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# I'm a walking IMDb

## Mark Cousins on film and the rapture of self-loss

Veronika Bednářová

Northern Irish director and cinéaste Mark Cousins is at KVIFF with two films – *The Story of Film: An Odyssey* and *What Is This Film Called Love*.

■ **Where did your unique love of film come from?**

It came from my childhood. I fell in love with cinema as a boy. I just loved it. In Belfast there was a war on and I was a nervous little boy but then I would go into the cinema and just feel so relaxed. It felt like cinema was taking you in its arms and making you feel safe and opening windows on worlds. And how could you resist? I was born in 1965 so I first went to the cinema in 1976-77. Cinema felt very safe. It still feels very safe. When you're sitting in the dark you can imagine yourself as other people in other worlds and I love that. There's a lovely phrase that Joseph Campbell has – "the rapture of self-loss." And that's what cinema affords, the rapture of self-loss.

■ **There wasn't any specific film life in the 1970s in Belfast was there?**

No, on the contrary. It was pretty dead. But there was TV. There was the BBC. And I saw Alfred Hitchcock films on TV; I saw Orson Welles films on TV. And also there was a video black market so we watched horror movies on old video tapes. I remember seeing *The Exorcist*. We were brought up very Catholic and my aunt got holy water and blessed the video recorder before she put in the tape of *The Exorcist* and I remember thinking if you have to bless a machine this must be so powerful, this medium of cinema. It was great fun.

■ **Do you think your feeling of nervousness regarding reality at**



Photo: Jan Handrejch

*Better than Google: director Mark Cousins is a fount of cinema knowledge.*

**that time helped you to latch on to the medium of cinema?**

I think people who feel slightly like outsiders find themselves inside in the cinema. I now work with Tilda Swinton, the great actor and she says we're all outsiders. All the movie lovers are from another planet, from the Planet Cinema, we're all weirdos and let's try not to be other than weirdos. So all of these people here [at KVIFF] are weirdos. They're from the Planet Cinema. You too.

■ **I don't deny it at all. Is your childhood one of the rea-**

**sons you and Tilda Swinton got together to work with the 8½ Foundation?**

Yes, she and I founded that together. We didn't know each other till we were grown-ups but we both fell in love with cinema around the age of 8½. So we thought it would be great to try and create a magic moment, a threshold moment in a child's life halfway between their 8th and 9th birthdays. Because when a child is that age, they're not yet trying to be cool, not yet teenager. Their minds are still imagina-

tively open and they're sucking in everything, so it's a good time to get to a child and say look at this plenitude, look at this extraordinary medium, this luminosity.

■ **It's like a Fellini movie isn't it?**

It's totally like a Fellini movie. Why it's like a Fellini movie is of course when you see films as a child there are lots of things you don't understand like sex and morality and all sorts of things, but you still have a sense that there's an amazing world out there that you see in the movie.

■ **The project that you are introducing here, *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*, can it ever be topped? It seems like you've done everything now.**

It's a big piece of work obviously. It took six years. It was sort of made in a way for my boyhood self. Somebody who had an appetite for cinema, a curiosity for cinema. I wanted to make a kind of roadmap, saying look at this world of cinema.

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### THE LOWDOWN

It's a reliable sign of a poor Lowdown columnist (and countless bloggers, while we're at it) to lead with a weather report; folks who read columns – and even blogs – are generally aware of how hot, cold, wet or muggy they feel.

But it's almost impossible **not to mention the sweltering heat** in KV this year, which has had Thermal audiences sweating buckets and nodding off. We just hope that fans remember to bring **bottled water** along to screenings until things cool off.

Some have, of course, solved the heat issue by heading for the **pool**. A grand party there Sunday evening saw a classic velvet-rope-type moment, when world-famous **DJ David Holmes** was told that he would not be allowed in because the event was "VIP only." Eventually, someone was located to explain to the security guys that Holmes was quite likely the most V of the IPs at the event.

But never one for raging ego, the down-to-earth Holmes himself ended up getting on famously with the veteran DJ who was laying down vintage tracks, one **Ivo Pospíšil**, founder of the Radost FX music shop who could be described as **Prague's answer to Terri Hooley**, the subject of KVIFF opening film *Good Vibrations*, which Holmes soundtracked.

