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Actor Jaeden Martell with the director at Tuesday's world premiere of *The True Adventures of Wolfboy* in the Grand Hall.

# A boy, a Czech and no werewolves

Martin Krejčí's first American feature film challenged the successful commercial director to scale new heights

The story of 13-year-old Paul, who suffers from a rare disease that causes thick hair to grow all over his face and body, is not the stuff of Marvel comics, director Martin Krejčí says of *The True Adventures of Wolfboy*. In the director's US-shot debut rising star actor Jaeden Martell takes on the role of loner teen cursed with congenital hypertrichosis, determined to seek out his missing mother despite long odds.

By Veronika Bednářová and Will Tizard

Paul has lost hope at fitting in at school but he's determined to get answers, at least. The Czech-born Krejčí says he was drawn to the story because it communicates something universal: loneliness.

"I get either such terrible scripts that nobody wants to do them or such weird scripts that nobody knows how to do them," says Krejčí. "And that was the case of *Wolfboy*."

Being a commercial director

is like a stigma, he says. "You get either big studio movies where you're a hired gun - and I kept telling them that's not really me - or you get just scripts by someone who thinks he's a genius." In the *Wolfboy* script, by contrast, each character has their own voice, Krejčí says. "It suddenly sucks you in a little bit."

### Poor Jaeden

Forging new ground was important, he adds. "It's kind of a cliché - the whole coming of age thing." But unlike in films such as *Elephant Man*, *Wolfboy* "sets the paradigm and then suddenly turns it upside down."

Martell says the role was no picnic. "Every day is three and a half hours of makeup, or six hours."

Krejčí had two goals, he says: establishing the style of the film ("Not a figure from a horror movie") and making the *wolfboy* look "believable and authentic, realistic." The requirement was "perfect - not too werewolfy," he says. "The sweet spot was to make him look instinctively cute - but not cute like a teddy bear. Still be-

lievable. It was a nightmare. Poor Jaeden."

As for his vision, the director says, he didn't want to make an "American movie" just for the sake of it. What mattered more was the story - "the feeling of loneliness - we can all connect with it."

After *Wolfboy's* budget grew well beyond the \$1-2 million originally envisaged Krejčí admits the pressure was so tremendous that at times on set he "wasn't very diplomatic."

### Disturbing makeup

In the four months between casting and shooting, the studio, employing all their best Marvel-worthy techniques, made a complete mockup of Martell to work from.

"It did hurt a little bit," Martell says. He even refused to eat on set for fear of disturbing the makeup. "He wouldn't let anyone know

about it," recalls Krejčí, describing Martell as a "Buddhist monk-slash-ninja-slash-I-don't-know-what."

Martell was also challenged to play a creature with such different physical limitations to expression - such as the powerful scenes in which he communicates more with his eyes than through dialogue. "That was born out of not being able to use my face and my mouth and my neck the way I wanted to," says the actor.

Krejčí confesses he knew from the start the character would need to communicate non-verbally so he actually made actors wear a ski mask during their audition. Which is why he selected Martell. "His eyes looked like there was something much deeper in them." ●

*The True Adventures of Wolfboy* screens again tomorrow at 12:30 pm [Small Hall] and July 6 at 10 am [Národní dům Cinema].

## See you there

Dennis Ivanov  
CEO of Arthouse Traffic LLC



I have a long-lasting relationship with Karlovy Vary. My surname is Ivanov, which means that in Russia, Ukraine or Belarus I don't really have a surname - one third of these countries is called Ivanov. But once when I came to Karlovy Vary to my hotel I was immediately taken to a wonderful, massive suite. I was thinking: "Wow. It's not just this festival that has become important to me but I have become important to the festival!" Then of course it turned out it was a mistake because they took me for some Russian oligarch with the same surname of course. And asked me to leave. You really have time to meet people here. Two years ago I found a project I am now

co-producing, Péter Kerekes' *Censor*, or met with Darya Zhuk whose *Crystal Swan* was showing here - now we are working on a project about Femen. It's always the same - I am coming without any plans but I always find a good project or someone I want to work with and be friends with. I am on the East of the West jury this year but I would really like to see some films from the Liberated section. It just belongs to this culture. ● MB

From the Liberated section, *It's Better to Be Wealthy and Healthy Than Poor and Ill* screens today at 1 pm [Karlovy Vary Municipal Theatre], while *Let's All Sing Around* screens at 9:30 am [Small Hall].

