



Crystal Globe winner Richard Gere says he's not in it for the money.

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FREE

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GERE EMBRACES HIGHER QUALITIES

LOWDOWN

Veronika Bednářová

Richard Gere has had a 40-year career, and starred in iconic films such as *Days of Heaven*, *An Officer and a Gentleman* and *Pretty Woman*. Last night he received the *Crystal Globe* for *Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema* at the festival's opening ceremony in the Hotel Thermal's Grand Hall. His recent films *Time Out of Mind* and *Franny* are being screened at the festival.

Of the roles in the films you have here – a rich, unhappy man in *Franny*, and homeless George in *Time Out of Mind* – which character is closer to your heart? And which was harder to play?

I like both these characters. *Time Out of Mind* is something that I've worked 12 years on, so I have much more of a commitment to that. And I think what we were trying to do was maybe more uncompromising. We were trying to do something extremely difficult – to make a movie that doesn't have a lot of narrative drive to it but is immersive. We're not witnessing

the narrative move across the screen. We're drawn into the screen.

Do you have the privilege of choosing whatever you want to work on?

No, I don't. People have the illusion that I can just choose what I want, but that's not the case. I'm surprised that I find the work that I do – I made four movies back to back over the past year and a half. I've never done that before. It's not that I need the money – I just liked the projects. In fact, we don't make any money making these kinds of films. So I'm just doing what I like.

And *Days of Heaven* – was that a groundbreaking film for you?

Yes, it's a beautiful film. It was the first experience I had of that kind of... excellence. Something extraordinary that was touching the world and ended up playing at Cannes. It won prizes at Cannes and led to many other things for me.

And weren't there a lot of grueling rehearsals during the shooting?

It wasn't the rehearsals that were grueling, it was the auditions! God, Terrence Malick was trying to put people together – this actor and that actress, the other ac-

tor – which three fit together. I remember saying, "Terry, I can't do another audition – you've got to make up your mind. I don't care at this point – if you don't want me, that's fine. But make up your mind. You're making everyone crazy."

But it was similar with *Pretty Woman* in that it was a slow start, wasn't it? Do you like that movie now?

I liked it then. They kept offering me this script, but I said there's nothing there. But then we worked on it. Garry [Marshall] and I did a lot of the rewriting ourselves, finding ways to make [my character] more than just a guy in a suit. Some movies really run on the chemistry of the people. If you put other people in the same movie, they won't work. It was just this director, this story, Julia [Roberts] and me. Something about that worked. She's magical in it. We were vibrating in a really nice way with each other. It doesn't always happen. You can't force these things. You can't manufacture them. You can't make them with a computer. If it could be done that way, studios would have made this movie over and over again. People are not computers; people are mysterious.

What worries you most in the world right now?

Well, we are seeing incredible mindless violence emerging. How could we, as social beings, allow all these people – who are so violent – how did we allow their minds to go in that direction? Why did we not take care of them? Why did we not embrace them in a way that the higher qualities, the generous qualities, the loving qualities emerged instead of these violent qualities?

Does your friendship with the Dalai Lama help you with your understanding of the world?

There is a very deep and deepening connection that I have with him as a teacher and as a friend. He gets angry once in a while and frustrated just like everyone else. But it's such a high level of functioning – the degree of patience and generosity and love and compassion, genuine responsibility, that this man has been able to develop inside of himself, not because someone waved a magic wand over him but because he did the work on himself. That's what's inspiring. If you do the work that's the result you get. ■

As planet KVIFF got to properly spinning for the fest's opening last night, following the star-studded gala and opening film – *Time Out of Mind*, in which Richard Gere portrays a homeless gent in New York – it seemed that the entire west Bohemian region was joining in the party. In fact, they were, reveling at open-air events all over town, which replaced the usual formal bash at the *GrandHotel Pupp*.

One figure eager to experience the city's *Promenade* before the crowd rushed in was Gere himself, who was out strolling the streets early Friday morning, on his own and looking to be in a state of peaceful contemplation.

Another character who will ever go his own way, of course, is KVIFF president Jiří Bartoška. In a recent interview for Czech TV, the erudite prez, also an actor by trade, was asked at the request of a nervous producer to please extinguish his signature cigarette. (The public broadcaster has a policy of not airing sources puffing up.)