The pair even **swapped email addresses** so that they could later swap track recommendations. Tunes really do build bridges, folks!

### NOTICE

There will be two additional public screenings of Sára Cserhalmi's *Dear Betrayed Friends* and one for press and industry. The latter takes place tomorrow at 12:30pm in the Thermal's Cinema B; the public screenings will be held at 4:30pm on July 5 at the Pupp Cinema and at 12:30pm on July 6 in the Čas Cinema.

### SEE YOU THERE

## Dan Sallitt

Director, *The Unspeakable Act*

One of the many films I'm looking forward to seeing is *Holy Motors* by Leos Carax who is obviously a very well-known French filmmaker. He hasn't made any films for a few years other than a while back, when he made a short film in a *portmanteau* movie called *Tokyo*, which was extremely good. The buzz on *Holy Motors* ever since its screening at Cannes a little while ago has been very exciting. I don't know what actually happens in the film because I've been trying to keep myself a virgin for it. It sounds as if Carax has done something extraordinary and he has certainly done some extraordinary things in the past, so this has to be one of my must-see films while I'm here.

*Holy Motors* screens today at 10:30pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall and on July 6 at 9:30pm in the Small Hall, also at the Thermal.

You can catch Dan Sallitt's film, *The Unspeakable Act*, today at 1pm in the Thermal's Congress Hall, tomorrow at 7pm in the same venue, and on July 7 at 10am in the Espace Dorleans Cinema. (COC)



Photo: KVIFF

### EXPLAINER

## KV's (sometimes surprising) film cameos

When seen from the right angle, Karlovy Vary's certainly a star, even when its trademark festival's not up and running. That (and just possibly cheaper food and accommodation rates than those of Prague) have won it prominent roles in lots of films shot in the Czech Republic.

Just about everyone remembers the city's promenades popping up in a fantasy version of Montenegro, where people like James Bond come to bluff and melt girls' hearts with their card sharp acumen as he did in *Casino Royale* (pictured). The Grandhotel Pupp becomes the ridiculously opulent Hotel Splendide, a veritable den of intrigue and dodgy dealings. The role of the casino itself was performed with gusto by the Lázně I building, in reality a venerable 19th-century spa facility.

A few also recall Queen Latifah showing us that you can actually see the Alps from your Karlovy Vary hotel window, as she did in Wayne Wang's *Last Holiday* while contemplating life and the secrets of Cajun cooking.

The city's riverfront has even been spotted in movies as unlikely as the action-packed Jackie Chan



Photo: KVIFF

feature *Shanghai Knights* (subbing for a slightly sunnier 19th-century London).

And let us not forget *Hostel Part II* – even if audiences and distributors did pretty quickly – in which Karlovy Vary showed off its more sinister side. Who knew this city could pass itself off as an Italian town in which feisty American girls show would-be evildoers what a bad idea it is to mess with them?

With the Czech Republic's new 20-percent cash-back production incentive now in force, it looks like a good bet that you'll be seeing the city in many more films to come – especially when that elegant Old Europe look is needed (but only a modern indie budget is on tap). (WT)



# I'm a walking IMDb

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■ It's extraordinary how you do it in an understandable way. It's not overly academic.

Absolutely. The word *auteur* does not appear in 15 hours; the phrase *mise-en-scène* does not appear in 15 hours. Because it's so easy to put an ordinary person off and say, "This is not for you." And of course cinema is the most democratic art and therefore when we talk about it we have to talk about it in an open and available way. Not compromising the ideas in cinema, not trying to make it look like a lesser art than it is, but certainly making it available and accessible. That's crucial.

■ I've seen your Mexico travelogue *What Is This Film Called Love*. It really contrasts with your 15-hour film.

It's kind of a reaction to that in a way, after doing 15 hours in six years on a very direct path so I just wanted to go off-piste as they say and just wander a little bit. As I say in my Mexican film, I've made films with neo-Nazis in them and the Gulf War and lots of serious social issues and I wanted to just experiment, like strumming a guitar. I always like the way people work in the music world, where they're not afraid to improvise and see what happens or to make personal work. Some of the best music is very personal. I sent the rough cut [of *What Is This Film Called Love*] to PJ Harvey the great composer and she sent me songs for it, so it allowed me to

collaborate with loads of people. I used three songs by PJ Harvey and the great composer Sam Fisher Turner, so I got to work with these extraordinary musicians.

