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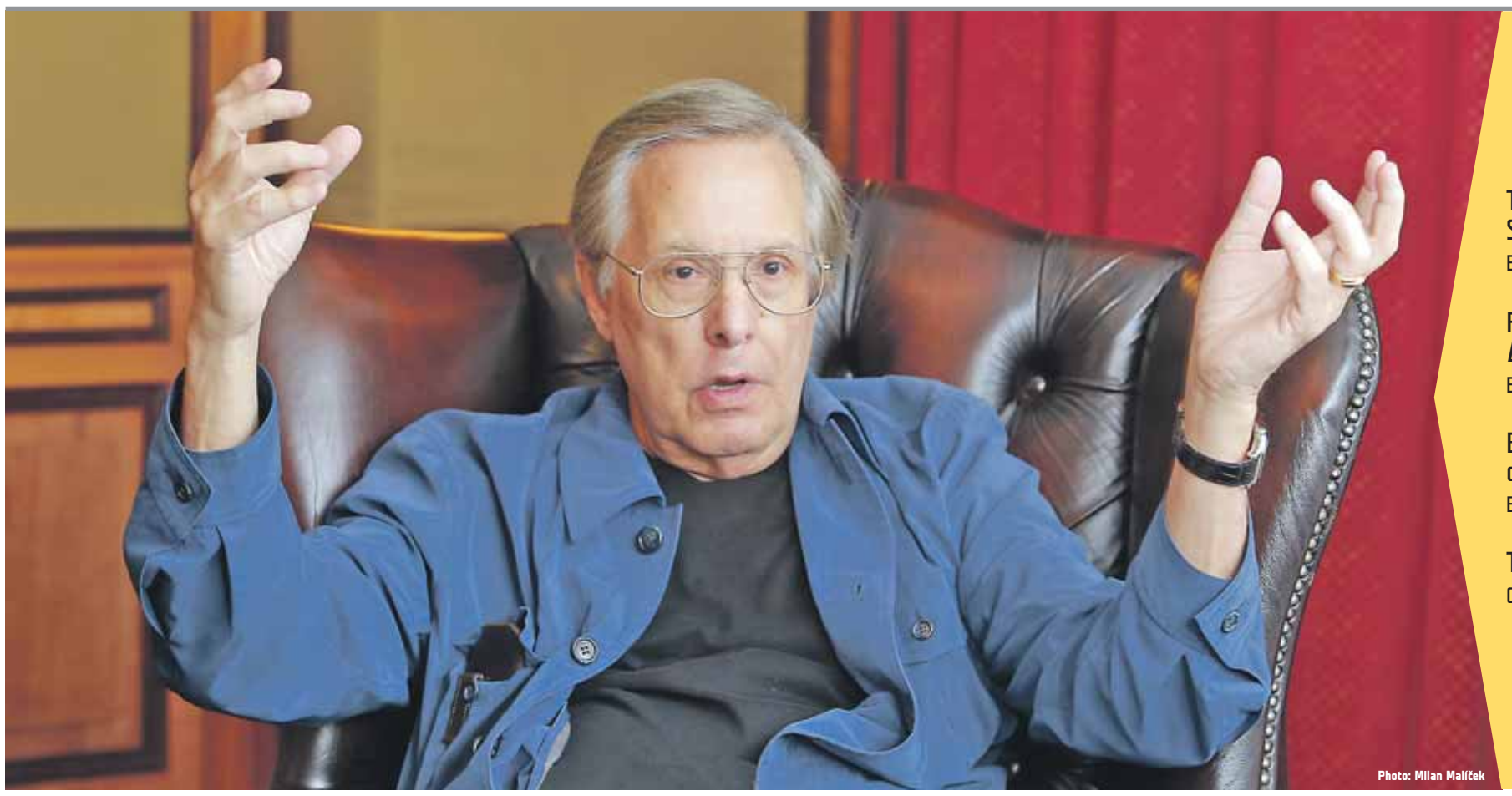

Photo: Milan Malíček

William Friedkin says he's fallen foul of a changing zeitgeist.

INSIDE

Today's Official Selection films
English Section, page 2

Franco Nero says *Django* may ride again
English Section, page 3

Ben Rivers – master of a "very fertile area'
English Section, page 4

Tomorrow's program
Czech Section, pages 7-10

NO SUCH THING AS CLOSURE

WILLIAM FRIEDKIN ON WHY HE DOESN'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING

Will Tizard
Kateřina Kadlecová

William Friedkin has been characterized by Hollywood chroniclers as the most notorious of the generation of rebels who set the tone after big-budget studio productions collapsed in the late 1960s, ushering in raw, new cinema with European influences, anti-heroes and previously taboo subjects: addiction, corruption, explicit sex. Friedkin won five Oscars for **The French Connection** *in 1971, then went on to redefine terror in cinemas with* **The Exorcist** *in 1973. His subsequent remake of* The Wages of Fear, *the 1977 film* **Sorcerer**, *was left in the dust by Star Wars, after two years of work and millions in studio backing. The famously outspoken* auteur *is in KV to present a newly restored version of Sorcerer, which is now garnering new interest worldwide.*

***Sorcerer* didn't make that much at the box office originally, did it?**

So what? This doesn't matter. I don't think in those terms. I don't look at the box office. I know that *The Exorcist* and *The French Connection* are huge; I don't know the numbers. I don't pay attention. I only look at a film that I like or that I don't like – that's all.

