TOUGH, FUNNY, TRUTHFUL HEROES

By Will Tizard

Master humanitarian filmmaker Ken Loach and writer Paul Laverty have covered ground from the Irish revolution to Nicaraguan death squads to working-class heroes of every stripe in films such as Carla’s Song, Cannes fest-winning I, Daniel Blake, Bread and Roses and The Wind that Shakes the Barley. KVIFF honours their teamwork this year with two Crystal Globes for Contribution to World Cinema and their films Land and Freedom and Sweet Sixteen screen in the section 30 Years of the European Film Academy.

What’s your collaboration process like? Who comes up with the script ideas?

Loach: A lot of piss taking.

Laverty: We talk about it a little bit first, then Paul writes it, starts with a blank piece of paper and a pencil. Then I make stupid comments.

And who generates the ideas for your films? They cover such diverse subjects, eras, people…

Laverty: It’s all very organic, discussions and talks. We see each other all the time. Every project is different. It depends what comes up and what happens. It usually just comes out of discussion. There’s no master plan.

But you’ve said you decide to explore areas, or the worlds most people know very little about in which fascinating characters live.

Loach: Yeah, like, ‘Let’s do something about such-and-such’ and then Paul will write a character or two characters.

Laverty: For example in It’s a Free World, we just knew that there was a viciousness in the way the economy was working and the way that immigrant workers were treated. So we spent a lot of time just digging around, talking to people who were working, people from Eastern Europe. We worked our way from the north of Scotland to the south of England. But it was told from the point of view not of the immigrant worker but from the point of view of someone who was exploiting them, a single mom in a very precarious position. It gave us a way of examining generations. So you have to examine that world, do that investment in work. The reality in the world nourished the characters.

You use humor masterfully with characters that are all too human. They drink too much, get in fights, are neurotic or self-defeating…

Loach: You can’t be in the world and not find things funny. It’s not something you put on. It’s absolutely implicit in everything. And people are contradictory, aren’t they? They’ve got to be contradictory.

Laverty: You see films about people who are in very tough situations and you never see a trace of humor. That doesn’t bear true in my experience. People in Ciudad Juarez on the Mexican border, even in these very tough areas, they’ll tell you daft stories. They’ll make fun.

Often your main characters, who get buffeted around by life a lot, don’t score a big win in the end, though now and then one breaks through.

Loach: Yeah, it’s life. And if it’s just one damn thing after another, everything’s predictable. And often what seems a victory isn’t a victory. In Daniel Blake, he gets his appeal finally, he’s gonna win. There are victories that aren’t victories and defeats that aren’t as bad as they seem. That’s how life is, isn’t it? You’ve got to have a defeat in order to have a victory sometimes.

So when is it time for a winner?

Laverty: You have to be truthful to the premise of the story. In The Wind That Shakes the Barley, those people paid a cost. And in Bread and Roses, there’s a great personal cost to the main character even when the trade union wins. So many people’s lives are destroyed by what happens. There’s a lovely quote by Howard Zinn in a story I read a long time ago. He talked not about making films but about making history, writing history, which you highlight. He said there’s no such thing as objectivity because there’s always selection. But if you end up making one tragedy after another you don’t see these moments when other possibilities are almost within reach. Black people have made such progress, trade unions…you have to look at history. All costing a great deal but there’s been massive progress in many of these things.

In your documentary, The Spirit of ’45, you capture a sense of the hopeful rebuilding of British society after the war. What do you think would be The Spirit of 2017?

Loach: It’s difficult to know when you’re in the middle of it. But it could be a turning point. I think we’re all working as hard as we can to make the turning point. It seems to be that with the serious left it seems to be looking for the turning point in their favor. Or it could be just a moment of optimism that fades. At the moment it’s absolutely in the balance – which is why it’s such a critical moment. And remembering the changes that were made after the war, they were good but they didn’t go far enough because they were easily washed away. They were good in that it came out of a sense of solidarity in the streets, the unions, the electric, the water, the mines, the railways. We owned a huge amount of industry. Of course it was all given away to big business. And now the left has a program to start saying ‘No’.

JASMINE, THE FORTUNATE

The Italian actress of the giorno Jasmine Trinca is humble, stunning and immediately likable. When she walked up to the podium of the Grand Hall yesterday at 12:30pm (Small Hall) and July 7 at 1pm (Karlovy Vary Municipal Theatre)

The Brazilian Cinema The Mirror is screening today at 10am [Pupp Cinema] and July 6 at 9am [Drahomíra Cinema] The Mirror is screening today at 12:30pm [Small Hall] and July 7 at 1pm [Karlovy Vary Municipal Theatre]

Ken Loach and Paul Laverty mine little-known corners of society for rich characters.
**OFFICIAL SELECTION**

**THE CAKEMAKER – PARALLEL LIVES IN BERLIN AND JERUSALEM**

By Zbynek Vlasak, Iva Raze

Director Oři Rud Graizer di- vides his time between Israel and Germany. His Guardian Angels selection movie The Cakemaker, too, is set between Berlin and Jerusalem and explores the challenges of immigration and identity, both sexual and cultural. The film has its world premiere in Karlovy Vary this year and Graizer is here to present it this afternoon in the Thermal Grand Hall.

