



Photo: Petr Hloušek

The stage and screen actor confesses that he'll take risks for a great script that plumbs the depths of who we are and who we choose to be – for less money than he should get



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FREE

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BECOMING MICHAEL SHANNON

IN *COMPLETE UNKNOWN*, THE FREQUENT TOUGH GUY EXPLORES DUALITY AND IDENTITY

Zbyněk Vlasák, Will Tizard
and Iva Přivřelová

Actor Michael Shannon is in high demand these days, with 16 films to his credit this year, which is clearly a time for branching out for the versatile stage and film actor and musician. He is screening the Josh Marston chamber piece *Complete Unknown* at KVIFF, a story that confronts an intimate group of characters with the ghost of what might have been.

What does *Complete Unknown* mean to you as a story?

It's exploring an existential question of identity – whether people are meant to have a singular identity their whole lives or whether it's OK to change. I think some people find themselves confined within themselves – are not comfortable just being themselves from beginning to end.

I think a lot of people at some point in their lives wish they could escape. I think this film kind of explores that conundrum.

Have you ever felt that way – that you want to change your life radically?

If I've had moments where I wanted to run away, they haven't been lasting or debilitating. But it was interesting for all the actors working on this movie because we realized this is what we do. We create these personalities. And it gives you some respite from your own life, you know – your own mind.

Do some characters stay with you when you're finished shooting? Was it hard to get out of the psychotic Van Alden in *Boardwalk Empire*?

I'm usually more attached to stage roles. When *Boardwalk Empire* was finished I didn't give it much thought. Because television doesn't really belong to the actors. In television the writers have the power, obviously. They're dictating the story and they're dictating what happens to the character and a lot of times I don't necessarily agree with it but I have to do it whether I agree with it or not.

You don't get very romantic about it. But when I'm doing a play – I just finished a play on Broadway – I get very attached

to the character. Because you're doing the same character seven times a week, eight times a week and you keep going deeper and deeper and deeper.

What's the best way for a director to get you to take a role?

I tend to be drawn to people who are making personal movies for personal reasons.

I respect that approach. It's the biggest risk – because you're the most vulnerable when you're taking something that really means something to you and in this arena of show business, which is one of the most ruthless and difficult businesses – to have the courage to do that anyway.

Do you worry about typecasting after so many successful roles as tough guys – especially after your Van Alden role made you a household name?

No, I just look at everything on its own terms as it comes to me and I thought (*Complete Unknown*) was just an interesting story about something that a lot of people experience at some point in their lives. That feeling of wanting to change who you

are and start over. It seemed like a subject worth exploring. I don't think many people would have imagined me playing Tom. All the more reason for me to do it – to thwart peoples expectations.

And what was it about that role in the film that appealed to you?

I just liked the idea of being the one defending who you are – yet being tempted to cross over to the other side. And at the end of the day having to make a decision. Am I right? Am I wrong?

Is it true that you can get a great actor for almost nothing if you offer them a great script?

Yeah, it tends to be the model nowadays. I've come to the point where I'm gonna start putting my foot down. I mean a movie like *Complete Unknown* is basically like a volunteer effort. That why you gotta take advantage of these film festivals. This is kind of your reward for making the movie. Stay in a nice old hotel.

I think as a group actors need to stop enabling this behavior. There's no reason it should be that way. If somebody's got

a good script and you want to put good actors in it then everybody should be taken care of. We're not asking for millions and millions of dollars. It's gone too far in the other direction really. If it was just me I wouldn't care. I probably would do it for free. But I have a family.

You wonder whether these new platforms will change any of that. Ted Hope has said he wants Amazon to be buying indie films for much more than the filmmakers are currently getting.

I like Ted's attitude.

How do you know when you have a character down? Can you feel it at a certain point?

No, you don't. I guess I don't really look at it that way. It's weird. Because I don't think people ever really have themselves down, you know? Experience isn't really that way. 'Oh, I finally have become Michael Shannon.' Which is like what this movie's about. It goes beyond qualitative commentary, being a good performance or a bad performance. It's more that I'm being what I can stand being right now. ■

SEE YOU THERE

JANA PLODKOVÁ

ACTRESS

KVIFF, for me, means balancing work and cinema. This year I plan to watch Petr Zelenka's *Lost in Munich*. We presented the new satirical comedy *Cosmic* here, which will be shown on Czech TV as well as the third episode of the period TV series *I, Mattoni* where I play the title character's daughter.