So you never perceived *Sorcerer* as a failure?

I don't think of it as a failure. And it's now reopening all over the world – a 37-year-old film is playing around the world in first-run theaters. And now there are special shows as there was in Venice, Istanbul...and all over America in special screenings. And then it opens in commercial theaters. And already the Blu-Ray is out. And then I made a DVD after the Blu-Ray, which will be out in America on August 5.

It doesn't seem from watching the film that you and Roy Scheider were in conflict, but you never worked with him again, right?

I've only worked with a couple of actors more than once. Every film I do is different. It doesn't have the same characters or require the same actors. I made two films with Tommy Lee Jones because both characters were similar. But I don't look to make films with the same actors. I really don't. I love all the actors I've worked with in *Killer Joe* and *Bug* and in *The Exorcist* but I've never made another – I did a play on Broadway with Max von Sydow but we've never made another film.

You worked with Pulitzer winner Tracy Letts on *Bug* and *Killer Joe* but you didn't end up doing his hit *August: Osage County*.

I wasn't interested in that – not as a film. But I did another one of his plays in a theater in Los Angeles. He's only written five plays. I've done three of them – two on film and one on the stage: *Man from Nebraska*.

Weren't directors of the New Hollywood like yourself put in impossible positions if their work happened to make huge profits, with the studios now expecting you to keep churning out these kinds of returns?

I don't think so. The *zeitgeist* is always changing. The audiences for film get younger; they have their own interests that are not based on the things that influenced me. And the heads of studios don't last forever. All of the studio heads that I worked with were either fired or they're dead. And there's new people running the studios who do not have the experience of filmmakers.

When did Hollywood go so corporate by your estimation?

Some of the people who ran studios in the '70s and before were producers and that's not true anymore. They mostly are former agents or lawyers. But because the *zeitgeist* has changed so much, all the films are different. Eighty percent or more of the films made in the US are about superheroes. I have no interest in making those. That was not true when I was making films. It began with *Star Wars*. If *Star Wars* had failed, about 80 percent of the films made today would not be made. They're all basically extensions of *Star Wars*, which changed the *zeitgeist* tremendously.

Continued on page 2

LOWDOWN

Taking lunch, as **every Hollywood mogul** knows, is a term signifying an important sit-down meeting over a movie project, major casting decision, writer deal...and the concept is surely spreading to the Czech Republic.

After all, what better way to reach a creative conclusion to a vexing business dilemma than a **three-martini pow-wow** accompanied by a tender filet mignon? Preferably in an insider-only hangout such as **Musso & Frank's**, where, as **Steve Golin** confessed this week, the casting of **John Malkovich** in *Being John Malkovich* was sealed (John himself happened to walk in by chance at an opportune moment, which was taken by the filmmakers as **a sign from God**.)

William Friedkin, ever pragmatic, is just as satisfied with a good ham sandwich. Feeling a bit peckish as journalists awaited him for his *Festival Daily* interview, he asked his lovely assistant if she could arrange one after spying the catering tray in the Beethoven Suite at the **Grandhotel Pupp**, where these things tend to take place.

An obvious pro, Friedkin received the whopping snack in mid-reply to a question and began to attack it without missing a beat. Ever the gracious host, **he then offered half** to his interrogators. ▮

SEE YOU THERE

DANIEL WOLFE

DIRECTOR,
CATCH ME DADDY

Three films I want to see are ***The Tribe*, *Leviathan***, and ***Calvary***. I missed *Leviathan* while in Cannes but my brother saw it and said it was amazing. *Calvary* I've wanted to see but missed. I've chatted with the director [John Michael McDonagh] and it sounds interesting.

I want to see *The Tribe* because it's from a Ukrainian director [Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy]. I was recently in Ukraine shooting a music video for Paolo Nutini and I just loved it. It's a very difficult time because of the revolution, but the people were great. In Kiev there was a feeling that things weren't great, but they were glad to have us filming and bringing work to the country. It was strange; you'd street-cast young guys and they'd ask the dates. When we told them they'd go, "No, we're going east to fight." It was a strange situation, but not dangerous, just quite upsetting. People were talking about *The Tribe* and when I saw the clip I thought, "Wow!" **(IVP)**

Leviathan *screens today (2pm, Thermal Grand Hall) and also July 12 (6:30pm, KV Theatre),* Calvary *is also playing July 12 (10:30pm, Lázně III). The final showing of* The Tribe *is today (3:30pm, Thermal Small Hall). Wolfe's* Catch Me Daddy *screens on July 12 (7:30pm, Lázně III).*

EXPLAINER

PLENTY TO SEE BESIDES FILMS

If you've been spending most of the last few days in darkened cinema halls, you might need to replenish your Vitamin D reserves and catch a little sunlight for a few hours.

Head up the hills and take in stunning views from one of the "spa forest's" lookout points. Starting behind the Grandhotel Pupp, hike thirty minutes up Friendship Hill's marked forest trails, or take the three-minute funicular ride. At the last station is the **Diana Observation Tower** (pictured). Take the lift or climb the 150 stairs up the 547-meter high landmark to view distances of 70km, free of charge. Once there, you can stop at Diana Restaurant's forest terrace for a refreshing beverage or bite, or visit the mini-zoo where you'll find ponies, goats, birds and Chinese pigs.