■ You know so many interesting people.

I do know loads of people. I think the reason is that people see that I'm so passionate about what I do, in the music world lots of music people are also fascinated by cinema and want to know more about cinema and they see me as a sort of walking IMDb. "We can't be bothered to google. Who directed this film in 1942?" And I like that. Also, I teach and write a lot about creativity – the creative process and work and why it's so fulfilling. What musicians and filmmakers and actors all have in common – this idea of creativity and how to keep it going, how to keep the juices going, how not to lose it, how not to get distracted by money or institutions.

■ Do you still feel the same excitement when you see a great movie?

Even more so. I always feel that I watch movies like a child. Defenses down. Even intellectual faculties put to one side. Watch it open-hearted and open-spirited and as soon as the film finishes then you use your adult ability to analyze and reflect. Was I moved? Why was I moved? Was that aesthetically interesting? Why? I think for me that's the way it works best. I can maximize the response. I always sit in the front row to be as close as possible to the screen.

# Peña on European film

Veronika Bednářová

Richard Peña is the Program Director for the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Director of the New York Film Festival. He is this year's President of the Grand Jury at KVIFF.

■ Do you remember seeing your first movie?

I think the first movie I saw that I remember seeing in a movie theater was *Jason and the Argonauts*. I distinctly remember the sword-fight against the skeletons. It seemed rather sad, as there's no way you can stab a skeleton.

■ How did your family background affect your taste in movies?

I think my family background affected me by always reminding me that there was an alternative to American culture – there was American dancing, and Latin dancing, American music and Latin music, American movies and Latin movies... Once you accept the existence of an alternative, then it opens you up to many other possibilities. If two, why not three?

■ How do you see the festival in Karlovy Vary in the international context?

Karlovy Vary is a widely respected festival that has become known as a great platform for new cinema emerging from Central and Eastern Europe. It also has the reputation of being a very young festival, with those youthful audiences we're all trying to attract.



Photo: Jan Handrejch

KVIFF Grand Jury President Richard Peña.

■ Do you have a favorite Czech movie?

I'm a great fan of Marketa Lazarová and František Vlácil's work in general. I also very much like *Distant Journey*; for me it's the best of the early Holocaust films. Recently, I was very much taken with *Something Like Happiness*. And of course the Czech New Wave, which has a powerful link to the New York Film Festival.

■ In what way is the New York Film Festival different from other film festivals?

Now celebrating its 50th year, the New York Film Festival is distinguished from other, especially North American festivals, by its size. Unlike festivals that show 200, 300 or even 400+ films, we only show 25-28 films in a given year, which has been our practice since the NYFF's founding in 1963. Thus, we have gained a cer-

tain "elite" reputation among filmmakers and audiences. We also don't give prizes of any sort. The NYFF, I should add, shows much more than European cinema, and I think it's fair to say we've been a key platform for Chinese, Iranian, Korean, Argentine, Israeli and other international cinemas.

■ How do you foresee the future of European cinema?

The most important thing for European cinema is to be seen first and foremost by other Europeans. Although there are multiple agencies to promote "European" cinema, I still think the concept has little resonance with the vast majority of Europeans. There are enormous talents throughout Europe and a strong sense of preserving and promoting cinematic patrimony, so I think the future of European cinema looks pretty good.

## WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

Irena Taskovski  
Taskovski Films, UK/Bosnia



Photo: Jan Handrejch

■ So what do you do at KVIFF?

We have a film in Karlovy Vary every year and we represent some very well-known Czech documentary makers, such as Filip Remunda, Vít Klusák, and Helena Třeštíková.

■ Are any of your films showing at the fest?

We have a film this year from Uruguay by first-time director Alicia Cano. It's called *The Bella Vista* and it had its world premiere on July 2 as part of the documentary films competition. The director, Alicia, and the producer Thomas Mauch, whose cinematography work you might know from *Fitzcarraldo*, are both here.