I'd like to see the Romanian *Graduation* and you'll definitely see me at the screening of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*. I've seen this cult movie five times on TV but never on the big screen.

Lost in Munich screens today at 7:30pm (Divadlo Husovka). *Graduation* screens today at 6:30pm (Small Hall). *Blue Velvet* screens today at 9:30pm (Karlovy Vary Municipal Theatre). ■



GLOBAL WINNERS

Festival-goers are waiting with bated breath to see who will lay claim to this year's prestigious awards and the exquisite trophies that come with them – the hand cut and polished 5kg Moser orbs lifted skyward by a shining metallic female figure.

The Grand Prix (the Crystal Globe) goes to the best of 12 features in competition, along with a \$25,000 prize. A Special Jury Prize is granted to another festival film, in addition to \$15,000, while awards are also given for best director, actor, and actress.

One Crystal Globe has already been handed out. The festival kicked off with actor Willem Dafoe receiving his for Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema.



KVIFF rules maintain that no single film can win more than two of the above awards, so the playing field is wide open. Two Special Mentions can also be doled out, but the jury would need to make a case precisely why these films are so special.

The East of the West award, along with \$15,000, highlights the standout film from central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Balkans and Turkey, while the documentary trophy, along with a handy \$5,000 prize to keep you on the road for a while, is also waiting in the wings, ready for the announcement of the winners. The Právo Audience Award, meanwhile always serves as a great gauge for future sales.

One of the festival's top prizes, the Festival President's Award, is presented by Jiří Bartoška himself, this year going to both screenwriter Charlie Kaufman and to the iconic French actor Jean Reno. There will also be a host of non-statutory prizes that go out tonight – the envelope, please! (MS) ■

INTRODUCING THE FESTIVAL JURY

We bring you portraits of the members of the Grand Jury who face the tough task of selecting this year's winners. Passionate debates are held among Italian screenwriter Maurizio Braucci, Czech actress with the blackest hair Martha Issová, award-winning Georgian director George Ovashvili, veteran Canadian-British distributor Eve Gabereau and US producer Jay Van Hoy, advisor at the Sundance Institute Creative Producing Lab.

MARTHA ISSOVÁ



This year marks a debut on the Grand Jury for the Czech film and theatre actress. "I'm very happy," she says. "Who wouldn't be? This festival is extraordinary. I am a passionate film fan and the discussions that must follow every viewing are very important for me. I like to travel and talk to people who live in different corners of the world and see art from a different perspective than I do." The 35-year-old mother of little Františka and partner of director and producer David Ondříček made her first appearance in Karel Kachyňa's *Hanele* (1999) at age 16. *Night Owls* (2008) brought her the Best Actress Crystal Globe at KVIFF and she has three Czech Lion nominations to her credit.



MAURIZIO BRAUCCI



The distinctive Italian novelist and screenwriter co-authored Matteo Garrone's *Gomorrah* (2008), Abel Ferrara's *Napoli Napoli Napoli* (2009) and *Pasolini* (2014), as well as Francesco Munzi's *Black Souls* (2014), to name but a few. It was *Gomorrah*, a brutally raw fresco of the ways

in which the Neapolitan camorra controls ordinary people, that attracted the most attention. *Gomorrah* won the Grand Prix at Cannes as well as a prize from the Chicago IFF. Braucci himself lives in Naples and is involved in social projects for underprivileged youth.

JAY VAN HOY



The US producer works as an advisor to production workshops organized under the umbrella of the Sundance Institute. This is his first visit to the Czech Republic but Van Hoy was present at least in spirit at last year's KVIFF when Robert Eggers' unusually lyrical horror *The Witch*, which he produced, screened as part of the Midnight Movies sidebar. In 2004 he co-founded Parts & Labor, a production company dedicated to director-driven pictures. He aided in the creation of David Lowery's *Ain't Them Bodies Saints* as well this year's Cannes favorite, *American Honey* by Andrea Arnold.