After the Diana tower you can either take the trails 1km down to the **Deer Leap** (Jelení skok) lookout, which also has fabulous views of the town, or take the funicular to Deer Leap station. To get back down from there you can take the stairs on the right, which lead to the Grandhotel Pupp.

Photo: ČTK

Heights aren't for you? Then go beneath the surface on an **underground hot spring excursion**. Exclusively for KVIFF, the Hot Spring Colonnade's basement will be open for tours from 8pm to 10pm. Visitors are treated to first-hand views of objects that are in the process of being petrified as souvenirs, rare minerals, century-old underground plumbing, and other subterranean delights. Tickets can be purchased at the Hot Spring Colonnade near Divadelní náměstí. **(MT)**

DOCU SIDEBAR GOES BEYOND FICTION

Photo: KVIFF

It's hard to get in the party mood in Carnival

Photo: KVIFF

Into the Clouds We Gaze*, says Europe's "lost generation"*

Will Tizard

Whatever the most imaginative fiction film writer can come up with, something wilder and stranger eventually happens on camera unscripted – that is, if a great documentarian is there to catch the moment.

Fans of KVIFF's respected documentary section know this feeling of suspense and, sometimes, amazement very well. Thus, the 10 feature-length docus competing this year – along with six under 30 minutes in length – have been packing audiences into screening halls, as the documentary race usually does.

One such Czech exploration of a world few creative writers could hope to capture authentically is Martin Dušek's ***Into the Clouds We Gaze***, billed by the writer-director as a custom-car subculture tour of "alcohol, drugs, erotica, sex."

As Dušek puts it, "I wanted to capture the feeling I had when I got to car tuning events that take place at old airports and fields during summer. The mixture of sex, loud music, badly customized cars, flavored vodka and beer in PET bottles was some participants' highlight of the year."

To his "characters," as documentarians refer to real people in their films, car body work and tricked out engines are "so interesting and important for them in comparison with their everyday life," the filmmaker says. "I started to follow my character, the unemployed and somehow lost guy Ráďa, with almost anthropological interest. I believe this film is not just his story but also a story of the whole European 'lost generation' of young people."

For films such as this one, screening at KVIFF can help propel their labor of love into cinemas and more festivals worldwide if things go well.

"It is a great success for us to be here since we started as a normal TV production," Dušek adds.

Another filmmaker in the docus section, Teodora Ana Mihai, who directed Romania's ***Waiting for August***, sheds light on a generational crisis in her country in which parents are forced to go abroad for work, leaving their children to fend for themselves for troublingly long stretches.

"I wanted to talk about childhood and then about adolescence," says Mihai, "which I find such a rich and intriguing period in a person's life. And I also wanted to touch the subjects of brotherhood, family... and of course of the difficult socioeconomical context of Romania – my country of birth – which puts family ties under a great amount of pressure."

The key to cracking this overwhelming issue, she says, was finding her film's 15-year-old hero, a girl forced to care of her siblings while her mother labors in Italy.

"I just wanted to make an intimate portrait of Georgiana, an adolescent girl and her six brothers and sisters," says Mihai, "because I believe universality is exactly to be found in those small, intimate, local stories, which people can relate to."

Other fascinating docus you're still in time to catch on screen are: German, Czech, Turkish, and Swiss co-production ***Istanbul United***, which looks at the effects of Turkey's civil unrest on football by Olli Waldhauer and Farid Eslam; Austria's ***Steadiness***, a Vienna-Norway road trip story by Lisa Weber; and Russian/Estonian political protest tale ***The Term*** by Pavel Kostomarov, Alexander Rastorguev, and Alexey Pivovarov.

Documentary short films still to screen are Argentina's ***The Queen***, a study of the tortures of a young Carnival celebrity by Manuel Abramovich; the brooding US oilfield documentary ***Solitary Plains*** by J. Christian Jensen; Netherlands eco-cautionary tale ***Wild Boar*** by Willem Baptist; and ***The Water and the Wall***, a short film from Switzerland by Alice Fargier, comprising an interview by Luc Dardenne with an 11-year-old boy who is greatly moved after watching the Dardenne brothers' *The Kid with a Bike*. ▮

MY KV

The Maw Naing

Director, *The Monk*

Photo: Milan Maliček

You did a fellowship at Prague's FAMU film school, which co-produced *The Monk*, the film that opened the Forum of Independents sidebar. How'd that come about?

I made a feature-length documentary about the May 2008 cyclone, *Nargis: When Time Stopped Breathing,* and when I finished my course at FAMU the school asked if I had ideas for a feature film. Then in 2011 my friend scriptwriter Aung Min and I participated in a script developing workshop at Midpoint: Central European Script Center. We also met Karel Och [now KVIFF artistic director] at the festival then.

It was risky to make *Nargis*, though distributed abroad – you didn't use your real name. There's less censorship now, but did you have problems making *The Monk*?

The camera was like a gun from the military dictatorship's point of view. To get permission to film we submitted a synopsis for a fake story. We illegally shot all of our documentaries. Since the 2012 elections, censorship has relaxed. But there are still no set rules – it depends on their mood what they allow. We must still apply to show *The Monk* in Burma.

You've cited Iranian documentary-style filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami as an influence. What draws you to his work?

Yes, a great influence. I like exploring social issues – I don't want to make a film only for entertainment. I was born in a closed society and we could not revolt or change things. Kiarostami's films reflect something like that.