The title character of Graizer's movie is a German-Jewish refugee, Thomas who runs a popular cake shop in Berlin. One day, an Israeli businessman on one of his regular trips to Germany shows up. A fleeting encounter soon turns into an intense – and clan- destine – love affair only to be cut short in a few months’ time by Oran’s tragic car accident. Thomas feels so lonely and empty that he decides to travel to Israel. He hopes an exposure to Oran’s world will fill some of that void, so he sets out to dive straight into Oran’s “other” life, one that he had always kept out of and one that included his son and widow Anat. He hopes that being close to Oran’s family might help him feel less alone in his grief. And loneliness is one of the crucial themes of The Cakemaker.

“The Cakemaker is a film about secrets, love, romance,” Graizer says. “But for me it is about immigration, search for identity and family, and the attempt to create a new life after a personal loss.” Pretending to be a random tourist, Thomas eventually gets a job in Anat’s coffee shop in Jerusalem and with his pastry chef skills he earns her respect. His pastries are an instant suc- cess with the patrons and Anat starts becoming close to him. On one hand they share their pain, on the other hand, they never talk about it. Nor do they talk about Oran. Thomas never tells her he knew him and he never tells her he was gay.

In the background another theme unfolds. Anat’s family takes pride in their café’s kosher status, and froms upon the new employee, who is not just non- Jewish, but also German.

The horror and terrors of history might have faded in the past, but they are never com- pletely forgotten.

“The Cakemaker is a very personal film that have been trying to do for seven years, right after my film studies, in parallel to creating a new life in Germany,” Graizer says. “But for me it is about immigration, search for identity and family, I am grateful to have managed to tell this story, set in a small kitchen in Jerusalem.”

More loosely plotted than some of Michael Haneke’s other recent films, Happy End is something of a mangent enigma. The story of an upper class family dealing with upper class problems, the film is more interested in present- ing the lies we tell to ourselves and then making you work to solve them. The film both demands and rewards our close attention, but Haneke is such a master – his framing so precise, his form so rigorous – that it racks us as in by default and builds to a killer punchline.

**THREE PICKS FOR TODAY**

**ARRHYTHMIA**
Director: Jiří Draskoň
Russia/France/Israel, 2017, 116min
July 4, 2pm, Drahomíra Cinema

**MENASHE**
Director: Joshua Z Weinstein
USA, 2017, 107min
July 4, 7pm, Grand Hall

**TANDOOR**
UP Palackého 25
Open Tue-Sat 12 – 9pm
In a man with an empty stom- ach food is God! So said Mahatma Gandhi, clearly a man who done his fair share of watching lengthy films with nothing to eat since breakfast. The Indian restaurant Tandoor has long been a staple for movie-goers who tire of the bland fare on offer in the shadow of the Thermal. So if you’re sick of sausages and not pinning for a pani- paar, head over to Tandoor (Entrance is of the street, in a lit- tle grey building).

Tandoor transforms into more of a bistro in festival-time, and its six tables in the main room and an ad- ditional two by the bar are often full. But don’t despair, turnaround is fast, and it’s de jour for two plates to share a table for six.

“Enough is enough,” said the late Czech president Vaclav Havel. “I would still eat. The food is delicious.”

So what’s not to like?

$5 – Inexpensive
$10 – Moderate
$25 – Expensive

**ON THE TOWN**

**ON THE TOWN**

**ROB CAMERON, BBC CORRESPONDENT**

This Russian drama about two medical professionals who are better at their jobs than they are at their relationship is a well-executed story that defines itself with careful casting and a detailed understanding of the character dynamics involved. People are buzzing. You might consider checking it out now, so that you can talk about it later.

Menace feels both foreign and familiar, telling the story of a widow, single father struggling to raise his son and make it in the Big Apple. Seen that before? Maybe – but never quite like this. Director Joshua Z. Weinstein’s film mixes documentary and fiction, takes place within a small and tight-knit his- torical Hasidic community, and is acted entirely in Yiddish. Lead ac- ENG by Michael Stein

From the start it’s clear that Birds Are Singing in Kigali is not your typical film about helping refugees any more than one about the horrific event behind its protagonist’s escape from his native country. The film shows a Polish ethnologist named Anna seeing Claudine, the Tutsi daughter of a colleague, during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, from where she brings her to safety in Poland. Director Joanna Koss-Krauze be- gan the long project together with her husband, fellow director Krzysztof Krauze, and continued work on it after his death in 2014.