EVE GABEREAU



Co-founder and managing director of Soda Pictures, an Anglo-Canadian film distributor who is currently screening Cannes faves and critical hits *Paterson* by Jim Jarmusch and *Toni Erdmann* by Maren Ade to British audiences. Soda Pictures has an impressive library of over 300 titles picked up since 2002. In her role at Soda she is involved in production projects, producer relations, acquisitions, and overall release strategies. Soda Pictures' recent distribution activities include Grímur Hákonarson's *Rams*, Alice Winocour's *Disorder*, and Joachim Trier's *Louder Than Bombs*.

GEORGE OVASHVILI



The Georgian director is no newcomer to Karlovy Vary: In 2009 his feature debut *The Other Bank* screened in the East of the West Competition. His second feature *Corn Island* (2014) made it to the Official Selection, landing the Crystal Globe for Best Film at the 49th KVIFF. It was shortlisted among nine films competing for the best foreign language Oscar. Following his previous appearances here, the director, who is currently finishing up his latest movie, *Khibula*, sees his membership in the Grand Jury as a logical step. (PH)

CRITICS ON THE MAIN COMPETITION

	Nightlife	The Next Skin	My Father's Wings	We're Still Together	Original Bliss	It's Not the Time of My Life	The Teacher	By the Rails	The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street	Waves	Zoology	The Confessions
Éva Bársony, Népszava, Hungary	-	-	3	4	2	4,5	3	2	5	3	3	3
Hala El Mawi, Le Progrès Égyptien, Egypt	-	4	3,5	4	4,5	4	3,5	4	-	4,5	3	4
Joseph Fahim, Middle East Institute, USA	-	-	-	-	4	-	3	-	4	3	4	3
Hauvick Habechian, An-Nahar, Lebanon	-	-	3	1	3	3	-	2	-	2	4	3
Barbara Hollender, Rzeczpospolita, Poland	4,5	4	4	3	2	3,5	3	2	4	4	3,5	3,5
Paul Katzenberger, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Germany	3,5	-	4	4	3,5	3	3	3	-	-	-	-
Dubravka Lakić, Politika, Serbia	4	3	4	2,5	3	3	3,5	2,5	3	3	3,5	4
Věra Mišková, Právo, Czech Republic	4	3,5	-	2,5	2,5	-	3	-	3	4	4	4
David Rams, TV-Movie.de, Germany	3,5	-	-	-	3	3,5	2,5	-	-	3,5	3	-
Stas Tyrkin, Komsomolskaya pravda, Russia	3,5	4	3	3	3	5	5	3	2	2	5	4
Zbyněk Vlasák, Festivalový deník, Czech Republic	3,5	4	2	2	2,5	5	3,5	3	3	3	5	2,5
AVERAGE:	3,79	3,75	3,31	2,89	3	3,83	3,3	2,69	3,43	3,2	3,8	3,44

MIDPOINT PREMIERES

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE EXPERTS' RECIPE FOR GREAT FILM



Discussion over scripts: Jiří Mádl, producer Monika Kristl and Sundance Institute lecturer Paul Federbush

This year's KVIFF is partly influenced by the spirit of film dramaturgy with the festival marking the 90th anniversary of the birth of Frank Daniel, who was script doctor, film director and artistic director of the Sundance Institute. In collaboration with KVIFF, the MIDPOINT international script development program has for the first time prepared an intensive workshop, led by lecturers and script mentors from Sundance. On the premises of the Becher Villa participants from Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Albania, Estonia, Bulgaria and the US met for three days over their

feature projects. The lecturers were Guyula Gazdag, one of Frank Daniel's successors in the post of the Sundance Institute's artistic director, and Paul Federbush, international director of Feature Film Program at the institute. The workshop was aimed at writer-producer teams. Among the participants were also actor and director Jiří Mádl, who worked on the development of his new feature in collaboration with producer Monika Kristl. Another participant selected for the workshop was the Slovak director Mira Fornay, the screenwriter and director of the successful drama *My Dog Killer*.