■ What else?

We're also here to attend the Docu Talents from the East event, which is taking place today in the Thermal at 1:30pm, because that's how we find new talent, and take their films on board to represent them. (COC)

## REVIEWERS RECOMMEND

Stephen Farber

Film critic, *The Hollywood Reporter*



### Beasts of the Southern Wild

Director: Benh Zeitlin  
USA, 2011, 91 min  
July 3, 2pm, Grand Hall – Thermal

This award-winner from Sundance and Cannes confirms the vitality of American independent cinema. It's a unique exploration of a father-daughter relationship and a regional community often overlooked by mainstream filmmakers. Set in Louisiana at the time of a devastating storm, the film may make you think of the people forgotten in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. But it's not a political message movie; it's a rare example of poetic cinema that is innovative and deeply stirring. It comes with an electrifying musical score and marvelously atmospheric cinematography.



### The Deep Blue Sea

Director: Terence Davies  
UK, 2011, 98 min  
July 3, 7pm, Richmond Cinema

To celebrate the centenary of the birth of noted British playwright and screenwriter Terence Rattigan, many revivals of his well known plays have been mounted. Terence Davies directed this new screen version of one of Rattigan's memorable studies of sexual desire and repression. Rachel Weisz gives a splendid performance as a married woman torn between a staid husband and a reckless lover. This was one of Rattigan's favorite themes – the war between responsibility and sexual bliss. Davies has an innate understanding of the central theme. The film is a bit slowly paced, but it's beautifully designed and undeniably affecting.



### Terraferma

Director: Emanuele Crialese  
Italy, France, 2011, 88 min  
July 3, 7pm, Congress Hall – Thermal

Many recent movies from all around the world have dealt with the subject of immigration, a hot-button topic in many places. Italy's submission for the foreign language Oscar of 2011 is an eloquent addition to this thriving new genre. An Italian fishing family struggles in an economic downturn, and their problems multiply when a group of shipwrecked Africans wash up in their village. As they get to know the African visitors, they find their complacency challenged. The moral dilemma facing the family is incisively rendered by director Emanuele Crialese and a skillful troupe of actors.



### Come As You Are

Director: Geoffrey Enthoven  
Belgium, 2011, 115 min  
July 3, 10pm, Drahomíra Cinema

Belgian cinema has been thriving lately, and this crowd-pleasing comic drama (an audience award winner at several festivals) indicates the diversity of new Belgian cinema. Inspired by a true story, the film focuses on three handicapped men who decide to defy their disability and travel to Spain to visit a brothel that caters to men with special needs. Their families resist the idea of a road trip, but when they find a driver, they manage to set out on an adventure. Uproariously funny as well as deeply poignant, Geoffrey Enthoven's film may not be a prestige picture, but it represents the best in offbeat, audience-friendly entertainment.

## Czech, please!

*Pokud zabloudíš ve Varech*, or if you get lost in Karlovy Vary, some of these phrases might help you to get directions from the locals:

*Jak se dostanu do kina ...?* (Yak se dost-anoo do Keena...) – How can I get to the Cinema...?

*Kde je hotel Thermal?* (Gdeh yeh hotel Thermal) – Where is the Hotel Thermal?

*Kudy se jde na kolonádu?* (Koody seh deh na kol-o-nadoo) – How do I get to the collonade?

*Hledám autobusové nádraží* (Hled-aahm ow-toe-bus-ovay nad-razhee) – I'm looking for the bus station

*Je to daleko/je to blízko?* (Ye to bleezko/dal-echo) – Is it near/far?

*Je to hrozná dálka* (Yeh to hroz-nah dahl-ka) – It's miles away

*Je to kousek odsud* (Ye to koe-sek od-sud) – It's just a little way away

*Je to hned za rohem* (Yeh to hi-ned za roe-hem) – It's just around the corner

*Je to na opačném konci města.* (Yeh to na opatchnem kontsee myesta) – It's at the other end of town

*Jděte rovně a pak odbočte doleva/doprava* (Deh-tay rovnyeh a pak od-botch-tay doe-lev-ah/doe-prav-ah) – Go straight and then turn left/right

*Jděte rovnou za nosem* (Deh-tay rovnyeh za nosem) – Go straight on (lit. Go straight after your nose)

*Promiňte, ztratil/a jsem se* (Pro-min-tay straat-eel sem seh) – Excuse me, I'm lost

*Promiňte, prosím, kde je tu bankomat?* (Pro-min-tay pro-seem gdeh yeh bankomat) – Excuse me, where can I find an ATM here?