What are you keen to see in KV? Whom do you hope to meet?

I saw [Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan's] *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* here in 2011 – a great film. I don't know what to see yet... In Burma, producers like to make comedies or love stories. So in KV I hope to meet with producers who like the kind of work we're doing on social issues. **(BK)**

OFFICIAL SELECTION

CORN ISLAND – BUCOLIC CALM IN A VOLATILE REGION

Cóilín O'Connor

The border between Georgia and its breakaway republic of Abkhazia is one of the main faultlines of the volatile Caucasus region and this is the setting for George Ovashvili's second feature, ***Corn Island***, which is screening as a world premiere at KVIFF.

In an area notorious for its frozen interethnic conflict, which has displaced some 250,000 Georgians, we see another side of life here as the film focuses on an Abkhaz peasant (Ilyas Salman) and his teenage granddaughter (Mariam Buturishvili) grappling with the challenges posed by the natural environment.

The action takes place on the Inguri River, which divides Georgia and Abkhazia. Every year, spring flooding on this body of water produces temporary islands made up of rocks, dirt and debris. These new patches of land provide fertile soil in which local farmers can grow extra crops, which they can hopefully harvest before all is swept away by fresh floods. The man and his younger companion lay claim to one such islet and begin planting corn there.

Although the Caucasus is home to dozens of distinct ethnicities and mother tongues, the director appears to sidestep the linguistic frictions that pervade this milieu by almost eschewing language altogether, keeping dialogue to brief conversations and having his protagonists communicate on a basic non-verbal level. Shot on 35mm by Elemer Ragalyi, we get some great scenic visuals while they work in silence, comfortable in each other's company. There is a bucolic stillness to their labors as they patiently till the new soil, build a hut, and plant their seeds.

Photo: KVIFF

George Ovashvili's film looks at the Caucasus beyond the headlines.

It's far from a rural idyll, though, and the occasional appearance of armed border patrols on motorboats ominously hints at the threat of violence lurking in the background. Of far more concern to the farmers, however, is the constantly encroaching river, which is slowly eroding their little island and threatening to wash away their hard-earned crop.

As the corn eventually ripens, the young girl also blossoms and her budding sexuality comes to the fore when a young man on the run from local militias arrives on the scene...

Ovashvili's debut feature, the award-winning *The Other Bank,* which screened in KVIFF's East of the West section in 2009, also referenced the Abkhaz conflict. However, whereas his first film focused on a Georgian refugee returning to Abkhazia in search of his father, *Corn Island* depicts the region from an Abkhaz viewpoint, raising eyebrows in his homeland.

"We thought telling the story from the other perspective would be more interesting, even for Georgian audiences," Ovashvili told Radio Free Europe in May. "A lot of things about what happen on the other side remain beyond our reach, both in terms of information and emotion. We tried to open up the emotional side of it and tell the story from another angle."

Corn Island *screens today (8pm , Thermal Grand Hall), tomorrow (1pm, Pupp), and on July 12 (11:30am, Drahomíra).* ▮

OFFICIAL SELECTION

FAIR PLAY – FINDING HONOR UNDER A CORRUPT REGIME

Cóilín O'Connor

The murky world of communist-era doping in sports is laid bare in *Fair Play*, the third feature by Czech director Andrea Sedláčková (who also has an editing credit for 2005 French Oscar nominee *Merry Christmas*).

Set in Czechoslovakia in 1983, 18-year-old Anna (Judit Bárdos) is an elite sprinter shortlisted as a candidate to compete in the upcoming Olympics in Los Angeles. To boost her chances, Anna's sports mentors assign her to a mysterious regimen of performance-enhancing "vitamins." Although her racing times duly improve, increased body hair and other weird physical changes make her suspicious, and she soon discovers to her horror that that these supplements are in fact anabolic steroids.

Unwilling to cheat, but afraid of being kicked out of the sports program if she openly opposes the use of these drugs, she quietly stops taking them.

Unbeknownst to her, however, Anna's mother, Irena (Anna Geislerová, continuing her smooth transition to more mature roles), is intent on getting her to the Olympics, seeing it as her daughter's best chance of escaping to find a better life in the West. This prompts Irena to secretly conspire with her daughter's coach to ensure that Anna keeps receiving her daily dose.

For Sedláčková, the difficult moral choices posed by doping programs in the Eastern bloc epitomize the situation faced by many under the old communist dictatorship. She was inspired to make a film on the subject after reading about this state-sanctioned cheating in a newspaper article.

Photo: KVIFF

Eva Josefíková (left) and Judit Bardós star in Andrea Sedláčková's film.

"I immediately said to myself that this was a huge topic, which had never been dealt with in a feature film, and that it also allowed me to delve into issues that are close to my own heart – freedom of choice, honor, and self-respect," she says.

One of the most impressive aspects of the film is the extremely faithful depiction of the dreary communist milieu of the 1980s and this verisimilitude owes a lot to Sedláčková's own experience of that era.

"Anna...is roughly the same age I was in 1983. Of course, Fair Play is not about me, but [in some ways] it is also about my adolescence in socialist Czechoslovakia and the issues that most of the people around me had to deal with, albeit in perhaps less extreme situations," she says.

