your consumers to piracy. Now as soon as you hear music on the radio you can buy it – stream it, download it, whatever. In the film business, you can't.

Did you and Colin Firth create Raindog Films to make a particular kind of film?

We wanted to make films about a subject or matter that people should know

more about. In the case of *Eye in the Sky*, it was drone warfare, because there was still very little in the news about drones then. In the case of our second film, *Loving*, about an interracial relationship, it's also more than ever a very timely subject in the world about relationships between human beings who just happen to have a different color of skin.

Is it hard to balance the social aspect with making commercial films?

To run a business, you mean? *(laughs)* Yes, it's extremely challenging. And we've been extremely fortunate. We've had very good partners, a German-Swiss company called Silver Reel is supporting us to make the sort of films we want to make and in establishing a plan. And now we're trying to figure out how to take that to the next chapter. But, yes, it is a challenge. How any film ever gets made is a miracle, because something can go wrong at any minute. So I've nothing but respect for anybody who's ever put a film together. It's a minor miracle.

Have Raindog's social priorities and all the talent you've already brought to

your projects helped attract others to your future projects?

Oh, very much so! We've never announced our company. We've never done any interviews. This is the first interview I've ever done. We like to let our work speak for ourselves. And we think that by choosing the right projects and putting the right talent around it that will attract the right talent – writers, directors, actors – and it seems to be working. ■

KVIFF TALKS

CHARLIE KAUFMAN

Oscar-winning screenwriter and director Charlie Kaufman known for complex stories such as *Being John Malkovich*, *Adaptation*, and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* will sit down with the audience today at 2pm at Vodafone Lounge. Scott Feinberg of *The Hollywood Reporter* is hosting the KVIFF Talk. ■

SEE YOU THERE

VITALY MANSKY

DIRECTOR
CLOSE RELATIONS,
UNDER THE SUN

I'm recommending two films linked to the documentary genre: the first one, *Zoology*, is a fiction film entirely. Its author, Ivan I. Tverdovsky, began as a documentary filmmaker, and I even was his opponent for his dissertation. He won the main prize at Artdocfest. His docs are provocative, so perhaps the provocation of reality has become too tight a space for him, so he resorted to provocative inventions.

The other is *The Land of the Enlightened* by Pieter-Jan De Pue. He spent seven years in Afghanistan and made up a fictional story, which he placed into the documentary world. The film is about an army of children who want to take down Kabul and build a happier world – this only happens in fiction films, while this is a documentary. (HG) ■



EXPLAINER

HIDDEN FACES EXPOSE ANTI-SELFIE THEME

In sharp contrast to the posters of last year's KVIFF, which had smiling film fans posing for full-on portraits, the theme chosen by Studio Najbrt for this year is celebrities trying to hide their faces from the pesky paparazzi.

The "anti-selfie" theme is in fact a direct comment on how we document our own lives in the digital age as well as those of luminaries. "We live in an era where a lot happens just for the sake of the cameras," studio head Aleš Najbrt says.

"It's normal to turn the cameras on ourselves and ask not just our family circles but also the vast unknown public for their approval. We're the stylists of our own media events: running, dog-



walking, snacking... We want to bring the god-like celebrities to our level as they flee through the backdoor or shop in their sweatpants, so that we feel closer to them as we publish our own shopping photos," he says.

Zuzana Lednická, the creator of the design, has returned to the recurring

idea of Hollywood celebrities attending KVIFF, but she also designed graphics inspired by newspapers and magazines from the '60s and '70s. It was their colleague Michal Nanoru who insisted that the celebs' faces remain hidden.

In all, hundreds of photos were taken, out of which around 40 were selected together with festival president Jiří Bartoška, whose most important criterion was authenticity.

Najbrt, who has worked for KVIFF on festival visuals since 1995, didn't reveal the names of the glitterati appearing in the posters, but he did admit that they are connected to the festival and don't need camera exposure to get recognition. (HG) ■

OFFICIAL SELECTION

THE NEXT SKIN - THE RETURN OF THE QUESTIONABLE SON



Sergei López and Àlex Monner face off in an unconventional reunion

Michael Stein

When a teenage boy is brought back to his mother after having disappeared from home in Spain's Pyrenees mountains eight years earlier, instead of warm feelings and closure there is suspicion, self-doubt, hostility and a sense that delving into the past is more dangerous than you think. Yet *The Next Skin*, directed and scripted by Isaki Lacuesta and Isa Campos, also displays the slow-growing and strong attachment between mother and son that increasingly puts into the background the question of whether or not Gabriel (Àlex Monner) is the boy who disappeared.