## Replay



Agnieszka Holland goes charlatan.

## More than reality

Yesterday's debate at the Czech TV house hosted renowned director Agnieszka Holland who spoke about the

production of *Charlatan*, her upcoming film about Jan Mikulášek, a widely popular 20<sup>th</sup> century Czech doctor.

"He was a shaman who up to this day is still a legendary guru for modern-day herbalists," said Holland. This is her second film about a doctor, which prompted some questions about her interest in directing medicine-inspired films. Ivan Trojan, who plays the main character and was one of the panellists, sees it as a universally relatable motif. "It has the potential to be a mega film," he said.

When answering the question of why *Charlatan* isn't documentary, as was at one point intended, Holland said: "Nowadays reality is so trendy. To me the human imagination is much more attractive than reality." ● EH



Official selection



Photo: KVIFF  
 “I knew the hardscrabble farming community of Wa-Keeney, Kansas: It’s the type of small American town in which a shy teenager can live out her life and end up feeling anonymous,” she says.

Maggie and Iris face small town pressures in *To the Stars*.

# Love, adversely

## Martha Stephens brings a story of longing and learning to fight back

by Michael Stein

In a tiny farming town in 1960s Oklahoma Iris is a shy girl whose sense of being different than the other kids is made all the worse by a bowel condition and a mother who takes out her frustrations on her. She is bullied, mocked and ignored and occasionally her mother tries to push her into being

like all the other girls but all Iris wants is to be herself and get away. Martha Stephens’ *To the Stars* shows Iris’ attempt at dreaming her way beyond the dusty confines of her life. Stephens was looking back and drawing from her own knowledge in working out how to show the world depicted in Shannon Bradley-Colleary’s screenplay.

### Nostalgia

Escape doesn’t come though. Instead, the beautiful, no-nonsense Maggie arrives from the big city and befriends Iris, taking her under her wing and changing her life. Maggie has her own weight to carry, of course. She’s gorgeous and can have anyone she wants but she wants a woman, and in this time and place and with an extremely strict father this has already led to beatings, recriminations and their move from Kansas City to this much smaller town.

The film is no trip down memory lane. The echoes of nostalgia are provided only to be quickly broken by bullying, intolerance and self-suppression. Beneath all these forces pushing back against Iris and Maggie a powerful friendship forms as well as a deep sense of longing. •

*To the Stars* premieres tonight at 8 pm [Grand Hall] and screens again on July 5 at 1 pm [Pupp Cinema] and July 6 at 5 pm [Drahomira Cinema].

Official selection



Photo: KVIFF  
 relatives lands on her doorstep she begins developing an outlandish relationship with it. Believing the body brings her good fortune, she loses her mind completely.

It’s just another day at the office for Sonya.

# Dead serious

## Set in a funeral home in the Philippines, *Ode to Nothing*, is a story of solitude

by Eliška Havlíčková

She might seem like an ordinary woman living a mundane life. Her constant loneliness, however, soon unveils something darker about Sonya. *Ode to Nothing* is a sad yet gentle film by the Philippine director Gwein Baltazar.

Living with her father, 44-year-old Sonya juggles

a lot of roles. She takes care of the family, her funeral business – not to mention her debts – while grudgingly accepting her ‘aging-female’ label. In order not to go crazy she seeks companionship anywhere she can.

One day a sudden knock on the door turns Sonya’s life around. When the corpse of a woman with no

### Shooting bodies

Cinematographer Neil Daza said the audience should be visually engrossed and should “smell” the corpses.