"Back then, adolescents often came to realize that their parents were living under a system based on lies, and they hoped that they wouldn't turn out the same. Their parents also had to decide whether they should set a moral example for their children and live as outcasts, or whether they should conform to the regime, collaborate with it, and thereby ensure a better future for their children," she says. "I put a lot of my own experiences, as well as those of my peers and our parents, into the screenplay. In this sense, the film is very personal."

Fair Play *screens today (5pm, hermal Grand Hall), tomorrow (10am, Pupp), and July 12 (9am, Drahomíra)* ▮

NO SUCH THING AS CLOSURE

Continued from page 1

And didn't these kinds of profit expectations turn a lot of promising directors into victims, as maybe happened with you on *Sorcerer*?

I wouldn't use the word victims. The *zeitgeist* changes. Literature has changed. Popular music has changed. So has contemporary classical music. Nobody writes like Beethoven anymore but fortunately we have Beethoven.

Critics and filmmakers have spent ages trying to work out what it was you did in *The Exorcist* that scared the hell out of a generation.

I don't spend time trying to figure it out. The film is about the mystery of faith. And even people who have no belief are concerned about such things. Almost every person that I know who is not a believer is concerned about what will happen to them after they die. There are very few people who think, "Well, that's it; it's all over." Most people are concerned about an afterlife, about the power of faith. And we've seen the power of faith work in very mysterious ways.

But there have been hundreds of horror films which tried to frighten people that never achieved half of what *The Exorcist* did in terms of emotional impact.

The Exorcist is not a horror film. It was never intended to be a horror film. I never spoke with the actors or the cameramen about a horror film. We talked about a film about the mystery of faith. And it was based on a true story of which there was no explanation. There are many things on earth that are unexplained.

There's been almost a fearlessness in your choice of subjects and stories, from putting Al Pacino into the gay leather bar scene in *Cruising* to the car chase that's unexplained in *To Live and Die in LA* – a first, no?

Well, we don't know why anything is happening! We have no closure. Life usually doesn't end with closure. A lot of my films have been about the mystery of fate, not faith. We have nothing to say about how we come into this world or how we're going to leave it.

But most directors will say the audience needs an arc to follow to stay involved with the story.

I don't care. I understood what it was about! And I don't feel the necessity to explain anything. I don't really believe that people go to the cinema for explanations. I believe they go for emotional reasons – to laugh or to cry or to be frightened. ▮

NERO SAYS *DJANGO* MAY RIDE AGAIN

Kristýna Pleskotová

Photo: Milan Malíček

By his own reckoning, Franco Nero has appeared in around 200 films.

Italian actor, writer, producer and director Franco Nero has appeared in hundreds of films around the world, including the lead role in Elio Petri's *A Quiet Place in the Country* (screening tomorrow as part of KVIFF's tribute to the late director) before portraying the lonely coffin-dragging *Django* in Sergio Corbucci's iconic 1966 spaghetti western. Nero also stars in Fanny Ardant's recent feature, *Obsessive Rhythms*, also screening at this year's festival as a special event.

You said that, for you, Elio Petri is like Stanley Kubrick…

Yes, he's the Italian Kubrick because the best Italian directors like Fellini, Antonioni and many others, they were great directors but they always did the same movie. Elio was the only one, he must have done 10, 12 movies, and each of them was completely different. A movie about science fiction, a movie about...the world of paintings, then movies about workers in a factory. He always changed subjects and I think he was a fantastic, very talented director.

You are also here for Fanny Ardant's film. What was it like to be directed by her?

It was nice. One day I told her, "One day you must tell me what you want to say about this movie." "I will tell you," she said. She still hasn't told me yet. It's a very original movie she wrote and directed. I love to be directed by actors or actresses because I am an actor and I've directed many, and most of the time actors have said that they've never been directed better. We actors know how to direct other actors. Actors are fantastic directors, so it was nice to be directed by Fanny.

I read that in the original *Django* you were cast by coincidence? You were picked by a distributor…

First thing is Elio Petri. I was in the car with Elio...and I said, "Elio, I've been offered a western," and he said, "Do people know you? No, nobody. So you just do it, you have nothing to lose." And that's why I did the western. But before that, it's true. There was this production and they had in mind two other actors to play Django. And one producer wanted one actor, then another producer wanted a guy from Spain, and Corbucci wanted me. So one producer said, "Listen, these guys, none of them are popular anyway. We go to the distributor and we take a photo of each of the three actors and he will choose the face he likes." And so he took the photos and [the distributor] pointed a finger on my face. That's it. I was already doing other movies but that was the big break.

You've played in almost 200 movies all over the world with many famous directors, and from 1964, you've had at least one premiere each year…

One new movie? Five, or six movies! But nobody has my filmography because I don't use a computer so nobody knows exactly. I hate the computers. I'm the only one who has my filmography. Two years ago we went through it for two or three days and, little by little, I started to recall all my movies, the titles. And yeah, we counted about two hundred movies.

Do you still plan to do more westerns?

In America they would love to do a movie with me, called *Django Lives!* That would be *the* last Django, set in 1915. The studios in America, in Hollywood, they were producing the first westerns with no voice, mute. And they used to engage – to hire – heroes of the West to be consultants. Like Wyatt Earp, like Buffalo Bill. So in this movie they hire Django as a consultant. And there would be no horses [but there will be] cars. You know, the first cars, chasing. It's going to be something very interesting.

