

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“I do not agree with what you say,
but I will fight to the death so you
can say it.”

VOLTAIRE

INFO FIPA 5

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Singin' in the Sun

Music lovers, today is the day to go by the Auditorium Le Bellevue and catch a Performing Arts film. From David Murray's saxophone and Rosemary Walden's viola, to the timeless music of Ravel, this is sure to be a day that leaves you singing.

News from the 21st International Festival of Audiovisual Programs in Biarritz, January 22 to 27, 2008

DISTRIBUTION

Distributors, Watch Out

Biarritz, the Atlantic and the fresh air... People from all over the world come together at the 21st FIPA. But what is this festival's main goal? It allows distributors to pick their future programs.



Marie-Catherine Marchetti.

In order to better understand how this complex industry works, we met with Marie-Catherine Marchetti, the buyer in charge of the drama programming for the channel Arte-France.

"Complex industry", is the least we can say when speaking of buying television programs. Before DVDs and legal downloading, Marie-Catherine Marchetti traveled to the four corners of the world, going from city to city, from festival to festival to "do her shopping", as we say in the business...

"Didn't you go to Cuba? What did you see?". "On the Island? Nothing but films," she confessed. She spent all her time watching films. Today she has time to breathe because the internet has replaced traveling. As far as Arte's programming policy is concerned, it is defined by the channel and the director of the drama section (François Sauvagnargues). "There are no restrictions concerning the genre. We are looking for contemporary dramas, stories that portray youth and everyday people. Epic films are rare. In Arte programs, costumes are used as an embellishment and are not confined to historical reconstructions. While other channels often tend to show thrillers, this genre does not always appear in Arte's programming."

Marie-Catherine Marchetti finds dramas (whether made for television films or series) adapted for the

Franco-German channel by choosing from a limited selection in festivals similar to FIPA, like San Sebastian. However, she has already seen most of these audiovisual works. "Thanks to DVDs, VHS, downloading, email, and previews organized by channels like the BBC, I often come to a festival already knowing the films that I will buy for Arte".

Distributed in Africa, in the Middle East, in Eastern Europe and Latin America, Arte has been recognized internationally by television and cinema producers. Many film makers solicit the channel for a very simple reason, the audience. "Even if Arte does not have the best ratings, it benefits film makers. In one TV showing there are on average 1.5 million viewers whereas only 500,000 people will see it if the film plays for two months at the cinema".

"Former director of the drama section, Pierre Chevalier, established a policy which tried to break the barriers between television and cinema".

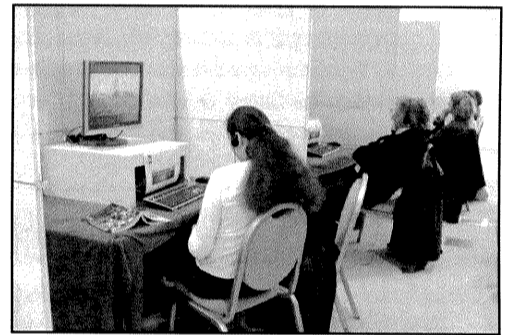
Arte sometimes bridges the gap between cinema and television for film makers such as Pascale Ferran, André Techinet, Raoul Peck, Arnaud Desplechin, waiting for a larger distribution. However

the audience is not the primary preoccupation of those in charge of Arte's policy. This just might be one of the secrets to the quality of Arte's unique programming.

Judith DOZIERES

Laure LARRIEU

Translated by: Nina DYK
and Olivia MASTRANGELO



Watching hours of footage is a requirement for buyers prior to purchasing programs.

PERFORMING ARTS

Where is my Africa?

A moving camera, a living frame. Jazzman, David Murray by Jacques Goldstein.

How do you shoot the portrait of an artist? Do you capture the creative flow, or maybe try to pinpoint what exactly urges a particular person to produce a work of art?

This film is an outspoken and sincere attempt to film art at work and absolutely not a deconstruction and demystification of the musician's approach to performing and composing. Goldstein is a humble film maker. He does not try to explain how Murray makes his music...

During a religious ceremony in Guadeloupe, Murray improvises with a group of local musicians, working his syncopated musical phrases into the dense, djembe driven rhythmic fabric of the traditional Gwo Ka music. His musical expression depends on a double assertion of both a physical and artistic presence. Goldstein shoots his film in the same way.

The camera eye transcends his vision, just as the horn takes Murray's voice to new heights. Goldstein captures the jazzman's steady gaze, searching the horizon for his Africa, his identity, his roots that seem to lie beyond some invisible vanishing point. The camera-eye selects fragments: a hand, a mouth, the key of the sax. Fragmenting and magnifying the musician and his tool.

