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Culture



Boris Cavazza, the leading role in the forthcoming cinema attraction.

Film

Dance – Lest you Forget!

04.06.2010

By Martin Pogačar

An international coproduction starts filming this spring in Ljubljana, with Slovenian theatre legends Minu Kjuder and Boris Cavazza in leading roles. The Maiden Danced to Death, a Hungarian-Slovenian-Canadian coproduction, is due to premiere at the prestigious Berlin International Film Festival in 2011.

The Maiden Danced to Death is written and directed by famous Hungarian director Endre Hules who has recently completed the multi-award winning feature film Torn From the Flag. Hules' heritage is impressive. A directing

alumnus of the Hungarian National Academy of Theatre and Film in Budapest and a Producing Fellow at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles, he has directed numerous productions at the National Theatres of Hungary, the Biennale de Paris, the Shakespeare World Congress, as well as film, television and radio projects. He also spent time in front of the camera, acting in Hollywood productions including Apollo 13, Angels & Demons, Se7en, and 24.

The Maiden Danced to Death is the story of emigrant Steve who returns to Hungary after 20 years in Canada. He decides to put up a dancing production with his brother, Gyula, who has a barely-surviving dancing group. 21st century Hungary is, however, is very different to the one Steve left in the late eighties and the two brothers clash over issues of art and finance as they prepare to stage the dance drama based on the ballad Devils' Dance of Death.

Let's dance

Hules says dance and music is key in the film. "[It represents] the common roots of the brothers, both geographically and artistically and is a means of their self-expression and their vehicle to renew a long-lost relationship," he says. "The music is the past and the future. It is our central metaphor: 'Life is a dance, but you don't get to choose the music.' You can't choose the circumstances you're born into, but within those circumstances it is your responsibility to choose how you 'dance'."

For Steve, of course, that dance involved leaving his motherland. The issue of emigration is an important one in the film. "I was always intrigued by how the emigrant community can deepen its connection to its roots and the mother country take advantage of this valuable resource," explains Hules.

Slovenian links

The story may be set in post-socialist Hungary but it has strong links both to the socialist period and to Slovenia. We learn that the main protagonists' parents were forced to flee Slovenia during the time of Cominform in the early post-World War Two years. Hules says that "reconciliation with the socialist past and the problems of transition are at the centre of the film."

The Maiden Danced to Death is produced by Cinema-Film Ltd, one of the first Hungarian independent production companies. It is also one of the most prolific, today producing up to four feature films a year as well as various programmes for national and international television. Also involved in the production is Canadian company Quiet Revolution Pictures, a motion picture development and production company aiming to deliver high-quality entertainment for worldwide sales. The final partner is a Slovenian one. Casablanca Productions was founded by Igor Pediček and Boris Jurjašević and has produced several feature films including Blues for Sara, Alpenpolka, Three Contributions to Slovene Madness (Omnibus), Loves of Blanka Kolak, A Waltz For 4 and Queen of Hearts. The company also makes short films and animated series. The film is supported by MediaPlus, the Motion Picture Foundation of Hungary, the Slovenian Film Fund and Eurimage.

The Film Fund and Casablanca Productions are not the only links the film has to Slovenia. Executive producer Nina Marucej and scenographer Duško Milavec are both Slovenes and all interiors are being shot at Viba Studio. Perhaps most importantly, the roles of the mother and the father are played by Minu Kjuder and Boris Cavazza, renowned Slovenian actors who distinctly marked the nation's cinema and theatre.

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