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE

KVIFF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR KAREL OCH ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING

Zbyněk Vlasák

How has film selection evolved over the past few years? And what will 2025 look like in that respect? We put those questions to Karel Och, who started working at the festival fifteen years ago as a jury secretary.

Do you have time in your busy schedule to reflect on how the selection of festival films has been changing over time?

Reflection of one's own work is extremely important for every one of us who participate in the programming. Each year is different because the films are different. By confronting them we cultivate our own opinions, taste and overall view of cinema. One also evolves in one's personal life: We are getting old, starting families, becoming vulnerable to certain types of films and subject matters. The criteria for selection keep changing; it is a dynamic process. And it is necessary to keep reflecting that.

Has the festival's choice of films undergone any development over the five years since you became responsible for it as Artistic Director?

It definitely has; it is closely linked to the festival's evolving taste, which focuses more on smaller films, younger filmmakers. We screen more and more debuts and second films. We also tend to concentrate on the territory of Central and Eastern Europe where we are able to make significant discoveries. To find a filmmaker who will be able to rise to the level of the largest festivals such as Cannes and Berlinale. The way we did in the case of Tomasz Wasilewski, who was awarded for his screenplay in Berlin this year.



KVIFF's chief film curator predicts we will always need the big screen – and audiences

Speaking of the festival's taste – to what extent is it Karel Och's taste?

To a large extent, of course, but it is also my colleagues' taste. This year is crucial for me because after five years of gradual evolution our team has finally reached the state that I had been aiming for from the start. That result is that our taste is more coherent and therefore I no longer need to push some films through to the Official Selection by force, so to speak. That does not mean, however, that our discussions are no longer inspiring.

Most members of the Program Department are younger, sometimes significantly. What are the advantages and disadvantages of that?

A great advantage of my colleagues who are ten years younger or more is that they are not weighted down by anxiety and they have a healthy self-confidence.

My generation, born in the mid-1970s, lacks those qualities. We grew up under constant pressure, we were raised to be obedient and now as we're getting

older, we try to get rid of that. They do not have that handicap. A disadvantage can be a lack of experience, of course; their view of cinema is still being formed. But that is all just a matter of time.

Are you trying to figure out the future course of the festival?

It is not easy because every year very much depends on films that we are able to obtain. In competition with large festivals it can be a tough battle. Not only the Romanians but also the

Greeks are becoming more ambitious with the growing success of their respective cinemas. Lately we have also had to tackle the fact that large global distributors have been applying more commercially minded strategies to festival films. Therefore they may not always be willing to screen their movies here.

How can you succeed in those conflicts?

Over the long term it has paid off to concentrate on the filmmakers. We pamper them, we try

to facilitate the strongest possible contact with a live audience for them, which is definitely not a common thing in the time of Amazon, Netflix and similar platforms. We wish to continue in that, also because the feedback from filmmakers themselves has been very positive. They see KVIFF as a festival which is there for them.

Let's look at 2025 for instance, the 60th year of the Karlovy Vary event. Do you think festivals may be a thing of the past then? As well as screenings in cinemas?

Cinemas as institutions are probably facing some tough times. A number of experts foresee a total end of classic distribution. But I think that people will seek out festivals all the more. Also the possibility to meet with filmmakers will become more valued. We have the advantage that most visitors need to get to Karlovy Vary somehow. Attending the festival means for them that they need to pack their suitcase and make a journey which is something out of the ordinary, it has the flavor of adventure, it has a certain charm and attractiveness.

So I'm not worried about the future. When I try and picture 2025, I see films being streamed onto the big screen straight from the internet but the audiences still sitting in their seats at the Grand Hall. And the fourth feature by Václav Kadrnka scoring in the Official Selection.

Why exactly a film by this Czech author of *Eighty Letters*?

Because he's one of the filmmakers I've been watching closely and I feel sorry that he's not more prolific. ■

DANIELS PUSH THE ENVELOPE

Šimon Šafránek

Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, known collectively as Daniels, are the creative duo behind the wildly unconventional new release *Swiss Army Man*, which stars Paul Dano and Daniel Radcliffe. The award-winning music video directors are screening their first feature at KVIFF and open up about where their "insane" idea for a film came from, how they work with actors and how they got two Hollywood A-listers on board.