The fact that Gabriel, now 17, is himself suffering from amnesia and might really not know the truth adds to the complexity and suspense of this compelling drama. It is the turmoil that his appearance causes in this tight-knit town that is the true engine of *The Next Skin*, a work which was a long time in the making.

The creative duo of Lacuesta and Campos begin writing their screenplay in 2005 for actress Emma Suárez (who also features in Pedro Almodóvar's *Julieta*, screening in KVIFF's Horizons section), knowing that she would play Ana, the desolate mother who had lost her son.

Like the character Ana, though, they too were missing the son that would be the centerpiece of their film. "We needed eight years to pass by so that the child, Àlex Monner, had grown and could embody our protagonist. Curiously, the same eight years that in fiction this character had been missing," the scribes say in the film's production notes.

What could be looked at as an inconvenient delay in getting a story onto the screen turned out to provide unexpected benefits as the two filmmakers' life experiences in the meantime – making other films, having children, family life – gave them added insight into the issues that *The*

Next Skin would ultimately explore.

"Some of the subjects which fascinated us before are still in the film: the self-deception, the uncertain family ties, the need to be unconditionally loved, the fragility upon which the identity and the wish to become another person is based," say the filmmakers; what changed was the idea of making a film not "of topics but of characters."

To pull this off, it helps to have first-rate actors on board. Besides the outstanding performances by Suárez and Monner, there is the remarkable and ruthless acting of Sergi López as Gabriel's uncle, who is sure that the boy died eight years earlier and that this teenage prodigal son is an impostor. Whatever the truth, Gabriel's search for identity and struggle is compelling in its own right. Another ally, as for adding to the drama of the film, was the forbidding winter landscape, exquisitely photographed by cinematographer Diego Dussuel. ■

OFFICIAL SELECTION

THE TEACHER - HIGH STAKES DRAMA IN A COMMUNIST-ERA CLASSROOM



Jan Hřebejk's classroom drama pits families against petty corruption

Brian Kenety

The year is 1983. The setting, the Slovak capital. The atmosphere, a mix of complacency and fear.

The Teacher is the latest drama by director Jan Hřebejk and screenwriting partner Petr Jarchovský to portray indignities and injustices endured by everyday people during the so-called "normalization" period; in those uncertain years that followed the attempt to introduce "socialism with a human face," which came to be known as the Prague Spring, civil society was brutally crushed by the invading Warsaw Pact.

Early on we meet the seemingly compassionate school teacher, Mrs. Dražděchová (played by the superb Slovak actress Zuzana Mauréry), as she takes attendance on the first day of class. She asks each student not only to introduce themselves but to tell her what their parents do for work, all the while taking copious notes.

Viewers soon realize that, al-

though she's a Communist official, it's not the parents' loyalty to the party she's interested in but rather what possible use they can be to her – the widow of a soldier, as she constantly reminds anyone who will listen, bravely trying to make it on her own.

Concerned about the school performance of their children, most parents succumb to the pressure Mrs. Dražděchová puts on them to do "little favors" for her, from doing her shopping to cleaning her apartment (which is done by her students). In return, she might tell a parent which chapter her son should study ahead of a pop quiz. But should they deny her, their children's grades get progressively worse.

Three families, however, take a stand and convene a clandestine meeting with the sympathetic principal to voice their grievances. ("I won't be blackmailed or kiss anyone's ass," one father (Martin Havelka), already blacklisted by the Communist party, tells his wife (Éva Bander) during a bitter

fight over which path to take. "Our boy will pay!," she responds. "He'll have a f**ked-up life, working factory shifts!")

Though specific to a time and place, the story is a universal portrayal of what Václav Havel called "the power of the powerless." The exchanges between the bold and sheepish parents make for a kind of high courtroom drama – inspired by true events – although Mrs. Dražděchová's crimes are clear, it is the victims (children and parents alike) most at risk of punishment.

"All adults and most children have experienced the feeling where something that might benefit you now might also be the wrong thing to do," Hřebejk says, or "that following your conscience or moral code may be difficult or very disadvantageous."