Bartoška politely but firmly stuck to his guns. A man must do what a man must do... ■

SEE YOU THERE

FERDINANDO CITO FILOMARINO

DIRECTOR,
ANTONIA

I cannot abstain from recommending *The Tales of Hoffmann*, because Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger are an absolute guide for me as a filmmaker – and probably not only that. *The Tales of Hoffmann*, in particular, is an incredibly brave statement of their vision of cinema and of staging with an amazing *tour de force* and a huge production machine. It is the vision – I would actually say crazy vision – of these two men and they also do it through the use of ballet, which they obviously had an expert knowledge of thanks to *The Red Shoes*.

The Tales of Hoffmann screens tomorrow at 10pm (Národní dům Cinema) and on July 9 at 1:30pm (Richmond).

Antonia screens today at 8pm (Thermal Grand Hall), tomorrow at 1pm (Pupp Cinema), and on July 7 at 11:30am (Drahomíra) (COC) ■



FINDING YOUR FEET AT THE FEST

If you're new to Karlovy Vary, the first thing you should do is hop aboard the KVIFF mothership – aka the Thermal Hotel. This towering lump of brutalist concrete by the Teplá River not only houses four cinemas, it's also the main hub of the festival. The accreditation office is on the ground floor right beside the red carpet, so filmmakers, hacks, and other industry types should go there first to get their vital lanyards and a swag bag.

Once they're accredited, journalists can also make use of the press center on the first floor. It offers workspaces with computers, Wi-Fi, and a counter for getting film tickets.

For industry people who can't make a screening, the video library is directly opposite the press center. There's also an official meeting point for festival

guests on the first-floor terrace. Producer-distributor types and other professionals should make sure to visit the adjacent film industry office (open daily from 10am to 8pm). While they're there, they can also find out what's going down in the local movie scene via the Czech Film Corner.

At the back of the Thermal, you'll find the press conference hall, where the stars meet the scribes. Provided there's room, those with a festival pass

can also attend pressers. That's just one of the many perks a pass offers if you're not here in an official capacity and you just want to watch some movies. Besides entitling you to one free ticket for three different screenings each day, it will also get you into the perennially popular KVIFF talks and other events. Don't forget, accredited guests and passholders also have the option of reserving tickets via SMS. See the fest website for more details. (COC) ■

FESTIVAL PASS PRICES

	1 day	3 days	5 days	Entire Festival
Festival Pass	250 CZK	600 CZK	850 CZK	1200 CZK
Discount Pass	200 CZK	450 CZK	600 CZK	900 CZK

*A discount pass may be bought by students, senior citizens (over 65) and those with physical disabilities (appropriate documentation must be presented upon purchase)

OFFICIAL SELECTION

HEIL - NOTHING HELD SACRED IN GERMAN SEND-UP OF NEO-NAZIS

By Brian Kenety

Mel Brooks won an Oscar for *The Producers*, his 1968 comedy about a Broadway producer who tries to bilk investors by over-selling interests in a sure-fire flop called *Springtime for Hitler: A Gay Romp with Eva and Adolf at Berchtesgaden*. To his horror, audiences mistake the tasteless "love letter" to the Führer for brilliant satire – and the play becomes a smash hit.

It was another four decades before a German comedy about Nazis came to the silver screen – *Mein Führer: The Truly Truest Truth about Adolf Hitler* (2007), in which another Jewish director, Dani Levy, portrays Hitler as a bed-wetter prone to crawling on all fours and barking along with Blondi, his beloved German Shepherd. ("I didn't want to give this cynical, psychological wreck of a person the honor of a realistic portrayal," Levy says.)

Is the time ripe – finally – for a German comedy directly addressing the Nazi legacy? "It all started with precisely this question," says director Dietrich Brüggemann, who got the idea to shoot his fifth feature, *Heil*, after seeing a poster for *Kriegerin* (2011), a film about a neo-Nazi who questions her beliefs after meeting an Afghan refugee. "And then I had a meeting with [my producer] and heard myself saying, 'Isn't it time for a comedy with neo-Nazis?'"

That was not long after the far-right terrorist group NSU was implicated for murdering nine im-



Dietrich Brüggemann's farcical satire *Heil* is an equal opportunity offender – poking fun at Germans of all political persuasions, in their collective struggle to deal with Hitler's legacy.

migrants. "Naturally, I had the entire story ... in the back of my mind. Taken all together, it seemed so absurd to me that you couldn't get anything by following the usual elements in scripts of empathy and identification," he says.