“We wanted to shoot *Ode* in black and white but we struggled to come up with a good reason. After abandoning the idea we decided to make it colored monochromatic but in a more tedious process,” he says. “The color of *Ode* bordered between old wood and a decomposing corpse while lighting and composition was bare, soft and simple, complementing the rhythm of *Ode*’s narrative.”

Aspect ratio was another issue, inspired by the setting. “We shot *Ode* with a square frame to simulate a coffin’s glass window,” Daza says. From his perspective, he adds, the production felt like “shooting an experimental film.” Hard to argue with that. •

*Ode to Nothing* premieres today at 5 pm [Grand Hall] and screens again July 5 at 10 am [Pupp Cinema] and July 6 at 2 pm [Drahomira Cinema].

## Three picks for today

Stephen Dalton  
 Journalist, *The Hollywood Reporter*



A deliciously weird experiment in darkly funny retro-horror pastiche, *In Fabric* is the latest erotically charged, genre-bending oddity from Peter Strickland, the cult director behind *Berberian Sound Studio* and *The Duke of Burgundy*. Paying homage to *Suspiria* and vintage 1970s British horror, the lurid plot concerns a demonically possessed dress sold at a gloriously sinister department store.

**In Fabric**  
 Directed by: Peter Strickland  
 United Kingdom 2018, 118 min  
 Today at 10:30 pm, Cinema B



Following his acclaimed bio-documentaries *Senna* and *Amy*, the Oscar-winning director turns his attention to Argentina’s mostly notorious sporting anti-hero. Drawing on a vast archive of private footage shot during the football superstar’s explosive career peak at Naples, Kapadia paints a rich and colorful portrait, even if the real Maradona still remains an elusive enigma at the end.

**Diego Maradona**  
 Directed by: Asif Kapadia  
 United Kingdom 2019, 130 min  
 Today at 10 pm, Pupp Cinema



Revenge is a dish best served cold – 60 years later, in fact – in this Czech road movie about two former political prisoners trying to track down and kill the former Communist Party official who ruined their lives. All three men are now old and frail, adding extra autumnal melancholy to this bittersweet comedy thriller.

**Old-Timers**  
 Directed by: Martin Dušek, Ondřej Provozník  
 Czech Republic/Slovak Republic 2019, 85 min  
 Today at 7 pm, Národní dům Cinema

## On the town

Ben Nicholson  
 Freelance Film Journalist



Free as a juvenile red-backed shrike.

# Early bird special

If big screen dramas are becoming too much for you, you could do worse than taking a break in nature. I’m a keen bird-watcher and I’ve found an amble up the hill to the edge of the Slavkov forest is a perfect way to start the day and blow the cobwebs or hangover away.

I’ve been coming to Karlovy Vary for a few years now and I’m always excited to see two resident species of birds - this year has not disappointed. Red-backed shrikes breed above the town and I’ve enjoyed watching a father showing his son the ropes (fortunately I’ve not

witnessed him passing on his grisly eating habits - you’ll have to google for the details!)

The other locals I always look out for are the beautiful lesser kestrels that often nest in buildings in the old town. This year I’ve seen them up in the forest, squabbling over a perch before settling into an uneasy truce a few trees apart.

If the woods are too far to walk you can keep an eye out for swifts, swallows and pied wagtails swooping over the river or listen out for chiffchaffs and firecrests singing from the trees around Thermal. •

## Kviffefe Tweet of the day

Martin Suchan  
 @martinsuchan



Just saw exclusive preview screening of [#SpidermanFarFromHome](#) at [#KVIFF](#), nice Marvel movie with a little bit of Eurotrip and a super villain in Prague.



Feature film



In Fabric is a film that divides people.