This film portrays an absolute form of jazz. Vital jazz, jazz as a *raison d'être*. Archie Shepp, Ornette Coleman, Al Ayler, John Coltrane...

And of course, a city. Jazz and New York. A place of dreams and a place of suffering. Murray and Goldstein return to the cradle of Loft Jazz in the Soho district. Its winter, bony trees scratch the façades of the white-grey buildings.

But most of all, this film is about identity: Murray's identity, jazz's identity, Afro-American identity. The identity of the exile, of the immigrant and of the up-rooted. The jazzman's style, a precarious balancing act bridging free jazz, blues and classic New Orleans jazz seems to reflect his constant movement, his constant search for something.

But what about the film? Goldstein has definitely chosen a great subject and the result is quite a good film! His choice of shots is full of sincerity and commitment. Of course, there is no right and no wrong way to shoot a film. All that really matters is how pertinent a film-maker's vision is, even if this film is but a small insight into David Murray, the jazzman. However, Goldstein fully assumes this filmic impotence and asserts his presence without trying to hide behind some hypothetical form of objectivity.

Make sure you see this film when it airs this year although the best way to get to know a musician, is and always will be hearing him (or her) play live.

Thomas HATCHER

INTERVIEW

The Audience is Waiting

Ramona Horvath, a concert pianist and jazz player, is the official composer for the Romanian Film Archive and a returning FIPA jury member for "Series and Serials".

When did you start writing music for films?

Music has always been my first love, and film, my second. I began composing for silent films for the Romanian Film Archive in 1996. The most notable was *The War for Independence*, introduced at the European Cinema Forum in Strasbourg. There, I played the piano while the film was showing. I had to play in time with the images, and it had to be synchronized with the plot like a heartbeat for the film. I really had to be creative in order to convey the emotions of the characters. That was a very intense experience, far different from the coldness of big concert halls, where the audience arrives, sits down, listens, and dines out. I needed to create a warm atmosphere for the public, so they could understand my music better.

How do you write music for film?

There are no rules! There is no particular way to learn how to do it. You only need to follow your own inspiration, listen to lots of music, watch lots of good films, be a cinema lover and get down to work. Well, I don't really mean work. It is more a desire to rethink an idea over and over until it is beautiful and accurate.

What is the relationship between Romanians and the television?

Passionate. Romanians prefer television to the cinema, probably for financial reasons and a lack of free time. Television is part of life; people come home and start watching. It's the very reason why TV programming is a major issue in this country. The audience is there. The audience is waiting.

Marie-Gaëlle GRATEAU

Translated by: Lindsay FUCHS
and Hendrik TELTAU



Composer and musician Ramona Horvath radiates talent.

The directors take the stage

Thursday 11:00 am. Médiathèque. "I never thought for a second that there would be that many..." Pierre-Henri Deleau was surprised to be faced with the 25 directors who came to have a discussion with journalists and festival-goers.



People gathered in the Médiathèque on Thursday to meet with this year's directors, including Jean-Pierre Sinapi and Emil Weiss.

Long and tedious presentations to start with. Everyone is striving to sell their film: pitch, time and place. FIPA's program is presented in an irritatingly monotonous way. All films are "unmissable" and above all, "very interesting".

Now it's time for questions

The moment, Pierre-Henri Deleau, FIPA's general delegate, invites the public to ask questions, dead silence ensues. Eventually, someone bravely decides to grab the mike to address Emil Weiss. He sets the tone. "People always talk about the atrocities inflicted to Jews in the camps, but the fact that there were also gypsies, homosexuals and 'mentally han-

dicapped' is much less known. How many deaths does it take to be taken into account by history?"

The director of *Sonderkommandos – Auschwitz-Birkenau* agrees when asked about it. Yet, he states that his film is mostly about the industrialized process of the victims' extermination and the way the Nazis tried to get rid of the bodies, taking away all possibility for families to grieve.

Next question. Next controversy. This time, the director of the film *L'affaire Ben Barka*, Jean-Pierre Sinapi, is targeted by a journalist of *Télé 2*. "Any changes in the script to be authorized to shoot in Morocco? Why didn't you interview Ben Barka's son?" The director is exasperated by what is a "pointless controversy" in his opinion, prefers giving the mike to his scriptwriter. "Not a word of the script was changed to make the shooting in Morocco any easier." Although the atmosphere became more and more relaxed, the question of self-censorship remained omnipresent once it was raised. Self-censorship is asserted when films deal with the sexual life of handicapped people while at the same time respecting their intimacy as in *La vie sexuelle de Peter Pan* by Corto Fajal. It is side-stepped when it comes to focusing on archive footage instead of testimonials in order to protect the interviewees. He lies to the authorities about the real subject of his film to protect his film from the *Putin System*. Self-censorship is more insidious in the way that broadcasters force the filmmakers to follow a definite

pattern. If it does not conform to their policy, sanction is immediate. Jill Emery, Jean-Michel Carre's main collaborator deplores the fact their "documentary on Putin, that was aired in prime time everywhere in Europe, was only scheduled for 11:30 pm before eventually being aired at 12:15 am". Pierre Henri Deleau concluded that "French television lacks democracy. There are only two choices, either national or American".

