

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The cinema is like love, when it's good, it's great, when it's not good it's still not that bad.”

George CUKOR

# INFO FIPA 3

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Family Drama

In the category of drama this year, the films tackle the issue of family problems. Whether it is the search for a son gone missing in *My Boy Jack*, a family tragedy and its repercussions in *Roulette*, or the struggle to keep a family from spiralling out of control in *Family Hotel*; this year's dramas are sure to interest all.

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

DRAMA

## End Game

Some stories can only be told in one way and *Der andere Junge* is one of these. It also proves the blossoming of German cinema.

Being yourself is no easy task, especially during adolescence, especially when someone evil is thrown in the mix. Robert, a mildly autistic high school student, finds himself in this situation when he is forced to confront Paul, his exact opposite. Of course no one knows that Paul secretly torments Robert, not even his family,

closest friends or neighbours. The violence in the boys' relationship appears as a game echoed by the melody of the Gameboy that serves systematically as Robert's refuge. However, his favourite past time has its limits and the tables turn the day Paul steals his father's gun, "just for fun". Robert shoots his

enemy. He breaks the rules. Everybody faces the tragic consequences of this lethal transgression.

The script is flawless, the work of a master who creates a suspense typical of the best thrillers. Volker Einrauch handles the camera and tells the story with great talent. The different frames outline what is hidden under the silences. The chilling light which floods the film, progressively highlights the grey areas that exist both in the characters' lives and our own. Thanks to impressive editing techniques, the film completely deconstructs all that is certain and reveals the multiple contradictions of this cruel social comedy. Everything that seems self-evident falls to pieces just like Robert's mind that snaps from time to time. The doctor who attempts to understand the young high school student's mind is like the audience that sees through the masks of the characters who are always acting out the comedy of life.

It is thus, that a modern tragedy is played out before our eyes. Masks, scapegoats, murder and incest... It's all there, even a Chorus that sets the pace of the film like a metronome that

measures the little time left until the inevitable happens. The music punctuates the plot with great finesse. It sounds like an infernal death toll, playing with the destiny of all the characters. Thus, by capitulating to their fate, they discover the Other that exists in all of us. Of course, this all plays out at a wild pace.

From its very first images, the film loses us in the drunken rush that passes from one blur to the next and plunges us directly into the heart of the story. As if this flow of images already evoked something extraordinary. As if you could actually feel the film spinning furiously around the reel. As if everything couldn't be anything but real cinema.

Eliane VIGNERON

Translated by: Nina DYK



A story of two adolescents caught in a game of violence. Volker Einrauch explores the obscure corners of human nature

If last night, you didn't have the chance to see this film, make sure you catch its last showing tomorrow at 2:00pm at Gare Du Midi.

SERIES AND SERIALS

## From Tony to Totò

The series continue. After *Caravaggio*, let's meet mafioso Totò Riina. After the paint brushes, let's encounter the weapons.

It starts with a tragedy. A bomb explodes. And young Totò becomes Capo, the head of the family. Between working in the field and dealing with crime, his choice is clear... In the first few minutes, we are immersed in the beautiful images and the lights of Sicily during the 1940s. And it suddenly conjures up the village Corleone of the "Godfather". It looks like cinema, and yet it is only television. The series hasn't any of the unfortunately usual shortcomings of European television series: poor images, poor script. And it is not only a question of budget (15 million euros for six 100 minute-long episodes). It is rather due to the quality of the direction. Enzo Monteleone and Alexis Sweet bring energy into the frame, and the frame itself comes to life. Over a period of more than thirty years, we follow the characters and witness the various changes in the Italian society. *Il Capo dei Capi* is both a chronicle that tells the story of genuine characters and an accurate historical account, similar to *Romanzo Criminale* by Michele Placido. It covers the recurrent themes of mafia films: family, revenge, brothers fighting to death, power struggle and of course... violence. Totò Riina's and his partners' human side is highlighted and yet we never forget that they

committed over forty crimes. The rhythm of the first episode is uneven, but our attention is quickly captured by the continuous rising tension and overwhelmed by its bloody violence. Francis Ford Coppola's shadow hovers over us. We are constantly kept in suspense in the second episode that ends with Riina symbolically seizing power at the head of Cosa Nostra. The actors are charismatic and become their characters, the production is impressive and the direction outstanding (despite the occasional superfluous crane shot). In short this series lives up to the viewers' expectation: it is a definite success.

American series were already in, but now we'll have to reckon with the Italians. Dear French producers, be ready!

And as this good old Don Corleone would have said, it's an "offer that you cannot refuse".

Kévin FAVILLIER  
Translated by:  
Judith DOZIERES  
and Diane LAZAR

CREATIVE DOCUMENTARIES

## Woman unveiled

Two Belgian productions lift women's veils in two documentaries.



