WHAT'S SLOVAK IN BERLIN?

FEBRUARY 15–25, 2018
THE INTERPRETER
TLMOCNIK

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN ŠULÍK, DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER OF THE FILM

Martin Šulík (1962) is an internationally successful and well-known Slovak film director. Seven years after his last feature film Gypsy, he is taking back with road movie The Interpreter. The film about two men dealing with their past decisions will be world premiered in the Berlinale Special section.

The film is about two contrasting men who travel around Slovakia to find the truth about their own pasts. What affected you so much that you made the decision to shoot such a story?

When working on a film, several sources of inspiration and concepts always converge. The interpreter was initially part of a ten-episode television series Fares [orig. 104] about various professions. We wrote it together with Marek Leščák and we expected to present a picture of society, rather like Balzac’s Comédie humaine, via portraits of people in a variety of professions. We sought to depict each profession in some sort of ethical conflict and, by means of these conflicts, we wanted to understand not just the individual people but also the society we live in.

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Both of the film’s protagonists are confronted with events from the period of the Slovak State. This theme is highly topical nowadays as the voice of ultra-right parliamentarism is again rising in the Slovak Republic. This theme is highly topical nowadays as the voice of ultra-right parliamentarism is again rising in the Slovak Republic. Like many Slovaks are not interested in the past, or shoot a whole ethnic minority. However, many Slovaks are not interested in the past, they are consumed by the contemporary social problems, they have lost all awareness of the context and, without batting an eyelid, are capable of accepting any political demagogy manipulating history and offering radical solutions. Our heroes, just like we did, encounter various people on their road, people who represent a variety of views from our past and, based on these coincidental encounters, they create a picture of the world they live in, of its values.

Peter Simonischek and Jiří Menzel are pronounced personalities. One of them is an experienced actor, the other an experienced director and actor. How did that show while shooting the film?

Peter and Jirka are two contrasting actors. Peter is a noted stage actor with big screen experience. He is used to rehearsing and he built his character gradually. Jirka says of himself that, despite the large number of films that he’s acted in, he is just one prominent type and so only able to play himself. Unlike Peter he doesn’t like to talk about his character. His principle was “Don’t talk, act.” It was intriguing that they not only played two contrasting characters, but they also worked using different methods. Peter liked to check his work on video and, based on what he viewed, he was able to offer variations on the individual scenes from a critical distance. Jirka did not, on principle, view himself while shooting and stated that he placed all his trust in the director.

You tell the story non-traditionally through a road movie. Did you opt for this genre with regard to the motif of the journey which carries cognition in it?

Marek and I liked the idea of making a road movie with two old men. They are both set in their ways, they don’t want to adapt to each other and there is tension between them. The shooting concept also resulted from this. I was happy to watch the faces of both old men when they reminisced about the past. I wanted to see what they felt when doing so, I was interested in whether they were ashamed, laughing or moved. We shot a lot of material with the director of photography, Martin Štrba, we wanted to overlap the conversations with this material, to create an image counter-point to them, but eventually we discarded everything with the editor, Olina Kaufmannová. That seems to have been a good solution. I like watching Jirka and Peter as they gradually get to know each other.

Abridged from film.sk (english Special Edition)

This film was financially supported by:

WHAT’S SLOVAK IN BERLIN?

DIRECTOR: Martin Šulík
SCREENPLAY: Marek Leščák, Martin Šulík
DOP: Martin Štrba
CAST: Peter Simonischek, Jiří Menzel, Zuzana Maúreá, Attila Mokos
PRODUCTION: TITANIC (SK), IN Film Praha (CZ), coop99 filmproduktion (AT), Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska (SK), Česká televize (CZ)

CONTACT: Titanic_sulik@chello.sk; IN Film Praha, produc@infilm.cz, www.infilm.cz
FESTIVALS: Celluloid Dreams, Pascale Ramonda, pascale@pascaleramonda.com
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WORLD PREMIERE: BERLINALE SPECIAL