Apart from Mauréry and Havelka, Hřebejk cast lesser known but highly convincing actors; the lack of overly familiar faces only adds to *The Teacher's* powerful naturalism. ■

EVENTS

Apart from the KVIFF Talk with **Charlie Kaufman** at 2pm, keep an eye out for **Jean Reno**, who is in town today to receive the Festival President's Award ahead of the screening of *Leon* in the Thermal's Grand Hall at 10:30pm.

Industry events today include: the **Works in Progress** presentation (from 1:30pm, Congress Hall),

where there are 8 films in post-production and 8 films seeking buyers; an open panel on the current trends of **European film education** (10am–12 pm, Barrandov Studio's Villa), and a discussion panel on benefits stemming from **producing in the Czech Republic** (11am, Industry Pool) as well as an introduction of **training opportunities**

in Europe (starting at 5:30pm, Hotel Thermal, Industry Pool).

For a change of artform, check out the open-air theatre performance every day under Chebský most, starting at 8pm. An exhibit commemorating 80 years of the Zlín studios starts at 5pm at the KV Art Gallery. ■



restaurant
TUSCULUM
Sadová 31 | Karlovy Vary
+420739541120 | tusculumkv.cz



CRITIC'S CHOICE CATHY MEILS, EDITOR, FILM NEW EUROPE

Film and theatre director/playwright Petr Zelenka solidifies his place as one of the smartest and most original Czech filmmakers with *Lost in Munich*. This film within a film is richly layered with history as well as social commentary and wrapped up in a dry comedy about filmmaking. And the star is a parrot. The title references the classic



LOST IN MUNICH

Director: Petr Zelenka
Czech Republic, 2015, 105min
July 5, 11:30am, Cinema B

Lost in La Mancha, but the film is so much more than just a clever mockumentary. It's

a must-see for fans of the Czech New Wave and Velvet Wave alike.

Estonia has been capturing the world's attention and winning audiences at home, so of course I want to see the new box office hit by debuting director Triin Ruumet, *The Days That Confused*. Add to that the story of self-discovery during the 1990s, the years when Estonia was re-discovering itself after winning its independence.



THE DAYS THAT CONFUSED

Director: Triin Ruumet
Estonia, 2015, 105min
July 4, 6:30pm, KV Municipal Theatre

Karlovy Vary is presenting the international premiere within the East of the West – Competition

section, giving us the first opportunity to see the first feature film by a rising star.



THE LURE

Director: Agnieszka Smoczyńska
Poland, 2015, 92min
July 4, 9:30, Cas Cinema

the 1980's disco era. Part vampire thriller, part Hans Christian

Andersen, part Euromusical, and 100 percent Another View. ■

MY KV

Věra Křesadlová actress and artist

You said the role of Štěpa in Ivan Passer's *Intimate Lighting* was your favorite. Why?

The shooting was very pleasant. We shot in summer in a small house in Mirovice village and it all felt like cozy family time. Ivan is a very laid-back guy. Bambas (musician Karel Blažek) and I took long walks and had long talks and had a lot of fun – we also partially improvised some of the scenes like the one where I meet the local simpleton Franta. He was actually a real resident from the village.

You were married to Miloš Forman for 35 years and you're the mother of theatre artists and actors Petr and Matěj Forman. Do you have fond memories of KVIFF?

I was here before during the festival with Miloš. We stayed at Jan Roháč's house and played golf. I remember when Miloš wanted to park in front of the Grandhotel Pupp but was kicked out by the security who didn't know who he was back then.

Apart from acting, you also create lamps with the Tiffany design. How did that come about?

I saw the lamps when I was in the USA with Miloš for the first time. I wanted to buy one on 5th Avenue but we didn't have money then. Later, I tried to design and make them myself – I bought the glass in Germany very early on. First I made glasses, then I tried and tried and collected designs and now I've actually made quite a lot of them.



*Věra Křesadlová remembers the filming of *Intimate Lighting**

You also worked at the Václav Havel cultural residence in the 1990s, correct?

We actually used to live close to the Havels; Miloš and Václav were friends. I remember when Václav stopped for coffee once just after he was released from prison. So, years later, just when I was leaving Semafor theatre after 26 years and was looking for a job, I met Václav in a restaurant and asked him if he had any job for me. He called me a week later with a job offer! He and Olga were really nice. Together, we helped him choose suits for his travels abroad. At first, he didn't have many and actually got a few as presents and named them after the people he got them from – so he had a Bush suit, a Forman suit...

Is there a role you'd like to play?