Brüggemann had turned an unblinking eye on Catholicism in his arthouse hit *Stations of the Cross* (2014), which won a Silver Bear for Best Screenplay at the Berlinale. *Heil* also holds nothing sacred; it lampoons the far-right and anti-fascists, self-righteous intellectuals, the media – in short, German society.

"Satire seems to me the only possible format that somehow can cinematically get a hold of the complex reality," he says, and depicting neo-Nazis as "inhuman" would detract from its power. "If they were complete monsters, you could distance yourself very easily from them or the whole film."

Heil's multilayered story (in-

cluding love triangles), centers on Afro-German author Sebastian (Jerry Hoffman) who is knocked out and kidnapped by neo-Nazis while on a reading tour. Suffering from amnesia, he parrots his captors; the group's leader, Sven (Benno Fürmann), seizes the chance to get this "blackie" to spout anti-immigrant views on the talk show circuit.

Sven's personal political ambitions are also driven by his desire for foxy fellow extremist Doreen (the director's sister and co-writer Anna Brüggemann), but she demands nothing less from her suitor than – spoiler alert – him invading Poland. "The entire film is a festival of rants, so I'll add one to the mix: Whoever forgets history is damned to repeat it," Brüggemann says. "As a farce."

Heil screens today at 5pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall, tomorrow at 10am in the Pupp Cinema, and on July 7 at 9am in the Drahomíra. ■

OFFICIAL SELECTION

ANTONIA - A TORMENTED POETIC SOUL THAT DEPARTED TOO SOON

Gillian Purves

"Today, I curve naked, in the clarity of the white bath and I'll curve naked on a bed tomorrow, if someone will take me. And one day naked, alone, stretched out under too much earth, I'll be, when death has called upon me."



A Milanese poet brings passion and despair to the main competition

So wrote Antonia Pozzi, the charming, melancholic and tormented poet-protagonist of director Ferdinando Cito Filomarino's Official Selection film *Antonia*. Antonia Pozzi grew up in Milan in interwar fascist Italy, the privileged only child of a lawyer father and aristocratic mother. In Filomarino's dramatization of the last 10 years of her short life, Antonia's father is portrayed as an authoritarian figure, who urges her to admire the "rigorousness" of Wagner's music, when she would really rather dance wildly to Strauss. We witness her blossom from an impassioned 16-year-old school-girl and wilt to a suicidal 26-year-old woman who wrote of her "mortal despair" before committing suicide alone in a field just outside Milan. "That decade coincides with the most intense part of her artistic life," says Filomarino, "ten years of photography and poetry that underwent constant change, and that actually contain a creative journey that is almost complete, regardless of her young age."

During her lifetime Pozzi had only shared her writing with a few trusted friends but, after her death, hundreds of poems were discovered among her possessions and her father had them published the following year. Her work has posthumously carved her a spot in the canon of modern Italian poets.

One of the film's producers, Luca Guadagnino, is a big fan of Antonia Pozzi's poetry and was eager to make a movie about her. He introduced Filomarino to her work, thinking they would be a good match. "I have always been fascinated by artists, and when I read her poems I immediately felt an affinity with what was on those pages," says the director. "Then I immediately read the books about her life, her letters, observed her photographs, and I understood the immense cinematic potential of molding those 'worlds' together."

Linda Caridi, the actress who so convincingly carries the role of Antonia, went to great lengths to absorb the essence of the poet.

"I read what she wrote and read, I listened to the same music she listened to, I watched movies she probably watched," says Caridi. "Then I tried to recover my Milanese accent, lost because of my theatre studies; but above all I immediately tried to find a body which our vision of Antonia could inhabit." Caridi says she "spent the preparation and shooting in a very concentrated and focused atmosphere and felt the dedicated and lovely support of the entire crew every step of the way, as enclosed as I was in a 'sacred sphere,' while every millimeter of this artwork was being lovingly created by them."

The film shows us a woman who loved everything that is beautiful in life: music, literature, nature, the mountains, and love itself, but who ultimately could not find peace within herself.