SCREENINGS
FEB 15 > 14:20 > M6B CINEMA *EFM BUYERS ONLY
FEB 16 > 10:45 > CINEMAXX 4 *EFM BUYERS ONLY
FEB 18 > 17:00 > CINEMAXX 1 *EFM BUYERS ONLY
FEB 23 > 20:00 > KINO INTERNATIONAL *WORLD PREMIERE
A film about (local) patriotism, tourism and emigration. The girl has lived in a grey, isolated country, enclosed by a huge wall. She has never travelled anywhere, but all her life she has dreamt of leaving forever. She finds calm and support and everything she could believe in. Her only security in life is competitive swimming. At the pool she feels abandoned and deceived – it’s like there is nothing left in the world that she can believe in. Her mom and dad say they are only doing what is best for her, but in fact, they act as though they only cared for them-selves. Nina doesn’t understand them. She acts as though they only cared for themselves. Nina doesn’t understand them. She acts as though they only cared for them-selves. Nina doesn’t understand them. She feels abandoned and deceived – it’s like there is nothing left in the world that she could believe in. Her only security in life is competitive swimming. At the pool she finds calm and support and everything she lacks at home. When it looks like she won’t be able to attend a swimming competi-tion, she makes a radical move.

This film was financially supported by:

" ANA NEDELJKOVIC " was born in Belgrade in 1978. She is a visual artist working in the media of drawing, installation and animated film, and is also active in art education.

NINA NINA

WORLD PREMIERE: 52ND KARLOVY VARY IFF

Nina is 12. Her parents are getting a divor-ce and her world is falling apart before her eyes. Her mom and dad say they are only doing what is best for her, but in fact, they act as though they only cared for them-selves. Nina doesn’t understand them. She feels abandoned and deceived – it’s like there is nothing left in the world that she could believe in. Her only security in life is competitive swimming. At the pool she finds calm and support and everything she lacks at home. When it looks like she won’t be able to attend a swimming competi-tion, she makes a radical move.

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Slovak cinema is again hitting the peak of attendance. In 2017, a total of 6,692,871 viewers attended Slovak cinema. That represents an 18.1% increase on 2016 and it is the second highest attendance since 1993. The gross box office takings increased by 18.9% year-on-year. Viewers paid 34,513,049 EUR in total for tickets, which is the highest amount in Slovakia’s independent history (since January 1, 1993). The share of all Slovak films and majority co-productions has risen during previous years to an unimaginable 18.9%. The most attended domestic film was romantic comedy All or Nothing (d. Marta Ferencová) with 340,503 views.

Four national premieres in 2017 reached the 1 million viewers! The Flower Shop (d. Ruben Desiere) is the highest amount in Slovakia’s independent history (since January 1, 1993). The gross box office takings increased to 31.8% in 2017, which will be announced by ECFA – European Children’s Film Association. The decision about the winner will be given by all ECFA members and will be presented during Berlinale 2018. 47th edition of prestigious IFF Rotterdam (Jan 24 – Feb 4, 2018) premiered two Slovak co-production films. The second co-production that world premiered at IFF Rotterdam was the last film by legendary director and master of Surrealism Jan Švankmajer. Insect is not yet ready to be a Mum, Jarka is pushed by her desire to love and form a family. Ten years-old and living with a mother who is not yet ready to be a Mum, Jarka is pushed by her desire to love and form a family to the point where she finds herself giving shelter to two abandoned twin babies. The second co-production that world premiered at IFF Rotterdam was the last film by legendary director and master of Surrealism Jan Švankmajer. Insect combines feature with animation and creates a remarkable satire on theatre, film, dreams and everything that makes humans human – and insects, insects. We are observing a group of amateur actors rehearsing The Insect Play by the Čapek brothers on a raised platform in an empty bar as they slowly turning into the characters they are playing, which – implied in the surrealistic concept of Švankmajer’s work - leads to frightening transformations.

**What’s Slovak in Berlin?**

Little Harbour, successful film by Iveta Grófová competes for the overall Award for the Best European Children & Youth Film of 2017, which will be announced by ECFA – European Children’s Film Association during Berlinale 2018. Every year, European Children’s Film Association not only gives special attention to quality films for young audiences, but also brings European children films into the spotlight. Little Harbour is among the nine titles shortlisted for the ECFA Award thanks to the ECFA Award at the Olympia International Children’s Film Festival in Pyrgos, Greece. The decision about the winner will be taken by members of ECFA, by over 100 film professionals from different fields of the industry incl. production, distribution, festivals and media education. The award will be given by all ECFA members and will be presented during Berlinale 2018.