Well, I have been cast as someone's mother and grandmother lately but I'd really like to play in a historical film; perhaps an empresses with a nice gown (laughs). (HG/ZV) ■

HOPE FOR AMAZON (AND NEW INDIE FILM PLATFORMS)

A key figure in non-Hollywood film production for two decades, Ted Hope now heads the retail giant Amazon's venture into original arthouse productions and acquisitions.

Hope spoke to film industry folk at the Grandhotel Pupp on Sunday, offering off-the-record insights into his vision for discovering new voices in indie film.

As Head of Production for Amazon Original Movies, a division that's part of Amazon Studios, he produces and acquires up to 12 films a year for theatrical release, according to the company. Four to eight weeks after these films screen in cinemas, they get an early distribution window online as video on demand on Amazon Prime Instant Video.

The practice breaks new ground; until now, the film industry has preferred delaying online releases until a given film has been in cinemas for much longer – although since 2006 more and more independent films with limited theatrical release have been available for VOD on the same day.

By committing to producing original films and buying the work of daring new filmmakers at events such as the Sundance festival, Amazon is taking on giants like Netflix. The competition is being closely watched by the industry – and by indie filmmakers, who often struggle to recoup much of their investment under the system as it has operated up to now.



Ted Hope

Hope, who for years has championed new ways for non-Hollywood filmmakers to survive and thrive, is an interesting choice for forging new practices and systems. Before taking on his role at Amazon last year, he left his position as CEO of Fandor, and he was also founder of Good Machine Productions. The company was behind a host of critically acclaimed films, including Edward Burns' *The Brothers McMullen*, and Hope has producing credits for *The Ice Storm* and *21 Grams*.

Hope has also won more Sundance jury prizes than any other producer. (WT) ■

FACES



Jean Reno



Felix van Groenigen



Olmo Omerzu



Catrinel Dăniș

Today, a cavalry of directors is coming to KVIFF to introduce new works to the public. The Official Selection – Competition section will welcome Romanian director **Cătălin Mitulescu** and his drama *By the Rails*, and the East of the West – Competition section **Catrinel Dăniș** (*Double*), **Jiří Sadek** (*Noonday Witch*), **Rusudan Glurjidze** (*House of Others*), and **Toomas Hussar** (*The Spy and the Poet*). Director **Felix van Groenigen**, curator of Future Frames section, is also bringing his new film, *Belgica*, which you can find among the

Horizons films along with films by **Henrik Ruben Genz** (*Tordenskjold & Kold*) and **Pieter-Jan De Pue** (*The Land of the Enlightened*), who are also arriving. Slovenian filmmaker and FAMU film school alum **Olmo Omerzu** will introduce his *Family Film*. **Vatše Boulghourjian** will offer his film *Tramontane* in the Another View sidebar, and director **Christophe Bisson** is bringing *Sfumato* to screen in the Imagina section.

Also coming is special KVIFF guest **Jean Reno** (*Léon: The Professional*). (HG) ■

Discover the 2016 **Official Selection**



The European Parliament is pleased to unveil the 2016 LUX Film Prize Official Selection, a remarkable and diverse cocktail of European cinema.

Three of the ten films will be subtitled into the 24 languages of the European Union and will travel across 28 countries during the LUX Film Days.

The European Parliament's LUX Film Prize brings films from Europe to Europe.



À PEINE J'OUVRE LES YEUX
Leyla Bouzid
France, Tunisia, Belgium, U.A.E



A SYRIAN LOVE STORY
Sean McAllister
United Kingdom



CARTAS DA GUERRA
Ivo M Ferreira
Portugal



KRIGEN
Tobias Lindholm
Denmark



L'AVENIR
Mia Hansen-Løve
France, Germany



LA PAZZA GIOIA
Paolo Virzi
Italy, France



MA VIE DE COURGETTE
Claude Barras
Switzerland, France



SIERANEVADA
Cristi Puiu
Romania, France



SUNTAN
Argyris Papadimitropoulos
Greece, Germany



TONI ERDMANN
Maren Ade
Germany, Austria, Romania

LUX
PRIZE
.EU

ye10
ars
OF EUROPEAN FILMS
IN 24 LANGUAGES
TRAVELLING ACROSS
28 EU COUNTRIES

BLOND HAIR, LIKE PEDRO'S WORLD, IS INFINITE

Šimon Šafránek

Adriana Ugarte, 31, has been appearing in Spanish films since the age of 16. Now she's in the title role of *Julieta*, Pedro Almodóvar's tale of a headstrong young woman with her fair share of luck and loss. Ugarte says she had wanted to act since the age of 5 and it the craft has become "my lifelong addiction."