*Nemůžu najít poštu* (Ne-moo-zhoo nai-yeet po-shtu) – I can't find the post office

(COC/PH)

## FACES



Kenneth Lornegan



Todd Solondz



Masato Harada



Ali Mosaffa



Jacob Dammas



Péter Bergendy

There are some pretty well-known faces in town today. Keep your eye out for highly respected American writer/director **Kenneth Lornegan**, whose eagerly anticipated *Margaret* is part of Horizons this year. He's joined by two other Horizons writer/directors, **Todd Solondz**, with *Dark Horse*, and **Masato Harada**, whose *Chronicle of My Mother* he adapted from Yasushi Inoue's novel.

Look out for beloved Iranian star **Leila Hatami**, who is expected to arrive today for the Official Selection competition entry *The Last Step*. She plays an actress called Leila, who loses her control after the death of her husband. The husband is played by her actual husband, the film's writer and director **Ali Mosaffa**. Lots to

think about there. Also competing is *Polski film*, whose co-star **Tomáš Matonoha** is due today. This film also blurs the line between real and fictional filmmaking, but takes care to remind us that "The fact that I'm playing myself doesn't mean that this is actually me." **Jan Budař**, Czech actor and musician, arrives today for *Polski film* as well, but he's also in *Lidice* and *Long Live the Family* in the Czech Films selection.

**Jacob Dammas** and **Helge Renner**, the writing/directing duo behind *Polish Illusions*, arrive today for the documentary competition. Another powerful contender this year is the troubling *Sofia's Last Ambulance*, directed, shot and co-edited by **Ilian Metev**.

And from Hungary, director **Péter Bergendy** and actor **János Kulka** arrive today to compete in the East of the West section with *The Exam*, a psychological secret police thriller about loyalty and friendship under Communism.

Forum of Independents feature debut director **Jan Ole Gerster** gets into town today for the world premiere of his character study *Oh Boy*. He's joined by **Aleksey Igudesman**, director of the star-studded arch mockumentary *Noseland*, star and producer **Julian Rachlin** and editor **Sebastian Leitner**. Also arriving for FOI today is writer/director **Rony Sasson Angel**, here with *Wherever You Go*, and *In a Bedroom's* writer/director **Tomasz Wasilewski**. (PLC)



## OFFICIAL SELECTION

**Nos Vemos Papa – an intimate look at loss**

Will Tizard

The Mexican entry in the Official Selection race, *Nos Vemos Papa* (or *See You, Dad*) is a haunting and brooding study of grief, memory, and the fight for resolution in the wake of a sudden tragedy. Director and screenwriter Lucía Carreras's story hinges on the aftermath wrought by the death of her heroine Pilar's father – an event that forces the young woman to confront her "near pathological dependence on him," as observers of the film have described it.

As Pilar reels from her loss, the psychological suspense story that follows takes us through a maze of traps with escalating desperation as the relationships in the rest of the family are revealed and tested. The look and mood of the images draw us into this shadowy world while Carreras never compromises on emotional honesty or resorts to melodrama.

The director calls *Nos Vemos Papa* "a very intimate story," adding that "the rhythm and the tone were an important aspect."

That feeling is quite apart from most movies coming out of Mexico these days, which tend toward lighter fare and audience films. Carreras, by contrast, "took inspiration from innovative trends in the Mexican film industry but still managed to find her own style," in the words of KVIFF programmers.



Photo: KVIFF

Cecilia Suarez in Mexican film *Nos Vemos Papa*.

So far the film has only screened outside Mexico in Ventana Sur, Argentina, and the European Film Market at the Berlinale, but those were industry screenings. "In that sense, Karlovy Vary will be the city where audiences from outside Mexico will see, for the first time, *Nos Vemos Papa* – it is our international premiere," says Carreras.