Does the style of the film come from the kind of short films you do or is it just your aesthetics to go completely crazy?

Daniel Scheinert: You're right to suggest the short stuff informed this feature. We've been making stuff together for six or seven years now and that process of making crazy images for music videos was really rewarding and we always wanted to take what worked in music videos and try to make a narrative feature that pushed the same envelope and that was weird in a similar way.

Daniel Kwan: We always come up with a weird idea, which is too dumb to make, like, 'We can't make this idea, no one's going to want to watch it!' But then the idea sticks with us for so long we're forced to look at it again and dig for meaning, dig for truth in the middle of all that ... A farting corpse is an insane idea that



Daniel Scheinert (left) and Daniel Kwan won over Sundance audiences by going for an unfilmable idea

we thought no one would ever want to watch.

Was it hard to get Paul and Daniel to do the film?

DS: Not really (*laughs*). We were very lucky. They're both very picky actors and I think they just read the script. Once they like something, they're on board. So

we luckily had made music videos like "Turn Down For What" and we did the Sundance Labs and I think that was probably very helpful for their agents and managers to be like 'These guys aren't crazy.'

DK: Paul was a fan of our work even before reading the script so he was already excited to read it.

He said that once he read the first scene where Hank rides the dead body off the island, that it was beautiful, and he just kind of knew he wanted to be a part of it.

DS: He said that he knew that if a different actor was driving a dead body's farts across the ocean he'd be so jealous (*laughs*). He said that 'If in a few years

I see that on the big screen I'm going to be so mad I said no.'

How do you work with actors? Is the script fully developed or is there room for improvisation?

DS: How we work with actors honestly depends on the actor. Daniel Radcliffe and Paul Dano

have very different processes. Daniel Radcliffe loves rehearsal. He'll do it over and over and over until he has perfected it and fine-tuned it. Paul doesn't rehearse at all. Literally, the first time he goes for it is when the cameras are rolling. And so doing rehearsals with those two is really interesting because we'd do rehearsals and Paul would only be reading it and Daniel would be, like, tearing up and crying on the floor. Then, when we shot it, it was really fun to see it come alive.

How about music. It's obviously an important part of the film. Do you think of it as another character in the film?

DS: It's definitely sort of a musical, like there's certain musical numbers we wrote before we shot and said 'Oh, that will be like a little music video.' And we love scores and we're so excited to finally make a feature film where instead of us making a movie for a band we got to make music for a movie. We pull inspiration from John Williams and movie scores but we also got to throw in a couple music videos in there too.

DK: Our process has always been: Let's turn the song on as loud as possible and we'll just scream ideas at each other until something makes us laugh or something clicks, so we just kind of wanted to take that process we had in music videos and bring it to feature films. ■

BREAKING GROUND IN MEXICO



Katina Medina Mora is shooting her next film in Mexico and New York City



It took six years to raise funds for her feature *You'll Know What To Do With Me*

Michael Stein

Katina Medina Mora shot her first feature, *LuTo*, in 15 days with a nine-person crew for \$1,000 and what she describes as a lot of favors. Now she is appearing at KVIFF in the Female Take on Mexico section with a solid production – 70-person crew, \$1 million budget – that tells a bracing story of romance, illness and loss: *You'll Know What To Do With Me*. Medina Mora talks about funding films in Mexico, her career trajectory and

her latest Mexican-American co-production.

You have a background working in advertising – how did it influence your filmmaking?

I was first assistant director for many years, for many films in advertising and I really didn't know how much that would help now that I'm directing, having that background – knowing the sets and knowing the shooting plans and having the structure in your head of having a good pre-pro-

duction and giving information to your crew. It's been really helpful.

How challenging was it to raise the money you needed for *You'll Know What To Do With Me*?

It was tough. Also because producers were like, 'If you get the money I'll produce' but I was like, 'Man, you're the producer, you should help me do that.' It took six years to get the money for the film because there wasn't a fund in Mexico at the time.