How did you get to work with Almodóvar, director of such masterpieces as *All About My Mother*?

It was like a present, like a surprise, but the process I remember was like the classic process. They called me to make a casting. I went but I didn't know the identity of the director. So I didn't know it was a film of Pedro Almodóvar. I just knew it was one of the most important directors in my country. But the casting directors, they couldn't tell me the identity. It was like a secret.

So I went to my casting, I did it. I tried to realize who the director was. The script was very like drama and I couldn't find like spaces of crazy comedy, originally of Pedro. So I didn't know who it was... I went to my second casting and at the end I remember they told me, 'Well, he's very happy with

your work; he thinks you did a great job and now we can tell you that it's the latest film of Pedro Almodóvar.' I was very, very thankful not to know the identity at the beginning because that would make me very, very nervous...

The first time I saw him face to face, I realized he wasn't only a genius but also a very good human being. He is a very special person who can feel how you feel in each moment, like a magician. He can see you before you can.

How was the shoot? Was there any improvisation?

No improvisation. Fortunately, we had a lot of rehearsals and a very big process of make-up and hairdressing because the most important thing was that Emma Suárez and me, we were the same person, the same woman. Because everybody knows who we are, I think to try to pretend that we are the same, it's impossible, but it was very important to have logic in the make-up, in our eyes, in our concrete and special blond hair. Because the blond hair, like everything in Pedro's world, is infinite...

What was the biggest adventure for you?

All of the experience, I guess. I remember that I really enjoyed the rehearsals. I thought maybe



Adriana Ugarte, who plays the title role in Pedro Almodóvar's new drama *Julieta*, says he's a genius

I had not the keys but some notes of the role and I started to feel sure, not completely, but a little bit sure. And when we started the shooting, I realized I had nothing. Because one thing is rehearsal, and another thing is the shooting... So when you think you have something of

the role, you are wrong because you have to work each minute and you have nothing. So I think it's like a lesson that Pedro gave to me that you have to jump into Adriana and forget all knowledge you had before of drama or theater or how to build a role or a character.

So it's always about changing the approach to the character?

Yeah – to be more flexible and to build a very complex character. I think if you start working with a role and you have prejudices; you are not free and you are not absolutely comfortable – or you are

comfortable but you are not right, you are like a false comfortable person. Because you are not looking for something absolutely naked. I think that's the way Pedro works, absolutely naked, in relation with everything.

How did you become an actress? Was it a dream of yours?

I needed to be an actress since I was five. I remember I was always crying and telling my parents, 'I want to be an actress, just a little role, please, wherever, I don't mind.' My parents always laughed and told me: you're tired, go to bed. Tomorrow you are going to see things differently. 'No, I'm not tired!' I wanted the same thing day by day. When I was 16, we were good students and normally, our parents gave us little presents when our results were great, and I remember I asked for a course of theater. There I met the first director I'd work with in a short film, playing a girl with schizophrenia. It was my first real contact with the fantastic, crazy and free world of creation and creativity. It was the first experience of my lifelong addiction.

Pedro Almodóvar's Julieta is screening within KVIFF's Horizons section on July 5 at 10pm (Pupp Cinema) and on July 8 at 1pm (Národní dům Cinema). ■

EAST OF THE WEST: BLACK HUMOR, TURBULENT TIMES

Michael Stein

Central and Eastern European films are known for their black humor, dark intensity, forays into some of their nations' histories more turbulent eras and a surrealist edge often less common in feature films from other parts of the world.

KVIFF's *East of the West* section has all these characteristics and more – with works featuring a group of assassins in wheelchairs, secret agents, Cold War conspiracy at the highest level, and a fear-inspiring witch – but also films of everyday struggles and alienation. Among the sections 12 films are some bold and daring debuts, as well as innovative works by more practiced directors.

Hungary's *Kills on Wheels* is a film that has benefitted from the experience and expertise backing it up. Its producer, Judit Stalter, was the executive producer of Academy-Award winner *Son of Saul* while the 2008 debut feature of the director Attila Till, *Panic*, also received extensive festival play.