Antonia screens today at 8pm in the Thermal Grand Hall, tomorrow at 1pm in the Pupp Cinema, and on July 7 at 11:30am in the Drahomíra. ■

69 YEARS, 50 FESTIVALS...

If you've been scratching your head and wondering why KVIFF is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year when it was actually launched in 1946, the answer lies in the establishment of the Moscow International Film Festival in the 1950s. Because of a decision by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) to allocate only one "A" category festival per year to socialist countries, Karlovy Vary was forced to annually alternate with Moscow between 1959 and 1993. As a result, we are now marking the festival's golden jubilee, even though it's actually been around for 69 years.

Here's a quick timeline of events that have left their mark on KVIFF down through those decades as it gradually evolved into the mammoth event that it is today:

1896 – the first ever film screening in Karlovy Vary is held – 60 years before the festival started. The venue was Lázně III, which is still used for KVIFF screenings to this day.

1946 – the first international film festival is held in the town. One of the highlights this year is a screening of legendary Czech animator Jiří Trnka's *Animals and Bandits* (*Zvířátka a petrovští*). It arrives at the festival fresh from Cannes, where it had won a prize for best animated short.

1948 – the first incarnation of the Crystal Globe is awarded to *The Last Stage* by the Polish director Wanda Jakubowska, who



A young Leonardo DiCaprio with his grandparents in *Karlovy Vary* in 1994

based it on her experiences at Auschwitz.

1950 – festival events begin to be held at the Grandhotel Pupp (then called the Moscow Hotel). It was to remain the festival's main venue until the mid-1970s, when the Thermal finally opened

1957 – on its 10th anniversary the festival is ranked as an "A" category event, a status it still holds to this day.

1964 – as the political climate thaws, the artistic climate at KVIFF follows suit. International stars such as **Henry Fonda** and **Claudia Cardinale** visit the fest.

1968 – the foundation stone is

laid for the Thermal Hotel. A whole street in the town is demolished to make way for it.

1978 – the Thermal finally opens. It has been the festival's central venue ever since.

1990 – the Velvet Revolution and the collapse of communism cast a cloud of uncertainty over the festival and it is not at all certain if the event will happen, especially as it had declined during the 1970s and 1980s, becoming little more than an ideological tool that showcased staid formulaic films highlighting the "struggle for social progress." The festival is eventually held and it boosts its profile by screening several classic Czech films that

had been blacklisted for decades, including *Larks on a String*, *The Ear*, *Black Peter*, *Closely Watched Trains*, and *The Joke*. Celebrated émigré director **Miloš Forman** gets behind KVIFF and famously arrives at the red carpet on a bicycle.

1994 – after nearly forty years of alternating with the Moscow IFF, the festival once again becomes an annual event. **Jiří Bartoška** becomes the festival's president. Guests this year include a youthful **Leonardo DiCaprio**, who comes with his grandparents.

Source: *Mezinárodní filmový festival Karlovy Vary 1946-2001* (Květoslav Kroča) (COC) ■

MY KV

Eve Ringuette,
Actress. *Le Dep*

Your film, screening in the Forum of Independents, is a rare look at issues facing Native Americans, directed and performed by them. Were you imagining it could reach European audiences while shooting?

It's a huge honor to compete in such a prestigious European festival as Karlovy Vary, considering the film was shot on a microbudget. It's my first time attending a major film festival. I'm very happy to come here with Sonia Bonspille Boileau, the director, and Jason Brennan, the producer, who did such a great job delivering an excellent film under limited circumstances and who believed in me when they cast me in the lead role.

The setting, in a small town in Canada's sparse east, along with the authenticity of the performances and dialogue, will be eye-opening to viewers in Karlovy Vary...

I'm very proud of the fact that all the actors in *Le dep* are indigenous and from Québec, which is very rare. Often in film, indigenous characters are played by actors who are not, so I raise my hat to director Sonia that she made a point of casting us. I also hope it will inspire indigenous communities to follow their passions.

How did you get started on the path to film performance?

I wasn't always convinced I could have a career in cinema, but I just kept trying anyway. So hopefully young people in the communities will see that it is possible to follow your dreams.



What are your priorities at the fest once the end titles roll?

I don't know my schedule for Karlovy Vary yet, but I hope I'll have a chance to admire the architecture in the town and to walk along the river. I'd also like to try the *oplatky* [local wafers for which KV is famous] since I have a sweet tooth.

Any other quintessential Czech experiences on your list?

On the internet I found info about the Diana Observation Tower and the Becherovka Museum, where I'd like to try a drink. I would also like to visit the Moser Crystal Museum. Usually I like to make impromptu discoveries, but I already know I will have a Czech beer in a great bar.