Now, there are these new funds in Mexico where companies can give you 10 percent of their taxes (Eficine, Article 226). It's a great fund because you don't have to give the money back. It's not an investment, it's hard money from companies and that's why now Mexico is producing like 170 movies a year. Eight years ago we were producing 10. So it's been because of that fund. They support around 75 movies a year. It is really difficult to get. There's a lot of competition – they ask you for a lot of paperwork. You

have to have your casting done, your locations, everything.

It's a great fund and now it's possible to make movies in Mexico.

You're already working on your next film; Can you say something about it?

It's tough because it's half-American. Half the movie is in New York and half the movie is in Mexico, so we're co-producing with a producer in the US. So it's a much more expensive movie because of that. We have

to shoot for weeks in New York. We had the script a year ago and we've been trying to fund it for a year. It's not this fund but another fund from the government in Mexico and trying to find money in the US.

The theme is on a transgender character and Mexico is too conservative for a theme like that. Many doors closed from companies because they're too conservative and they don't want to support it. In the US it's a huge theme – everybody wants these kinds of stories. ■



CRITIC'S CHOICE

LAURENCE BOYCE, FILM JOURNALIST & PROGRAMMER

Steve Oram – who Karlovy Vary audiences may remember as the lead actor in Ben Wheatley's *Sight Seers* – makes his directorial debut in this completely insane slice of UK cinema. Imagine a world steeped in the realism of Mike Leigh, all grey council estates and drab skies. Now imagine this world populated with humans who have devolved into apes,



AAAAHHH!

Directed by: Steve Oram
UK, 2015, 80min.
July 9, 10pm Congress Hall

communicating in nothing more than whoops and grunts. With a retro 70s feel, the film has mo-

ments of the utterly strange alongside some heartfelt social commentary.

Ben Rivers makes a triumphant return to Karlovy Vary with a film that is both genre defying and inherently playful. Ostensibly the film is about director Oliver Laxe making a film in Morocco but we soon find ourselves pulled into a world in which Rivers himself is ever-present. Asking questions about the nature of reality and the



THE SKY TREMBLES, AND THE EARTH IS AFRAID AND THE TWO EYES ARE NOT BROTHERS

Director: Ben Rivers
UK, 2015, 98min
July 9, 7pm Congress Hall

illusory world of the cinema, the film revels in making the audi-

ence question just what exactly it is they are seeing.

It's been 30 years since it was first made, but *Blue Velvet* still has the ability to crawl under the skin and inflame the brain like no other film. From the iconic opening shot in which a human ear nestles in the perfect lawn, David Lynch peels back the white picket fenced dream of America to find it rotten and crawling with per-



BLUE VELVET

Director: David Lynch
USA, 1986, 120min.
July 9, 9:30pm KV Municipal Theatre

version. Dennis Hopper still ter-

ries and Bobby Vinton's sweet song will forever carry the air of a world spinning off its axis. ■

PRÁVO AUDIENCE AWARD

Don't forget that you can still vote for this year's Audience Award competition run by the Czech national newspaper *Právo*, which publishes the *Festival Daily*. The award will be announced after KVIFF ends today. Here's a quick look at the current frontrunners. 70,023 tickets have been counted so far.

PRESENT STANDINGS

1. HASTA LA VISTA!
2. LÉON: THE PROFESSIONAL
3. CAPTAIN FANTASTIC
4. NORMAL AUTISTIC FILM
5. KILLS ON WHEELS
6. INTIMATE LIGHTING
7. DIVINES
7. TONI ERDMANN
9. THE TEACHER
10. THE MOON IS BLUE

FESTIVAL FIGURES*

13,088 accredited participants, including:

11,016 Festival Pass holders

404 filmmakers

1,062 film professionals

606 journalists

428 screenings

200 films, including

20 short films

34 documentaries

21 world premieres

25 international premieres

9 European premieres

72 in search of an international sales agent

49,130 Facebook fans

5,988 Twitter followers

(3,409 in Czech, 2,579 in English)

*Unofficial numbers valid as of 4:30pm yesterday. Final figures will be released later today.

DAILIES

1/ The swimmers and zoetropes of the opening Gala return tonight as KVIFF wraps its 51st edition

2/ The back of Daniels at their packed Great Hall screening of *Swiss Army Man*



Photo: Petr Hloušek



Photo: KVIFF