Kills on Wheels portrays a group of disabled people who have become hired assassins while forging a strong yet highly risky bond of friendship. To make the film, Till says he watched every film made over the last 10 years dealing with people confined to wheelchairs. "In my case, I just wanted to avoid one thing: not to create another film with actors about disabled people without involving real handicapped people in the project. In this film real disabled people are in the main roles. Finally, they



Attila Till's *Kills on Wheels* has assassins in wheelchairs, played by people with disabilities

got the possibility to be on screen," he says.

Questions of truth abound in Slovenian director Žiga Virč's *Houston, We Have a Problem!*, which debuted earlier this year at the Tribeca Film Festival. Did Tito really sell the Yugoslav space program to the US for a whopping \$3 billion, including the 26 aerospace engineers developing it? Virč shows one of the kidnapped engineers meeting his daughter for the first time, the conflicts between Tito and JFK that immediately preceded the latter's assassination on the grassy knoll, and shows Slovenian social theorist Slavoj Žižek venting his thoughts on the whole affair.

The Kosovar director Faton Bajraktari's debut feature *Home Sweet Home* recounts the story of a soldier, Agron, thought to have been killed in the Kosovo conflict whose homecoming as prodigal

son ends up being far from the joyous occasion one would expect. He is compelled to remain dead in the eyes of the world. The film reflects the stifling atmosphere of postwar Kosovo by remaining entirely within the confines of Agron's home during his self-imposed imprisonment.

Confinement and a painful sense of endless waiting is also the plight of the main character's in the Turkish film *Verge*, co-directed by Ayhan Salar and Erkan Tahhuşoğlu in their feature debut and seeing its world premiere at KVIFF. The film is shot and acted with an atmospheric, understated melancholy as it moves back and forth between the present and past.

The Russian director Alexei Krasovskiy also took confinement as a challenge and decided to make his dark thriller *Collector* with a single actor in a single office location throughout the film.

Konstantin Khabenskiy starring as the ruthless debt collector finds the tables turned on him and the clock ticking in his bid to bail himself out of trouble.

The echoes of war are tragically and beautifully rendered in another debut feature, that of Georgian director Rusudan Glurjidze's *House of Others*. The film will have its world premiere at KVIFF and is marked above all by its stunning cinematography, courtesy of Spanish Director of Photography Gorka Gómez Andreu. The film is set after the civil war between Georgia and Abkhazia, as the winning side moves into the vacated houses of those forced to leave. But a fresh start turns out to be less easily gained than expected and war continues on even after the fighting has stopped.

Another form of war will see the screen in another KVIFF world premiere in Estonian director



Rusudan Glurjidze's *House of Others* is having its world premiere at KVIFF

Toomas Hussar's *The Spy and the Poet*. His 2012 debut feature *Mushrooming* was a hit on the festival circuit, and his new film's genre-bending black comedy and spy story appears set to conquer audiences with similar resolve.

Another Estonian film and another of life's turning points comes to the screen in Triin Ruumet's debut feature *The Days That Confused*, which follows the lives of Allar and his friends in the small-town late '90s Estonia, drinking and recklessly wasting away their lives until an accident forces Allar to reconsider where he's headed. Vividly shot without prettifying the characters' lives, the film captures the essence of a generation.

Relationships and personal dissatisfaction are the themes around which a number of films in this section are based. In Romanian debut helmer Catrinel Dăniș's

The Double an architect finds that the life he should be happy with isn't enough. In another debut by Polish director Łukasz Grzegorzek, *Kamper*, world premiering at KVIFF, it's the difficulties of relationships that are put under the microscope. Also having its world premiere here is Lithuanian helmer Lina Lužytė's feature debut *Together For Ever*, about a family that is a locus of discontent and miscommunication.

The horror genre, meanwhile, is a departure not only for this section but for contemporary Czech film in general. With his feature debut *The Noonday Witch*, Czech director Jiří Sádlek has modernized a classic work of Czech literature and crafted a film that plays with the boundaries between the world of phantoms and the imaginations which give rise to them. ■

DAILIES

- 1/ KVIFF Artistic Director Karel Och (far left), with actress Magdalena Cielecka, sales agent Jan Naszewski, actress Julia Kijowska, director Tomasz Wasilewski, actress Marta Nieradkiewicz, and KVIFF Programmer Lenka Tyrpáková
- 2/ Alexandre Pajon of the French Institute in Prague at the Lux Film Prize official selection ceremony, with participant Roumiana Vasileva Zlateva from Bulgaria
- 3/ Crystal Globe winner Willem Dafoe shares a moment of levity with the press