The press conference dominated by directors.

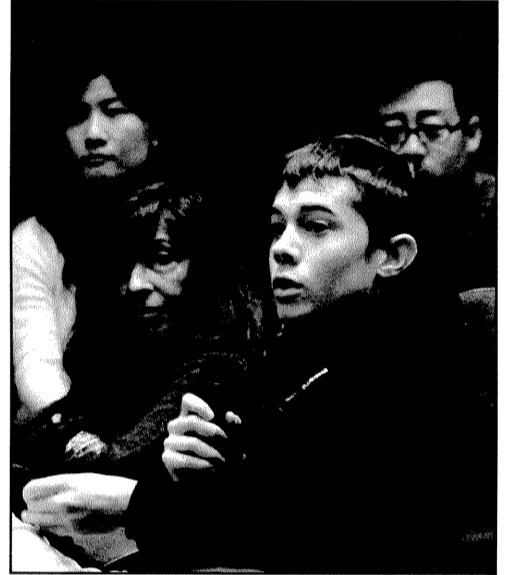
Silence falls. The director of the documentary on the Chinese youth *Les demoiselles de Nankin*, Camille Ponsin, decides to reverse the roles. He calls out to the Chinese delegation that left the projection of his film the day before after only 15 minutes. The general good mood that had so far prevailed suddenly crumbles when a young Chinese filmmaker cries out "This film is a lie!!! I left because I thought it was crap". One of the other Chinese tries to calm things down and says "I respect your work, but I think that the things you said are taken out of context. So I preferred to leave".

Pierre Henri Deleau can be satisfied. The second meeting between the press, the public and the directors was a big success, proving that FIPA is synonymous with debates. Quality and intensity of these dis-

cussions reflect the urge, among filmmakers and festival-goers to meet. See you next year!

**Guillaume DESJARDINS
Kévin FAVILLIER**

**Translated by: Thomas HATCHER,
Olivia MASTRANGELO
and Hendrik TELTAU**



All ages were represented at Thursday's conference.

EUROPEAN CREATION

Between the wind and the dust

If you're a blockbuster fan, this one's not for you! Fred Pelon's film is dense yet delicate. Working as both the director and the cameraman, he chooses frames that are neither decorative nor crowded, but rather accurately defined and anchored; the cinematography is grounded. Like the camera, we, too, are steadied, which lets us appreciate the purity of the colours and the lighting.

This film is anything but fast-paced. Pelon takes us to a Buddhist meditation centre and invites us to live in the moment. The editing is not rushed. Each frame takes its time and we sink further into our seats. We're lulled by the calm, whirling rhythm of prayer wheels, and we find it hard not to question whether these frames were filmed in slow-motion.

But when we speak only about the images and not the sounds, we ignore an important aspect of the film and a major part of cinema in general. Alfred Gabriel's soundtrack spins a delicate acoustic web. *Mantrayana* is a film without words, but not a silent film. Voices exist, but the dialogue is not translated. What they're saying is not essential. Their presence, whether through speech or song, plays the same role in the phonic universe as the sigh of the wind, the rippling of water or the chime of a bell in the Himalayas. One hears the space when surrounded by the wind and the dust. We distinctly perceive the clarity of the air in this combination of sight and sound. It comes as no surprise that Fred Pelon considers his work as a form of experimentation. The effects of this sensory exploration are definitely felt.

I don't know whether this review reflects what I saw or what I wanted to see. It's now up to you to open your eyes and ears. If one thing is for sure, your retinas and your eardrums will not suffer. They might actually ravish this film.

**Raphaëlle DE CACQUERAY
Translated by: Miriam WEINER**

Mantrayana: Saturday, 2 pm at the Cinema le Royal.