Little Harbour tells a story inspired by true events about two children whose innocent play will change their lives forever. Ten years-old and living with a mother who is not yet ready to be a Mum, Jarka is pushed by her desire to love and form a family to the point where she finds herself giving shelter to two abandoned twin babies. Little Harbour won a Crystal Bear for Best Film in the Generation Kplus competition at Berlinale 2017. Keeping fingers crossed.!
THE YEAR OF HANÁK, JAKUBISKO AND HAVETTA

During the second half of the sixties, three outstanding film directors enriched Slovak cinema with their feature debuts. All of them already caught viewers’ attention with their previous student films (Dušan Hanák received recognition for his short documentaries shot after graduation). All three studied film directing at FAMU in Prague and, what’s more, they were all born in the same year – 1938. This is the reason why 2018 will be the anniversary year of Hanák, Jakubisko and Havetta – three crucial pioneers of New wave cinema in Slovakia.

The first one to enter feature-length production was Juraj Jakubisko with his The Prime of Life (1967). He then quickly shot other titles such as Deserters and Pilgrims (1968), Birdies, Orphans and Fools (1969) and See You in Hell, My Friends (1970, finished in 1990). Jakubisko brought to the films unique insanity at various levels, including original games with the possibilities of image expressivity. Significant visual sentiment is also characteristic for works of both Elo Havetta and Dušan Hanák. Havetta debuted with his colorful depiction of a village feast, Celebration in the Botanical Garden (1969) and Hanák with 322 (1969) – feature film with noticeable documentaristic approach. His following work was award-winning documentary Pictures of the Old World (1972).

Problems with censorship and film-banning were a significant part of their artistic creation. Elo Havetta finished just one more film entitled Wild Lilies (1972), when he suddenly died in 1975. Dušan Hanák later shot Rosy Dreams (1976), I Love, You Love (1980) for which he won the Silver Bear for Best Directing at Berlin IFF, Simple Pleasures (1985), Private Lives (1990) and Paper Heads (1995). Juraj Jakubisko is the only active director to this day. His most recent film Bathory (2008) is the highest gross domestic film in Slovakia’s independent history.

Slovak Film Institute has recently digitally restored a number of their films, notably - Simple Pleasures (1985) and Private Lives (1990) by Dušan Hanák, Infidelity in a Slovak Way (1981) by Juraj Jakubisko, as well as Celebration in the Botanical Garden (1969) and Wild Lilies (1972) by Elo Havetta. On the occasion of their anniversaries in 2018, SFI will make them available on DCP for cinemas and film festivals and will release them on DVD and BluRay.

SLOVAK FILM INSTITUTE
National Film Archive, National Cinematographic Centre, seat of Creative Europe Desk Slovak Republic, Lumièere Cinema, Klapka.sk Store, member of FIAF and EFP

CONTACT
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CENTRAL EUROPEAN CINEMA STAND NO. 137
Martin-Gropius-Bau
Slovakia is hosted at the European Film Market in Berlin for the 13th time. With friends and colleagues from Czech Republic and Slovenia, under the umbrella of the Central European Cinema, Slovak Film Institute offers an informational and promotional point for Slovak cinema and a networking place for Slovak film professionals and their international counterparts. Come & meet us at the EFM!
www.efm-berlinale.de

REPRESENTATIVES AT BERLINALE 2017
Peter Dubecký, Feb 16 – 20, sfu@sfu.sk
Rastislav Steranka, Feb 15 – 21, rastislav.steranka@sfu.sk, +421 905 539 500
Kristína Aschenbrennerová, Feb 14 – 23, kristina.aschenbrennerova@sfu.sk, +421 917 684 839
Lea Pagáčová, Feb 14 – 23, lea.pagacova@sfu.sk, +421 905 422 281
Soňa Balážová, Feb 16 – 19, sona.balazova@sfu.sk
Vanda Vacvalová (SFI sales), Feb 15 – 25, vanda.vacvalova@sfu.sk

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Slovak Film News

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FOTO © Archive SFI
Nevera po slovensky / Infidelity in a Slovak Way (1981) photo: Elena Hríbiková
Súkromné životy / Simple Pleasures (1990) photo: Vladimir Vavrek

SLOVAK FILM INSTITUTE