# Dress to kill

Watch that dress code - it's all about a cursed frock in the British director's *In Fabric*

Peter Strickland brings to Another View his bonkers *In Fabric*, the story of a red dress sold in a department store run by witches, which always seems to threaten the stability of its owners' lives. And not just because of complicated washing instructions.

by Marta Bałaga

Why a dress?

It couldn't be a sock, real-

ly, as a sock can't really fly through the air with such grace and that was one of the first images in my head.

There is a haunting aspect to clothing in general. Especially dead people's clothing, second-hand clothing and

all the stories that go with it. They can transform how we feel; we can escape our problems or maybe be reminded of them and our bodies. How we hate them sometimes.

Clothing is plumage, isn't it? It's enough to take one look at the animal kingdom. There are all these elements of attraction but also this idea that when you are selling something it's a performance. Of course, I am pushing it in my film but it's almost ritualistic in a sense.

And playful, too, as there is something very entertaining about seduction.

I have always been fascinated by human desire although we live in a time that's quite puritanical. There is a valid reason for that but at the same time film should still be a safe space to explore it. Whether we are single or attached we all desire. Violence is not that interesting as it's not particularly human behavior.

You are not afraid of silliness in the film. Would you say that humor is always important in your stories?

I didn't set out to make, say, horror comedy. I knew the characters I wanted to take on this journey or some ideas I wanted to explore and it just ended up being quite humorous.

Had I written these scenes as very serious it could be too self-pitying. There is something cathartic about humor. *In Fabric* is a film that divides people and some really don't like it - which is fair enough, I suppose. But it's very dangerous trying to second-guess what the audience wants. The only true thing I can do is to go inside my head. You are never going to make a perfect film and the ones I love the most have parts I really dislike as well.

You seem to reference them with the soundtrack a bit, just like you did on *Berberian Sound Studio* - about a Foley artist slowly losing his mind in Italy.

Music, working with bands is a big part of what I do. With this film music actually came very early. But you don't get good results if you say to a musician: "Please, make it sound like this or that." You want it to sound original. In *Berberian*... there was a bit of Italian exploitation cinema, a bit of *giallo* and supernatural horror. I like these films but maybe not for the reasons people think I do. I don't like the violence so much - that's not particularly pleasant. It's just this irresistible atmosphere, which is so ethereal and strange, and poetic. That film was actually more about the corruption of sound. The sound

of a cabbage being stabbed [used to illustrate a violent scene] - that's an innocent sound on its own. We don't associate it with murder, we associate it with the kitchen.

It's funny how in films, red is usually considered almost empowering. Not so much here.

Yeah, it's not *Woman in Red* with Kelly LeBrock, that's for sure. It's a color of tragedy, really, of bodily fluids. When you wear clothing, you get sweat on that or menstrual blood. It's very visceral and very private, sometimes we don't even want to think about it. It's very weird because blood coming out of a stab wound is fine but sweat is a no-no. Some taboos are taboos for a good reason but others need to be explored. •

*In Fabric* screens today at 10:30 pm [Cinema B].



Strickland goes full *Profondo Rosso*.

Q & A



Lucía Garibaldi and producer Pancho Magnou Arnabal.

# Cowgirls don't cry

In *The Sharks*, a teenage girl discovers desire. We're gonna need a bigger boat

by Marta Bałaga

Rosina, attracted to a boy, uses the reports of a shark infestation to her advantage. How did you come up with that concept?

I wanted to make a film about a way of being, about this character. That was the seed. Teenage girls are like ticking bombs that are about to explode. She does things that are not exactly commendable, but you still empathize with her, I hope. She is a loner, doesn't fit in. That happened to me too when I was at that age. We found Romina Bentancur two years before we shot the film and she was very similar to what I imagined: so strange

and beautiful, and didn't care about how I'd make her look.

You come very close with your camera and sometime all teenagers want to do is to hide.

Being a teenager, for me, is all about feeling uncomfortable. I wanted to show the awkwardness. I came up with this story, trying to put myself into her brain. Every time I was thinking about making a decision, I was thinking about her. She kidnaps the dog of the boy she likes but still remembers to feed her every day. She is always making the wrong choice; she is attracted by evil a little. There is something beautiful in it.