According to Carreras, the film originated with her interest in exploring loss. "I thought that if this person had devoted her/his life to somebody, starting from a very early age, the absence would then make the character go to really interesting places. Those places will be a limbo where Pilar goes."

The journey is a tricky, sometimes deceptive one, she adds. "I do not know if I will call this world surreal rather than imaginary."

But it's a sojourn that surely transcends Latin American culture, the director believes. "The international appeal of the film, I think, will come from different aspects... For me, the film explores deep layers of emotions that are also appealing to audiences."

The exploration of the darker palette is something that resonates in Central Europe, as well, says Carreras. "Connecting with the people of the land of Kafka, obviously, is a big deal for us and it will be amazing to hear what they got from the movie."

***Nos Vemos Papa screens today at 5pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall and at 1pm tomorrow in the Espace Dorleans Cinema.*** ■

## OFFICIAL SELECTION

**To Kill a Beaver – the insidious recesses of the human mind**

Barbora Baronová

Dubbed a distinctive film narrator, bard of magical realism, and poet of image in his native Poland, writer/director Jan Jakub Kolski is now going to be known as a prophet too. In his feature *To Kill a Beaver* he forecast the fate of a man without a past who was discovered earlier this year in the Tatra Mountains.

That film explores the topic of the return of a professional soldier to routine, tedious, everyday life. It opens with the solitary character of Eryk arriving at an abandoned farm. At first it seems that only the ubiquitous beavers will keep him company, until a sassy girl floats into his life on a raft. She has occupied Eryk's house in his absence and has no intention of leaving, but she has no idea how insidious the human mind can be while processing serious trauma.

"I wanted to create a hero whose worlds are getting mixed up. It happens to people who are pushed to their limits. I remember those states of mind from the time when I was engaged in caving. I wrote the script two years ago on an impulse which eventually turned out to be secondary. During the shooting I discarded most of what I had prepared. I surrendered to intuition and my inner voice, which allowed me to 'hear' Eryk's mind. The lead

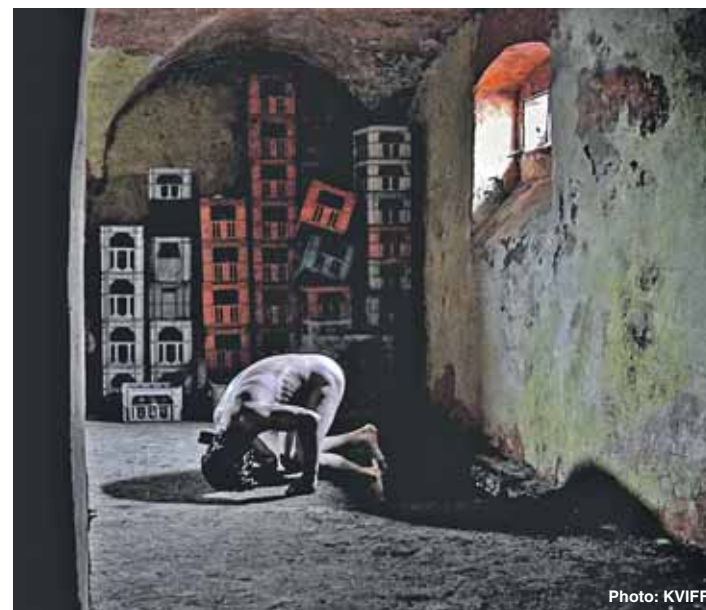


Photo: KVIFF

*To Kill a Beaver looks at how war affects the psyche.*

Eryk Lubos helped me a lot by thoroughly researching the topic ahead of shooting."

That topic was made all the more relevant by real-life events that unfolded just as the film was being completed. "When the film was almost finished, there was a breaking news story in Poland of an Afghanistan veteran who was found in the Tatras. His identity was unknown for many days until it was finally established he was a war hero who was discharged after a number of missions. His family thought he was still on a mission while he was lying in a tent in the mountains, frostbitten, and drinking water made from melted snow."