Any films at KVIFF that are must-sees for you?

During the festival I'm not sure which films I'd like to see, but *Above and Below* looks interesting and I'd also like to see *Time Out of Mind*. If I have any spare time, I will try to subtly get my photo taken with Jamie Dornan...

Le dep screens tomorrow at 9:30pm in the Cas Cinema and on July 6 at 7:30pm in Lázně III (WT) ■

FACES



Eva Neymann

Corine Shawi

Sonia Bonspille Boileau

Ivona Juka



Visar Morina

Eva Neymann

Veronika Lišková

Nicolas Steiner

New arrivals to Karlovy Vary today include actress **Alena Mihulová** (*Home Care*) as well as actors **Benno Fürmann** (*Heil*) and **Jeremy Chabriel** (*Partisan*). Several directors are also making their way here, including **Thomas Salvador** (*Vincent*), **Eva Neymann** (*Song of Songs*), **Syllas Tzoumerka** (*A Blast*), **Bartek Prokopowicz** (*Chemo*), **Leonardo Guerra Seragnoli** (*Last Summer*), **Sonia Bonspille Boileau** (*Le Dep*), **Nicolas**

Steiner (*Above and Below*), **Shigeo Arikawa** (*Am I Dreaming of Others or Are Others Dreaming of Me?*), **Visar Morina** (*Babat*), **Ivona Juka** (*You Carry Me*) and **Nicolae Constantin Tănase** (*The World is Mine*). There's also some local Czech talent with directors **Irena Pavlášková** (*Photographer*), **Jan Foukal** (*Amerika*), and **Veronika Lišková** (*Daniel's World*). The protagonist **Peter Baláž** and director **Ivan Ostrochovský**

of para-documentary *Koza* will be arriving today. Screenwriter **Radka Denemarková** (*US 2*) is on her way. Director **Paz Fábrega** and actor **Fernando Bolaños** are here with *Viaje*. Director **Corine Shawi** and producer **Myriam Sassine** are here with Lebanese/French film *e muet*. And director **Kyros Papavassiliou** and screenwriter **Maria Varnakkidou** are in town with their film *Impressions of a Drowned Man*. (GP) ■



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Alissa Simon, Film Critic, *Variety*

Croatian director Dalibor Matanić makes something new and provocative from the theme of the Balkan wars, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the ingrained hatreds that cause ongoing pain by setting his three-part story over three decades and using the same two talented actors to portray different characters. Each section fo-



THE HIGH SUN

Director: Dalibor Matanić
Croatia/Slovenia/Serbia, 2015, 123min
July 4, 9am, Drahomíra Cinema

cuses on the relationship of a Croatian boy and a Serbian girl. *The High Sun* deservedly won the

Jury Prize of the Un Certain Regard Section at this year's Cannes festival.

This ingenious multilayered movie-about-a-movie mixes reality and fiction as well as multiple perspectives. As a teenager, director Mohsen Makhmalbaf had been a member of a militant anti-Shah group, and at 17 was arrested and imprisoned for an incident in which a policeman was stabbed. That same policeman unexpectedly



A MOMENT OF INNOCENCE

Director: Mohsen Makhmalbaf
Iran/France, 1996, 78min.
July 4, 10am, KV Theater

turned up to audition for Makhmalbaf's *Salaam Cinema*, but was convinced to instead collabo-

rate on this project: a reconstruction of the events which brought them together so many years before.

Ognjen Sviličić won the East of the West prize in 2007 for *Armin*. He reunites with that film's Bosnian leading man, Emir Hadzihafizbegović, for a tragedy that consumes an ordinary family. After their son is beaten in the street, a bus driver and his wife find that their world of false security collapses around them. They have to



THESE ARE THE RULES

Director by: Ognjen Sviličić
Croatia/France/Serbia/Macedonia, 2014, 78min.
July 4, 10:30pm, Lázně III

re-examine their lives and question all their beliefs. Heart-rending performances by Hadzihafizbegović

and Jasna Žalica, sobering camera work, and apropos music make this compact film extremely powerful.