Obsessive Rhythms *screens today at 1pm in Espace Dorleans and tomorrow at 10am in Thermal Cinema B* ▮

FACES

Watch for two special events guests arriving today – British director of *Bjork: Biophilia Live* **Peter Strickland**, who will present the European premiere of his film, and the star of world-premiering *In Silence,* **Judit Bárdos**.

Coming to KV for the Official Selection line-up are director **Angelina Nikonova** along with co-writer and leading actress **Olga Dihovichnaya** with the film *Welkome Home,* Hungarian director **György Pálfi** with his film *Free Fall*, and prolific Czech thesp **Anna Geislerová** will return for the international premiere of *Fair Play*.

Also around today are co-directors **Farid Eslam** and **Olli Waldhauer** with their documentary *Istanbul United* for its international premiere. Another documentarian to look for is **Andreas Horvath** with his film *Earth's Golden Playground.*

Directors **Abdolreza Kahani** with *We've Got Time*, and **O Muel** with *Golden Chariot in the Sky* are showing up with world premieres for the Forum of Independents sidebar. And from the Czech Films 2013-2014 section, director and writer **Bohdan Karásek** will be out and about with starring actress **Taťjana Medvecká** from the film *Love Songs.*

Look out for director **Asif Rustamov**, who will appear at the festival with the film *Down the River*'s world premiere within the East of the West sidebar, and **Dietrich Brüggemann**, director of *Stations of the Cross* in the Horizons program. **(MT)**

Peter Strickland

Judit Bárdos

Olli Waldhauer

Abdolreza Kahani

O Muel

Asif Rustamov

Laurence Boyce, CRITIC'S CHOICE

CONTRIBUTOR, *SCREEN INTERNATIONAL /CINEUROPA/EESTI EKSPRESS*

This intensely personal film from Estonian director Veiko Õunpuu is a compelling work that veers between relationship drama and a critique of modern life. Given that its story is about a film critic who finds himself choosing between whether to live a life of hedonism or settle down with a family, it also speaks to – shall we say – certain

FREE RANGE
Director: Veiko Õunpuu
Estonia, 2013, 104 min
July 9, 10am, Čas Cinema

members of the audience. With a number of stylistic and surrealistic touches, some strong performances, and a superb soundtrack featuring the likes of Scott Walker, the film is an interesting example of contemporary Estonian cinema.

More Baltic cinema as this paean to first love shows off the beauty of the Estonian countryside whilst maintaining an almost dreamlike atmosphere that mirrors the heady intoxication of falling for someone for the first time. Aside from looking beautiful, it also manages to avoid cliché and contains some strong

CHERRY TOBACCO
Director: Katrin Maimik, Andres Maimik
Estonia, 2014, 93 min
July 9, 4pm, Karlovy Vary Theatre

performances from the talented young actress Maris Nõlvak, who plays Laura, a girl who falls for the charms of the older Joosep played in another great performance by Gert Raudsep.

After his short film *Frozen Stories*, the debut feature from Polish director Grzegorz Jaroszuk has been eagerly awaited. A superbly observed black comedy that's clearly influenced by the likes of Aki Kaurismäki and Roy Andersson. It's a static and languid film full of absurd situations and some moments of genuinely laugh-out-loud hu-

KEBAB & HOROSCOPE
Director: Grzegorz Jaroszuk
Poland, 2014, 72 min
July 9, 4:30pm, Lázně III

mor. There are lots of great performances in *Frozen Stories* as well with a cast of young Polish stars such as Piotr Żurawski and Justyna Wasilewska keeping up with the likes of established actors, including Bartłomiej Topa.

The subject of one of this year's retrospectives at Karlovy Vary, this opportunity to see some of the shorts from British filmmaker and artist Ben Rivers should not be missed. Shooting on 16mm and working in the spaces between documentary and fiction, Rivers often examines outsiders in society and has a knack for el-

BEN RIVERS – SHORT FILMS V and I
Director: Ben Rivers, UK
July 9, 4pm and 7pm,
Husovka Theater

evating the mundane into the beautiful. Highlights of the two shorts packages screening include *Ah Liberty!* winner of the Tiger Award for Best Short Film at the 2008 Rotterdam Film Festival. ▮

ART-FILM MASTER OF A 'VERY FERTILE AREA'

Brian Kenety

Last year, director and artist **Ben Rivers** *introduced the new* ***Imagina*** *sidebar screening films taking cinematic roads less travelled (shunning linear narrative, embracing abstracting techniques). This year, KVIFF is screening a retrospective of his own experimental films, which often blur documentary lines.*