For Koss-Krauze, being in Rwanda and bearing what people went through was a difficult but fruitful experience: “Everyone has their own story there. Everyone is either a victim or a killer there, or killer’s descendant. It’s all very complicated. All those emotions have not cooled yet,” she says.

Most films on refugees present them with two distinct receptions in their new homes: there is the outright hostility of racists and xenophobes versus the sympathy of those who welcome them. But the relationship between Anna and Claudine is much more com- plicated and is far more revealing of the incredibly wide spectrum of emotions which come into play in what is summarily described in the film as the “refugee crisis.”

The subject of refugees is typi- cally filmed with a heavy emo- tionality, if not outright senti- mentality. This film is the very opposite, both in substance and style. It is shot with the gritty im- medacy of a documentary, some- times lingering for long moments on the corpses of animals for powerful symbolic effect. There are also seemingly mundane, everyday moments that make you feel like you’re witnessing the horrors of what has taken place in Rwanda as an outsider.

After Claudine’s returned to Rwanda in search of her families’ bodies she goes to a stadium where corpses are laid out to be identified. At one point there is a little group of one or two living people in it. It starts to rain, and a UN sap is pulled over the bod- ies to keep them from getting wet. It’s a practical matter, everyday life thing, but far more powerful than the usual swelling symphon- ic music and tearful reunions that would be in a Hollywood film. Not that there aren’t emotional scenes, but the emotion is arrived at by less traditional means, to powerful effect.

In the few scenes with Hutus, of violence or an attempt confon- mation after the genocide, you never get a clear view of the ene- mies faces any more than Claudine gets a clear explanation why her father’s former col- league and friend (and her godfa- ther) perpetrated the massacre of her family.

**FESTIVAL DAILY Tuesday, July 4, 2017**
IT’S NOT A POTHEAD SHOW

The main character’s claustrophobia is the least of his problems when stuck inside an underground cannabis growroom for three months.

by Jan Škoda

Two years after his debut, The Greedy Tiffons, the Czech director who calls himself Andy Felu is back at KVIFF with his Growroom series about Ondřej, a young man who works off his debt in an underground cannabis growroom. It’s not allowed to leave for three months. Thousands of viewers of the popular online TV channel Stream.cz have seen it. I tried not to present it as a pothead show, getting stoned is secondary. The people who had expected that lost interest. From their reactions it sometimes seemed that every Czech had a growroom at home and knew how it should be done. But we built a fully functional growroom.

Where did you shoot it?

It doesn’t seem so but in the center of Prague, not far from Karlůve náměstí. We found an underground space, we moved rubble from it and equipped it. We didn’t have the cash for a studio, but I wouldn’t want it anyway for the sake of atmosphere – for both the viewers and actors. Initially I didn’t even want to let them out but I didn’t get away with that.

And you brought it in cannabis?

Yes, I did. Three months ahead we started growing industrial hemp in a garden and transported a thousand plants right to the center of Prague (laughing). The tourists took pictures of us and asked whether it was legal. On one occasion this German tourist stayed in, saw our little garden of hemp, got frightened and called the police. He wouldn’t talk to us at all, he only shouted: “Cannabis down, cannabis here!” The police told him they knew about us and that it was OK. He moved out of the hotel the next day. I guess he was scared we would be after him.

How did the Vietnamese actors who play Ondřej’s partners in the growroom feel about your working with a stereotype?

The last thing I wanted was to turn the show against the Vietnamese. I mean, their boss in Czech. It was more like they were confused at the beginning because they didn’t know their role was so crucial. At the end they were actually sad it was over.

Another important character is Šembera, who is in charge of the growroom. How did you find the actor?

Martin Hub is one of our best known stuntmen. He was in Titanic, Saving Private Ryan and Gladiators. There aren’t many work opportunities for stuntmen in this country so he was happy. I found him because every stuntman harbors acting ambitions.

There was this very real fungus and any food not eaten within two hours went moldy. Our prop guy picked his hand on a nail and his whole arm turned black in two days. It’s really hard to get used to the environment. We spent two weeks there in total.

And you brought in cannabis?

Yes, I did. I brought in cannabis.

It’s not a pothead show.

Tuesday, July 4, 2017

FESTIVAL DAILY strana 3 / page 3
By Michael Stein

People have different ideas of what makes the perfect midnight movie. Various recipes include buckets of blood and gore, generous helpings of the bizarre, perhaps a bit of crime, gratuitous sex and general mayhem. The Midnight Screenings section at this year’s KVIFF contains all those elements and more, but there is also a more particular feature that runs through the selection.