Kolski hopes the veteran's case will change Polish society's attitude to the serious but neglected issue of the impact of war on

a soldier's psyche after returning from a mission.

"After the test screening, viewers told me they struggled to believe what they saw. But when the 'commando from the Tatras' was found, they changed their minds."

The sensitive film has a surprising ending. "I wanted to tell a love story," Kolski says. "It's gloomy, powerful, passionate, but still a love story. While we were shooting, my mother was dying and I transferred my suffering to the film. More misfortunes surrounded the film. To tell you the truth, I am surprised it didn't end up killing me."

***To Kill a Beaver screens today at 8pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall and tomorrow at 10am in the Espace Dorleans Cinema.*** ■

# Panter z Varů: na vlnách publika

Skupina ČEZ, geniální panter  
47. ročníku MFF Karlovy Vary



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# KVIFF goes on A Musical Odyssey



Photo: KVIFF

LCD Soundsystem Shut Up and Play the Hits.



Photo: KVIFF

Romany dreams in Bells of Happiness.



Photo: KVIFF

Avante-garde composers explore The Reach of Resonance.

## Peter Le Couteur

At first glance, this year's music documentary selection seems to have little in the way of common themes. Pavel Klusák, head of the section, explains how they chose the eight films on offer: "It's easy! The film must be relevant on both a filmic and musical level. And what's most important: there must be the *zeitgeist* hidden inside. *Shut Up and Play The Hits*, for example, shows a group [LCD Soundsystem] that helped erase a border between the independent scene and the mainstream."

This theme of erasing borders certainly has powerful relevance today, and runs through the traditional VH1 "Behind the Music"-style work on iconic artists (Paul Simon, ambient pioneer Brian Eno, or free-jazz saxophonist Peter Brötzmann), the attempts to capture the style and surroundings of live performances (by transcendent Icelanders Sigur Rós

and NYC electropunks LCD Soundsystem), and other, stranger areas of musical documentary work.

Marek Šulík and Jana Bučka's *Bells of Happiness* tells the story of two Slovakian Romany cousins who dream of living the life of the gods, in this case the luxurious realm of mullets and misty lenses inhabited by Karel Gott and Darina Rolincová. The two cousins decide to send a video greeting to their two idols, along with a Roma remix of *Zvonky štastia* (Bells of Happiness), which still resonates with them almost 30 years after its release. Despite their prayers, neither the fans nor the filmmakers ever succeed in contacting their personal Gott, and their dreams of doing so are set against the troubles of the Roma people in Slovakia, trapped by physical and cultural segregation and endemic poverty.

Segregation and the question of music's ability to transcend lin-

guistic, political and conceptual borders is a strong theme in the section 2012: A Musical Odyssey, whose title alone is suggestive of this kind of radical journey. The documentary *Under African Skies* follows the story of Paul Simon's album *Graceland*, recorded during the worst years of Apartheid, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. Simon travels back to South Africa to meet both the musicians who worked with him on the album and the African National Congress spokespeople he angered by breaking their international cultural boycott. This is a well-made look at a sensitive subject, with a wider relevance about the interaction of art and politics. Simon is adamant that he did not want to make a political record, that working with black African musicians was a musical decision, and that music does not need to be controlled by its political circumstances. As proof of this, he cites the content of the

African pop songs he reworked; one is about how nice it was when women wore miniskirts. And one memorable verse on *I Know What I Know* can be translated something like, "Kill an owl because there's no chicken, but don't worry, if we cut the head off it'll look just like a chicken. We can eat it on the train." With luminaries like Maya Angelou, David Byrne, Whoopi Goldberg and Peter Gabriel on the cast list, this is definitely not to be missed.