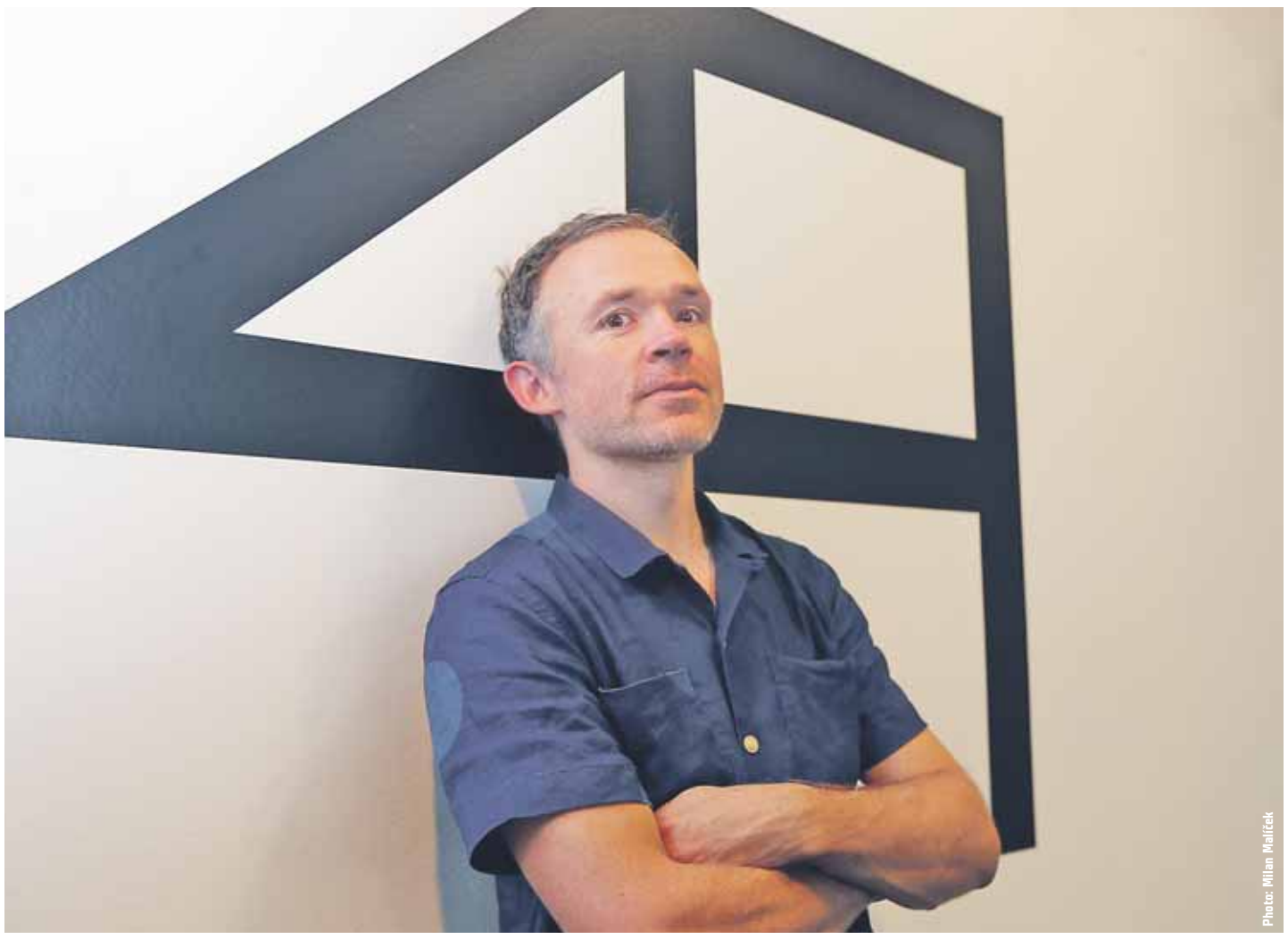
Photo: Milan Malíček

Ben Rivers is fascinated by "hermetic worlds," be it "the space an individual has built around them, or a factory, or an island."

You shoot mainly in 16mm. What's special about this format for you?

There's a pretty huge history of cinema shot in 16mm, artists and others experimenting and making films outside of the commercial realm – [French New Wave director] Jacques Rivette made some of his greatest films on it. Coming from an art college background, I like making things with my hands – and 16mm is tactile. I started off hand-processing things, which added a whole other level to the process. It seems much more alive to me as a medium [than digital]. There are inherent accidents or unexpected things that happen with film. And I like surprises. They're kind of built into my whole practice.

What was the idea behind your first short, just over a decade ago?

The Big Sink! [*laughs*] The idea was to make a kind of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* using black-and-white super 8, and I'd been watching a lot of Alain Resnais [*Night and Fog*], who was cutting backward and forward in time, making these very fragmented films which sort of time traveled. So in a very, very crude way, I tried to play with the story in the same way, just using my friends as actors.

Speaking of time travel, if you could go back in time and give yourself advice, what do you think you'd say?

There are films I look at and think, "God, if I did that now, I'd change it." Still, if I could go back and talk to 19-year-old Ben, I might prefer to not say anything, because it's then a ripple effect – that's the danger in time travel, and I don't know if I'd want to change anything. I think it's really important to live with your mistakes. That said, I'd probably give myself technical advice I would've liked to have known then, because I was just making it up – at my art school, there were no film tutors... I bought a Super 8 camera from a secondhand store and off I went. And actually – not that digital is a bad idea – but I do think it's useful for people just starting out to invest a bit of money in making something in film. It forces you to make very different kinds of decisions than if you have a video camera and endless time to shoot. That's not necessarily that helpful. It's good to see what you can do with a 3-minute roll of film.

Is it fair to say that, if there's a common thread in your films, it's that they blur the documentary/fiction line, eschew plot-driven narrative?

I'm interested in that very fertile area, and not alone in thinking that *all* films are a kind of construction. Even if it's a documentary, there's still a great deal of manipulation. I'm always reluctant to say a film is a "documentary" because that comes with certain preconceptions – you know, that this is "real"... But that'd be a kind of common thread. I'm also interested in hermetic worlds. The space an individual has built around them, or a factory, or an island – they all have this kind of parameter.