Imagine a situation in life that would scare anyone – being lowered in a cage to watch great white sharks, reaching the night of your 30th birthday still a virgin – then imagine those real-life situations through a prism of freakish terror.

The hero of Benjamin Barfoot’s debut feature Double Date is Jim, only hours away from turning 30 and his best friend vows to help him lose his virginity. Everything looks like it’s going according to plan when they meet a pair of beautiful sisters who agree to go out with them. The only problem is that the plan is the sisters’ and it involves lots of blood and human sacrifice, a clash of intentions that leads to a wild and hilarious climax.

The film is marked by unique visual feel, a result both of the director’s influence and his earlier plans for what he thought the film’s budget would be. “Initially, I thought Double Date would be a micro-budget film and I had always hugely admired Doug Liman’s approach to making Swingers,” Barfoot says. “I really learned so much just listening to the interviews about how he made it and it’s such a charming comedy. Our film ended up having a bigger budget with a different feel, but certainly Swingers production methods were a big influence.”

“I’m also a fan of 70’s horror – Don’t Look Now, The Exorcist, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre – and listening to Goat’s music, who did the score, was just driving me to some kind of feeling I had about the girls. Of psychedelic, murderous sirens and folk horror and paganism,” Barfoot says. “47 Meters Down, directed by Johannes Roberts, also features a pair of sisters, but in this case they are the victims of a shark-viewing dive gone terribly wrong when the chain holding their cage just below the surface of the ocean snaps and they plunge 47 meters down into the depths. The film possesses an impressive cast that includes Claire Holt and Mandy Moore in the lead roles and Matthew Modine as the skipper of the boat who brings them out on their ill-fated expedition. Another midnight movie strategy is to go full-on apocalyptic, and two films this year are perfect examples of this, though in very different ways. We are so far in the future now that the cyborg from James Cameron’s Terminator 2: Judgment Day 3D has not only become a good guy but a former governor of California and is now a vocal environmental activist. This year festival-goers have a chance to see this action classic in full-screen 3D for the first time ever. Cyborg invasion isn’t exactly a Hollywood monopoly, as Japanese director and special effects master Yoshihiro Nishimura shows in his madcap Meatball Machine Kodoku: Things are bad enough for lonely 50-year-old debt collector Yuji, who has terminal cancer and three months left to live. But when it rains it pours, and in this film it rains blood. According to the filmmakers, a full four tons of (fake) blood poured down on set in wild scenes of surreal, cyberpunk battle.

A midnight movie legend in Shaun of the Dead director Edgar Wright has a more big-budget crime feature with Baby Driver starring Ansel Elgort and with other big names such as Kevin Spacey and Jamie Fox adding lustre to this car-chase, shoot-em-up extravaganza.

In this feature debut Irish-Welsh director Liam Gavin delves into black magic rituals, grief and otherworldly terror in the minimalist horror A Dark Song, a film which builds up with steadily gripping intensity and force.

FACES

The fifth day of the 52nd KVIFF welcomes director Iulia Rusean with her film Little Harbour. The East of the West section will see the arrival of director Priit Pääsuke and actress Maiken Schmidt with his film Džeik. Other main competition arrivals are director Rachel Israel with her film Keep the Change and actor Aleš Holík with the film Little Cranberry.

INDUSTRY EVENTS

One of the main roles of the festival’s Film Industry department and its partners is to support projects in various stages of development. Every year KVIFF selects several dozen best projects and their authors present them to a group of experts from different branches of the film industry, such as production, finance, sales and distribution. A number of Czech and Slovak film projects in various stages of development that have a potential to succeed on the international film market will be presented today at 11am at the Industry Pool as part of the event titled Pitch & Feedback @KVIFF.

How does a pitch work? “Filmmakers have only a few minutes to showcase: the best from their projects in terms of subject matter, script editing and the director’s or producer’s intention in front of an expert audience,” says Daniel Machill from KVIFF’s Film Industry department. “The experts get acquainted thoroughly with the projects beforehand and afterwards can offer professional feedback from their respective fields.” The panel gets an overview of the best from the works in progress in both domestic and international cinema and confronts the selected projects with the analytical inquiries of the experts who considers the works to have international potential,” says Daniel Machill from KVIFF’s Film Industry department. For a successful pitch it’s important not just to come up with a good project but also to be able to present it well, to capture the idea and the imagination of the panel. It is also a good networking opportunity for filmmakers and international film professionals.

Today’s Pitch & Feedback event, organized for the fifth time by the Czech Film Center, the Slovak Film Institute and KVIFF, will also involve closed consultations of the projects with invited experts. “The aim of Pitch & Feedback is to create an efficient platform for Czech and Slovak projects that could give them the right momentum and attract the attention of the international expert audience,” Daniel Machill says.