Don't miss this chance to see Larisa Shepitko's devastating black-and-white masterpiece on the big screen. A gripping, tragic parable of betrayal and martyrdom set during the darkest days of World War II, *The Ascent* follows the harrowing trek of two peasant soldiers, cut off from their troop. As they trudge through the snowy backwoods of Belarus,



THE ASCENT

Director: Larisa Shepitko
USSR, 1976, 102min
July 3, 3:30pm, Small Hall - Thermal

they meet collaborators, enemy gunmen, and innocent bystanders. Each of these meetings will eventu-

ally have their consequences. The visuals are unforgettable, but sadly, this film was her last. ■

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VARIETY SPOTLIGHTS DIVERSE EURO FLICKS

SIDEBAR SHOWCASES FILMS, STORIES AND GENRES THAT STOKED THE CRITICS' PASSIONS, AND ENGAGE AUDIENCES



In *The Lesson*, Margita Gosheva plays a Bulgarian schoolteacher driven to the edge by crushing debt.



Sworn Virgin stars Alba Rohrwacher as an Albanian woman living as a man who tries to reclaim her identity.

Brian Kenety

The *Variety Critics' Choice* sidebar has long spotlighted innovative films by 10 promising European directors with debut or sophomore features. In 2014, the focus shifted, with any European film championed by a critic on the *Variety* team having a shot. "This year, we didn't limit choices to first or second films – or to a distribution of countries that had to be represented," says event curator Peter Debruge, the magazine's chief international critic.

"The idea was to find 10 films that *Variety* critics, overall, are all passionate about that we think KVIFF audiences will also appreciate," he says. "The diversity in the films, stories and genres also reflects the diversity of our critics' tastes."

Among the films that struck a chord with many on the *Variety* team (though with so many films to choose from, there is never a total consensus) is the arthouse horror flick *Goodnight Mommy*,

which takes place in the austere, isolated Austrian home of a dysfunctional family with twin boys who suspect that something is terribly wrong with their mother. "It's a thriller – the kind of movie that the less you know about beforehand the better," Debruge says, noting that its co-directors, Veronika Franz and Severin Fiala, were mentored by Austria's two "most important directors," Ulrich Seidel and Michael Haneke, respectively. "Yet they've made a film that doesn't feel 'inherited' from their teachers but which rather has this really fresh, really creepy kind of vibe."

There are two films in the line-up that screened at the fest in Locarno – a Swiss sister city of Karlovy Vary: *A Blast* (by Greek director Syllas Tzoumerkas) and *Fidelio: Alice's Journey* (by French director Lucie Borleteau, starring Greek-born actress Ariane Labed). "It's a funny coincidence," Debruge says, adding that Locarno and KVIFF

festivals will show classic films from one another's countries this year. That aside, there is also "a facet of a common theme" in the films, he says, with both exploring life at sea (literally and figuratively).

Variety's Guy Lodge called *A Blast*, the story of a young mother's nervous breakdown in the face of financial ruin, an "aggressive, agitated sophomore feature" that "displays more than enough rough-and-tumble directorial nerve, coupled with bristling socioeconomic critique, to magnetize those accustomed to the headier demands of Greek New Wave cinema."

While in *A Blast*, it's the husband who is a philandering sailor, in *Fidelio*, it is a lone female engineer on a freighter who strays, even while fighting to earn respect from the randy all-male crew. "The movie is very frank and progressive in recognizing the sexual autonomy of a strong woman in a setting where you might expect her to be a victim or

an object," says Debruge, who reviewed *Fidelio*.

Among the debut works is French director-actor Thomas Salvador's *Vincent*, a low-budget film about an aquatic superhero. *Variety's* Jay Weissberg found it a refreshing upending of the genre, with its focus on an unassuming guy who has special powers: "Impressive shots of his dolphin-like swimming represent basically the sole nod to *f/x*, since otherwise this understated sleeper focuses more on concepts of individuality and persecution."

If *Vincent* is a French indie answer to *Aquaman*, Swiss documentarist Nicolas Steiner has blazed a trail with his debut *Above and Below* in uncovering America's "invisible" men and women, some homeless, others in self-exile – and one undergoing desert training for a trip to Mars.

"For me, *Above and Below* is a real discovery of a voice. He's inventing his own documentary style, finding a form truest to what he felt, his impressions,"

says Debruge of the film, which probes the damaged psyches of people Steiner filmed over several years. "He shows us the characters' souls before revealing superficial details that would have us stereotype them."