Two Years at Sea **(2011), set in the Scottish backwoods, follows recluse Jake Williams from your short** ***This is My Land*** **(2006). It's been called your "crowning achievement" and compared to** ***Nanook of the North*** **(1922). Do you consider it your magnum opus?**

No, that's still coming [*laughs*]. I hope that I'm always learning and making better films – or not "better", but moving forward. But it is a movie I'm very proud of, for sure, with no small thanks to Jake, as well, because he's such an important presence and inspiration that I decided to go back to him.

Speaking of isolation, on ***A Spell to Ward off the Darkness*** **(2013), exploring a man's quest for utopia, you collaborated with experimental director Ben Russell. You share an interest in ethnography, early cinema, Surrealism... One reviewer called you the "Brothers Ben." How was it to work in tandem? Utopian? Dystopian?**

The other Ben has more experience collaborating, so he helped me through it [*laughs*] – I thought I might find it difficult because all the other films I've made pretty much all by myself.... The reason for working together was to push each other to do something we wouldn't do normally by ourselves. To get rid of our egos. And it worked really well. We shared the camera work equally and did all the editing together. We didn't argue – apart from when I was hungry. It was pretty utopian and went hand in hand with us collaborating also with the band and other people in the film.

Spell **features Robert A. A. Lowe (aka Lichens) who has done vocals for stoner/doom metal band Om and black metal band Twilight. I have a silly question for you. Were you a metal fan, or have you since become one?**

I was already [*laughs*] – though more of doom than of black metal. I like doom.

What's next? You're working with fellow artist/filmmaker Gabriel Abrantes...

He's been making short films that have done very well which are more narrative than mine. We've co-written and will co-direct a short film. One reason I wanted to work with him because I was interested in making a narrative film.

What's the working title?

The Hunchback. It's a comedy set in the future [laughs] – maybe that's all I should say about it. ▮

ON THE TOWN

Charleston

Bulharská 1
Tel.: 353230 797
Open 9am-midnight

If you need a break from the commotion surrounding the Thermal, the Charleston is right up the hill past the Tomáš Masaryk fountain. Decorated with vintage sepia-tone photos and classic newspaper clippings, this quiet, dimly lit English-style pub is a great place to grab a steak (429 CZK). Veal cheeks in red wine or roasted duck (both in the 250-300 CZK) range were recommended by the smiling and efficient staff, and they didn't disappoint. You'll also find a selection of pastas and a variety of salads in the 130-200 CZK range. Italian chardonnay and merlot are available (48 CZK per glass). If you're more inclined to just grab a brew, however, a cool half-liter of Pilsner Urquell (52 CZK) is never a bad call. **(MT)**

Venezia

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

This conveniently located restaurant and pizzeria (emphasize the former) directly across the river from the Hotel Thermal serves up a wide variety of quality, authentic pastas and pizzas made of fresh Italian ingredients regularly imported by owner Claudio Boglio. The affordable, hearty dishes, such as the Sicilian style penne, or any of the pies with generous toppings are all between 100 and 200 CZK. Large meat and fish dishes are also on hand but they'll run you a little more, like the grilled sea bass for 490 CZK. The comfortable chandeliered terrace is a perfect place to keep an eye on the festival life, but make sure to call ahead as this central hotspot fills up pretty quickly around the usual lunch and dinner hours. **(MT)**

Photo: Milan Malíček

Charleston – a little bit of olde England in KV

EVENTS

FILM NEW EUROPE COPRODUCTION MEETING / 3-5PM / FILMMAKERS' LOUNGE, ČAS CINEMA

A presentation of co-production schemes of film funds from Central Europe, with case studies of ongoing joint projects between countries in the region. Moderated by Cathy Meils (Film New Europe) and followed by a cocktail for participants. Limited to 40 professionals; registration requested. Partners: State Cinematography Fund, Polish Film Institute, and Slovak Audiovisual Fund.

JAROSLAV RÓNA – HEART OF DARKNESS / 10AM-7PM ALL WEEK / KV ART GALLERY / GOETHOVA STEZKA 6

The painter, writer, teacher, sculptor of the Prague monument to Franz Kafka, and star of the KVIFF trailer in 2002, presents a selection of picture stories as well as bronze and terracotta sculptures from the last ten years of his work.

THE LIFT / 1PM / IMPERIAL CABLE CAR

Festival visitors have the opportunity to ride the Imperial cable car and see 555-Tereza Velíková – "The Lift" project, taking place along the way, an audiovisual performance playing with time and space, with as many acts as there are visitors willing to ride.

ELO & KV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA / 7PM / OUTDOOR CINEMA, SLOVENSKÁ 2003

Pop Meets Symphony, a double concert featuring the British rock celebrities ELO (music by the Electric Light Orchestra performed by singer Phil Bates) and the Karlovy Vary Symphonic Orchestra. Advance tickets 200 CZK/300 CZK at the door. **(MT)**

DAILIES

1/ Producer of Works in Progress winner *Goat* (Ivan Ostrochovský) talks with jury member Niloufar Siassi. *Journey to Rome* and *The Gulls* also made the shortlist.

2/ *Nowhere in Moravia* director Miroslav Krobot with cast members Tatiana Vilhelmová (center) and Lenka Krobotová.

3/ Umm... what screening?

1

Photo: Jan Handrejch

2

Photo: Milan Malíček

3

Photo: Milan Malíček