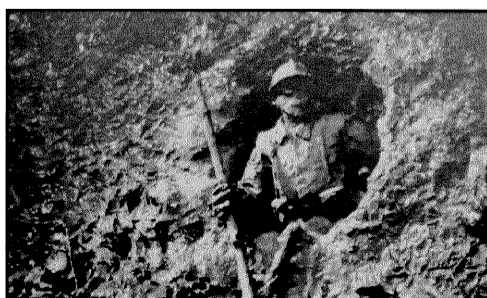
FRENCH CREATION

The mud, the blood and the guts

That's all that's left of WWI. As a response to "the soldiers' memorials that have become part of our urban landscape" and the death of the last Poilus, Bruno Collet decided to direct a short animated feature about WWI. The film opens with a plough which tears the ground apart and digs out a shell. It then fades to the heart of a trench the night before an assault as a soldier tries to find refuge underground.

The accumulation of clay and mud that Bruno Collet displays gives the audience a perspective on the war, which reminds them of Barbusse's *Feu* and the fourth volume of Genevoix's autobiography, *Ceux de 14*. Everything is mud and muck in Collet's film: the walls of the trench, no man's land, uniforms, guns, bayonettes, soldiers' corpses and soldiers on the brink of death. What strikes the audience is the substance used in the film, whether it's the matt, rough and sticky plasticine or the shiny nauseating lumpy resin. The colours almost blend into a dark brown monochrome and highlight a world broken into pieces. A world made of an infinite amount of slimy particles, a decaying world like the shelter crawling with maggots out of which a soldier squirms.

Since each Poilu remains anonymous under his gas mask, the viewer cannot identify himself with



A soldier in Bruno Collet's film, *The Day of Glory*...

a soldier in particular. Bruno Collet's characters are doomed right from the start. We are far from the hero/ antihero stereotype widely developed in war films as seen in *My Boy Jack*, a rather poor film in the drama category of the competition, spoiled by its clumsy choice of music. When the assault is given, the officer in *The Day of Glory...* has hardly put his foot on the ladder when a bullet blows his head off. A swarm of projectiles kill the few soldiers caked with mud that manage to get out of the trench. This non-battle lasts but an instant, and underlines the uselessness of this classic assault against an invisible enemy. Within a few seconds we are led to understand that weapons have become too efficient and too deadly. The idea of an obsolete war inevitably leads to absurd slaughter.

In another well-made sequence, a soldier wades through a trembling trench stacked with corpses. It's as if the man were trying to push back an army of dead soldiers, already slaughtered on the battle field. And when the soldier finally gets out of the trench, a red light fills the frame, as bloody as afterbirth. *The Day of Glory...* is a silent film, yet the music plays an important part subtly mingling with the light. The pale moonlight filters through heavy clouds lit by a flare blinking disturbingly to the music of a guitar and a female voice, in a sort of baroque opera.

It's not that surprising that Bruno Collet's film, which is part of the section, Aspects of French Creation, has already been selected and already received awards in numerous festivals.

**Pierre DENOITS
Translated by: Nina DYK
and Diane LAZAR**

REPORTAGES

BULGARIA'S ORPHANS

We anticipate heavy suffering. We only hope that the camera remains sober, without any good-will, humanitarian blather. We enter the confined universe of a hospital for physically and mentally handicapped children in Mongolino, Bulgaria. Director Katie Bewett filmed the daily life of these children for nine months, and is now showing her first-hand images. The hospital personnel do not speak to these children, reduced to bodies whom they have to wash, look after, and force-feed, like little, deformed idiots. Time no longer exists for these children and they rock endlessly back and forth, like a metronome. They are abandoned. The camera subtly moves through the chaos surrounding these damaged children. It is an appalling sight. The documentary's violence floods the utterly blank expressions on the faces of the children. We are searching for a thread of hope to cling to. We attempt to associate faces with names. The author tries to understand the situation without indulging in sentimentality. The voice over, however, interferes with the images that speak (or shout?) for themselves. The editing lacks inventiveness. And it is annoyingly repetitive. After an hour and a half, we are eager to leave. So are they.

**Marie-Gaëlle GRATEAU
Translated by: Lindsay FUCHS**

Editors-in-chief

C. Decognier, I. Labrouillière (ESAV), Sylvie Toux (Dickinson College)

Students of ESAV, Toulouse II University

Raphaëlle De Cacqueray, Pierre Denoits, Judith Dozieres, Kevin Favillier, Thomas Hatcher, Laure Larrieu, Hendrik Teltau, Eliane Vigneron

Students of Dickinson College en France

Nina Dyk, Lindsay Fuchs, Diane Lazar, Olivia Mastrangelo, Miriam Weiner

Journalism students (IEP Toulouse)

Esther Batelaan, Guillaume Desjardins, Marie-Gaëlle Grateau

Page Editors

Esther Batelaan, Guillaume Desjardins, Miriam Weiner

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