Rounding out the line-up are intense dramas from the Balkans: Croatian director Zvonimir Juric's *The Reaper* (about events that unfold after an accused rapist offers a lift to a stranded woman) and Bulgarian co-directors Kristina Grozeva and Petar Valchanov's *The Lesson* (about a teacher driven by desperation to commit a crime). Both stories unfold in under 24 hours, a device adding to the palpable tension.

There are also unique coming-of-age films in which gender roles feature front and center: Italian director Laura Bispuri's *Sworn Virgin*, about an Albanian woman who, following an ancient tradition, lives as if she were a chaste man, and *The Summer of Sangaile*, Lithuania-born director Alanté Kavašaitė's

tale of a lesbian relationship that transforms a teen's identity. "*Sangaile* is a beautiful film – the sensuality of it," Debruge says. "You experience the characters' emotional state, a very tricky thing to pull off... My colleague Scott Foundas championed it at Sundance [where it won the international competition], and we're totally on the same page on this one."

Finally, English director Julien Temple's *The Ecstasy of Wilko Johnson*, about the rock guitar legend who – diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer – spends what should be his last year alive giving farewell concerts. "Wilko Johnson's unexpectedly buoyant response to the news ... makes for a film about saying goodbye that is itself void of grief, fear or regret," writes *Variety's* Dennis Harvey. "The film feels delightfully alive, inventive and droll, very much like its unassuming subject, and its perspective on terminal illness is a rare tonic." ■

ON THE TOWN

Sushi Sakura

Zeyerova 1, Tel. 777 912 311, sakuracr.cz/sushi-sakura-karlovy-vary
Open Mon-Fri 11am-10pm, Sat-Sun 12 noon-10pm

Sushi Sakura offers good sushi and other Japanese dishes with the option of sitting outside and watching all the action of the festival in full swing or heading into the cool interior for some quiet time as you digest the latest screenings along with a decent plate of fishy morsels. The lunch menu offers 8-piece sushi sets for as little as 160 CZK with a bowl of soup thrown in for good measure, spicy tuna roll for 165 CZK and veggie options such as avocado maki (100 CZK). Huge platters can be rustled up if you want to feed a crowd (64 pieces for 2,900 CZK). Desserts are tempting – green tea ice-cream (100 CZK) or strawberries with Belgian chocolate (150 CZK) or your choice of battered, deep-fried fruit (60 CZK). 36 CZK for 0.4l of Pilsner



Sushi Sakura has become a fixture on KV's increasingly cosmopolitan dining scene.

Urquell or 85 CZK for Japanese beers won't break the bank.

Republica Coffee

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

Hits the spot when only the best coffee will do. The comfortable interior has ample plug sockets for laptops as well as free Wi-Fi, making it an ideal spot to recharge your batteries (literally and figuratively). All beverages can

be packaged to go if you're really in a rush.

Tandoor

I P Pavlova 25 (in the courtyard), Tel. 608 701 341, tandoor-kv.cz
Open: noon-9pm

A good lunch spot serving up classic Indian curry and rice-based dishes just a few minutes' walk from the Thermal. During the festival they will be offering a limited selected menu (including vegetarian options) to aid swift service and get you back to business promptly whether you eat in or take away.

Panoptikum

Bělehradská 3, Tel. 728 520 822
Open: 10am-midnight

Hearty well-priced Czech food served in a cozy restaurant with a pub feel. The place to go for traditional Czech roast duck or pork knee washed down with a local beer or two. (GP) ■

EVENTS

EXTRA SCREENING

There will be an added screening of George A. Romero's classic sci-fi horror *The Crazies* in the KV Theater at 9:30pm tonight. The director himself will be in attendance.

OUTDOOR CINEMA

There will be a special free screening at KVIFF's outdoor cinema (Slovenská 2003) tonight at 11pm. The actual movie is a "surprise" but chances are it'll be a big crowdpleaser.

BEER TASTING

Moderated beer tasting and beer tapping in the Lobkowicz tent in front of the Thermal Hotel from 6pm.

MIROSLAV PECHÁNEK – TYPOGRAPHY, PICTURES, FILM

Opening of a retrospective exhibition put together for the 50th KVIFF that presents the artist's acclaimed film posters and large-format pictures of recent years. Karlovy Vary Art Gallery, Goethova stezka 6. Open daily 10am-7pm. The exhibition opening is being held today at 5pm. ■

DAILIES

- 1/ Some frantic last-minute preparations
- 2/ I think we all know how he felt...
- 3/ Richard Gere greets the waiting hordes at the Thermal