It's funny, because they played this festival trailer before our film [starring Jiří Menzel], a rather old-fashioned take on sexuality, I have to say. And in our story, it's the woman who desires.

Is that why everybody in your film is a bit awkward? Even the boy she likes, with rather odd methods of seduction.

In her family everyone is so self-involved. I wanted to reflect the economic situation, with everyone struggling every which way they can. And as for that "seduction"... that happens. After I showed the film to some people, some girls actually confirmed that!

There are no sharks in Uruguay, it could never happen. But it was fun to show how the entire community slowly becomes paranoid. It happens a lot, actually, with people gossiping and rumors spreading. Rosina is like a shark too. She acts like an animal, led by her instinct.

You mentioned her making all the decisions and it's still rather unusual to see that in film. Especially a young girl.

Very often people would ask me: "Why doesn't she cry?" But we all hide our feelings, so why can't she do it as well?! I didn't want her to break down, I wanted her strong. Nobody expects cowboys to cry. •

Top 5



Don't give your audience any bull! Animal in the title, animal in the film.

# Real animals in film

by Marta Bałaga and Michael Stein

Truly appalled by the recent tendency of luring people into cinemas by promising them animals that do not, we repeat, do not actually appear in the finished product or at best get a fleeting cameo (we are looking at you, *The Sharks*. And *The Bull*, *A Dog Called Money* etc., etc.). We decided to dedicate today's Top 5 to the real furry deal.

1. The Last Autumn

Yrsa Roca Fannberg's doc might revolve around the last herding, not to mention include the best tail-wagging we have seen in a week, but it has nothing to do with Gene Wilder's infatuation in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex\* But Were Afraid to Ask*. Most distasteful, in view of the fact that the sheep was under 18 years old.

2. My Thoughts are Silent

Antonio Lukich's film is a veritable zoo as his main character travels through Ukraine recording animals, in some cases covering himself in absurd-looking camouflage. The best animal scenes of all though are still-portraits of owners and their unusual pets shown in front of their homes. Do people have pet foxes in Ukraine? Is that a thing?

3. Our Time

Carlos Reygadas surely knows how to deliver four-legged glory by setting his newest on a Mexican ranch positively swarming with bulls and other critters that provide a perfect background to a *ménage à trois* gone wrong. A rather odd beast, it also includes a line we can't possibly disprove: "Horses aren't stoners". Everyone knows they are more into crack.

4. Dogs Don't Wear Pants

Focusing on a surgeon descending right into the world of BDSM where he is nothing more than a dog, and dogs don't wear pants, Finnish director J-P Valkeapää luckily found a few minutes to spare among all the merry strangulation to show an actual poodle...witnessing things no poodle should ever witness. And for that we are truly sorry.

5. Satantango

If we're writing about our cute and cuddly friends then we couldn't possibly leave out Béla Tarr's seven-and-a-half-hour opus, a work synonymous with those two words. Because there's a scene of a little girl walking with her cat. It's just that the cat is... uh...oh, well, you should see it for yourself. •



Fright night movies



The Lodge is a work of horror that blends the best of genre and art house film.

# Fresh Blood

An annual favorite, this year's Midnight Screenings category brings together new terror and genre classics

Divorce and remarriage, especially with children involved, is always difficult, sometimes horrific. In *The Lodge* by Severin Fiala and Veronika Franz the usual emotional turbulence and legal battles are taken to sinister and unexpected extremes as an isolated winter cabin, a suicide cult and a twist or two get thrown into the mix.

by Micheal Stein

What makes the film so unique and hard to categorize - is it horror, family drama, a supernatural story, psychological suspense? - is the way it bounces back and forth between the tropes of genre

and art house film with little regard for convention, something co-director Veronika Franz says comes naturally to the filmmaking pair.