Contentious borderlines feature heavily in the stand-out work this year for anyone interested in the boundaries between experimental music and activism, Steve Elkins' *The Reach of Resonance*. What starts off as a depiction of four otherworldly *avant-garde* composers swiftly builds into an elegant demonstration of the links between cultural experimentation and radical political gestures. Bob Ostertag spent years in El Salvador campaigning for the free-

dom fighters, John Luther Adams led the movement to protect the Alaskan wilderness through the creation of national parks, and Jon Rose has become famous throughout the world for using cello bows to play fences. Starting in the classical tradition, Rose pushed the form of the violin, adding longer and longer strings, until he suddenly looked around him and realized that Australia is strung with millions of kilometers of resonating wires. These fences are deeply embedded in Australia's short and brutal history, absurd signs of Western culture's insistence on imposing straight lines of division on places and peoples where they have no relevance. Drawing haunting music from these fences has led him around the world, to the artificial lines carved between Israel and Palestine, or Mexico and Arizona. Rose's work is just one thread in this balanced, thoughtful piece, guaranteed to introduce you to new ideas, new directions, and

maybe even change how you think about sound.

Adams, who stopped campaigning to focus on composing, asks especially relevant questions about the place of art in a time of so much conflict and destruction. For people like Adams in central Alaska, where rising temperatures mean winter often comes months late, and huge icebergs crash into the sea every day, the growing ecological devastation is extremely evident. "What meaning does art have in a world that is literally melting?" he asks. But, as he recounts, Claude Monet was feeling the same guilt, shuffling out to the garden to paint water lilies with the front lines of WWI only 35km away. And as Adams says, "we would all be so much poorer if Monet hadn't shuffled out to the garden to paint those water lilies, even in the middle of a war...those spaces he created...were his last great gift to his fellow human beings."

## ON THE TOWN

### Panoptikum

Bělehradská 3  
☎ 728 520 822  
Open 10am-"around 2am"

With pleasant wood-lined walls displaying fascinating photos from Karlovy Vary's rich and colorful past, Panoptikum is a cozy eatery specializing in traditional Czech fare at reasonable prices. As is typical for such dumpling-friendly cuisine, the food is a little heavy, particularly as the portions are almost ridiculously generous. That is just a minor quibble though, as overall we were very impressed with the personable and relaxed service as well as the delicious draft beer on offer from the boutique Švijany brewery. Panoptikum is a little off the beaten track, but is definitely worth the trek if you fancy a less hectic and crowded dining experience than you'll find in most restaurants on the main strip. (COC)

### Tandoor

I P Pavlova 25  
☎ 608 701 341  
www.tandoor-kv.cz  
Open noon-9pm Mon-Sat,  
noon-6pm Sun

Long an oasis of convenient, affordable, colorful, and spicy cuisine, Tandoor is the family-run place that festival veterans have been slipping off to, and returning to, for years. It's just two simple rooms secreted in the courtyard of an apartment block just around the corner from the Thermal, but it's as welcoming and unpretentious a place as you'll ever find. Starters include some mouthwatering Indian specialties such as dahl, onion bhaji and meat-stuffed paratha (30-60 CZK). Follow that up with the city's most appealing **vegetarian menu**, which offers palak, bhaji, veggie madras, vindaloo, spinach, and jal frezi (85-145



Photo: KVIFF

Panoptikum's walls comprise a photographic guide to Karlovy Vary's colorful past.

CZK). You can get chicken, beef, lamb, or prawn versions of these classics by adding 40 CZK or so. All the usual sides are here, in-

cluding chapatis, garlic and cheese nans (25-45 CZK). Some swear they achieve enlightenment when combining the above

with Czech beer on draft, like Gambrinus (25-35 CZK). Also, watch out for the special fast festival menu. (WT)

Foot-tapping Czech percussion maestros **The Tap Tap** are giving a **drumming workshop today at 4pm** in the beautiful Mlýnská kolonáda to get everyone in the swing of things before their **Concert for the Jedlička Institute Foundation at 8pm** at Poštovní dvůr (Slovenská 2). The Jedlička Institute was established in 1913 to help the Czech disabled community, running a school in Prague and organizing events. Many of the members of The Tap Tap are former students of the Prague school, and they've done amazing work raising awareness, playing in festivals around Europe and working with well-known Czech musicians like Dan Bárta. Entry to the concert is by voluntary contribution, and you can be sure whatever you give will be used wisely. Excellent music in support of an excellent cause. (PLC)

## DAILIES



Photo: Milan Malíček

The ČEZ cat gets down with the kids.



Photo: Jan Handreich

Variety's Ten Euro Directors to Watch.



Photo: Milan Malíček

The Jedlička Institute collection.