"We like art house films and we like how these films' stories are told," she says. "We like the suspense of genre films and

the taboos genre films address. Maybe that's why we mix it. It's not on purpose but maybe it's that we make the films we'd like to see."

**No hope for people**

In the latest film directed by the trio of Esteve Soler,

David Torras and Gerard Quinto, *7 Reasons to Run Away (From Society)*, seven wildly varying stories all aim to show the horrific, often brutally funny degradation of human existence. Sergi López and Emma Suárez are two of the many greats

of Spanish cinema acting in the film.

Horror comedy has been done to death, so to speak, and originality is hard to come by. That's why *You Might Be the Killer* directed by Brett Simons with its meta approach has brought some fresh blood to the genre. A camp counselor played by Fran Kranz locks

himself in a cabin after a bloody massacre. He's covered in blood and gets a friend on the phone to go through all the horror-genre particulars to help him out of his dilemma. What they find is not what either of them expected.

**Pop culture classics**

The section is rounded out by some truly groundbreaking, fan-favorite classics. Ridley Scott's *Alien* is 40 years old and just as terrifying as ever, its influence on the sci-fi genre no less profound than when it first came out. John Carpenter's *The Fog*, a story of age-old vengeance in a small coastal California town, is considered by many of his aficionados to be his most visually impressive work.

It's the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the appearance of Lilly and Lana Wachowski's *Matrix* on the scene, a work whose cyberpunk aesthetic spread beyond the bounds of film and throughout pop culture. *Rambo: First Blood* gave birth to a muscle-bound icon of Americana in its sequels but the original film was a gripping thriller about a Vietnam vet bringing the war back home. On top of that this American classic was directed by Ted Kotcheff, a Canadian son of Bulgarian immigrants who had considerable success working in Britain. ●



A ghostly invasion terrorizes a seaside town in John Carpenter's *The Fog*.

Faces



Patricia Clarkson

The Special Events section greets American actress Patricia Clarkson, who arrives to represent the screening of *Learning to Drive*. During the closing ceremony, the actress will walk the red carpet to re-



Olga Sommerová

ceive the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to World Cinema. Directors Olga Sommerová and Jiří Suchý, also a highly-respected actor on the Czech scene, will introduce the biography *Jiří Suchý- Tackling Life with Ease*.



Radim Špaček

The Czech Films section presents director Radim Špaček, screening his film *Golden Sting*. The Prague Short Film Festival Presents section welcomes Norwegian director Kerren Lumer-Klabbers, arriving to introduce her film *A Stone Slowly Falls*. ● EH

Industry events



Pigeon's Milk brings home a 100 000 EUR award.

## Winners announced: Works in Progress, Works in Development

KVIFF Eastern Promises, a sidebar dedicated to film professionals, finally knows the winners of all its four categories. After Docs in Progress (*The Silhouettes*) and the Eurimages Lab Project

(*Bottled Songs*), the winners of the other two platforms supporting emerging films by talents from Eastern Europe, Works in Progress and Works in Development – Feature Launch, have been

announced.

Nine projects from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the former USSR, the Middle East and north Africa were presented at this year's *Works in Progress*.

An international jury consisting of Khalil Benkirane from Qatar, Aija Berzina from Latvia and Virginie Devesa from France decided to honor the Russian-Moldovan *Pigeon's Milk* by Eugen Maryan. The award, with a value of 100,000 €, combines post-production services from partner companies UPP (60,000 €) and Soundsquare (30,000 €) and 10,000 € in cash provided by Barrandov Studios.

The winner of the *Works in Development – Feature Launch* award was chosen from among eight projects that were part of the Feature Launch 2019 program. The jury made up of KVIFF Industry Office head Hugo Rosák, Danijel Hocevar (Slovenia) and Katriel Schory (Israel) decided to award the prize, along with 10,000 € towards further development, to the Hungarian project by director Dániel Hevér, writer Zsanett Kertész and producer László Dreissiger. ● FŠ