"...until your eyes bleed."

The three independent Mauritian women of *Awaiting for Men* will reveal to us their inner-most secrets and visions of marriage. The topic is universal when talking about seduction, love, and heartbreak, even if their culture and lifestyle are very different from ours. With a smile on their face, their sparkling black eyes stare straight at the camera, these experienced women are definitely reaching out to us.

During the second part, *Afghanistan, the Choice of Women* will present us with two women in power. One is a governor. The other, a commander, is a legendary figure in the resistance against the Russians and the Taliban. These two strong women won't let us leave without having heard what they have to say.

If in Ouataia, Mauritius, the walls of the village have been repainted, in the Middle East, the weapons are still close at hand for the threat of a new conflict is still

strong. In Parliament, great hope is invested in a budding democracy as they prepare to build a new idea of citizenship. Be it in art, politics, or family life, in both films women are deeply implicated and devoted.

Who better to speak of women than women themselves? Rather than be restricted by the harsh rules of the investigation reportage both Katy Lena Ndiaye in *Awaiting for Men* and Hadja Lahbib in *Afghanistan, the Choice of Women* prefer to fully embrace the documentary genre. Making a documentary means looking, even if it makes your eyes bleed, just to make sure they have not deceived you. Making a documentary means that you must be prepared to listen for hours just to get to grips with a particular question. To make documentaries is to constantly doubt and most of all it means exposing one's self. In my opinion, reporters often conceal themselves behind a so-called objectivity. A documentary always exposes a director and in this case two- who uses camera-eye to fight narrow-mindedness.

Laure LARRIEU

Translated by:

Thomas HATCHER  
and Olivia MASTRANGELO

They will be played Thursday at 6:30pm at the Auditorium and Saturday at 9:30am at the Atalaya (Gare du Midi).

# Executives, take a stand!

Screenwriter and director of a number of TV dramas, Jacques Renard began his career in film. Now a member of the jury, he answers some of our questions.



Jacques Renard's goal : to make intelligent drama.

**Why did you agree to be a judge at this year's FIPA?**

Quite simply, because they asked me! All jokes aside, if I am here in Biarritz for this festival, it is

because I find it interesting to see it from another perspective, all the more so as I didn't enter a film in the competition. To be honest, the best part of being a judge is being able to see the films without having to speak at the end of the showing. As a mere spectator, you discuss the movie among friends and compare your viewpoints. As a judge, you keep your opinions to yourself, and you do not disclose them until you have previewed all the films.

**You started your career in film, before going into television...**

For ten years, I was, effectively, an assistant or head photography director and I shot two full-length features. Between these two projects, a large number of my films were never successfully completed. The only propositions I had were for police dramas; which do not interest me. I then started working for television which allowed me to work as I wished. However, I think it is harder and harder to be creative in television.

**You have mainly written and directed dramas. Is working on a series likely to interest you?**

Nobody remembers it, but in the 1980s, I was the second director to make two 90-minute mini-series, such as *Trois morts à zéro*. The backdrop of this series was the world of soccer, and was a huge success. I was asked to recreate this idea for the world of tennis, an offer I evidently refused. I was not interested in reproducing something that had already been done, because then I would no longer be creative. I have no interest in doing a soap opera like *Plus belle la vie*. Broadly speaking, I want to bring to life thought-provoking scenes that give place to quality fiction, documentaries and series and reach a larger public.

**What is your opinion on the restriction of commercials on public channels?**

I am afraid it is not a good decision...if we get rid of advertising, where are we going to get financial backers? How is France Télévisions going to compete with private channels? This decision, publicly announced by the President of the Republic, is, in my opinion, not unlike the one he made concerning the refugee center in Sangatte. In this sense, I am not very optimistic for the years to come, but I hope I am wrong...

**In your opinion, are there any interesting dramas on French television?**

Stations, such as public service stations and Canal+ are beginning to react. In order to direct a good drama, the executives must be daring and they need to listen to the ideas of the writers and directors.

**What do you think about American series?**

The most interesting series are the ones broadcast on cable channels, like HBO, but few people have access to them. When the French try to imitate these successful series, a lack of means prevents them from doing so.

**Overall, are you happy with your career?**

I have not made a lot of films, but they were all learning experiences. In general, I think the majority of my films were well-made. I had a dry period in the beginning of my career, particularly between the two features I directed. This is partially why I changed my career to television. And if I directed several films written by others, I've always made sure to direct my own scripts.

**Esther BATELAAN**

**Translated by: Lindsay FUCHS**

## FRENCH CREATION

### Chabrol

**To film a filmmaker is a daring project.**

J.B. Thomasson is not fainthearted, yet he draws a delicate portrait. This film is not a stylistic exercise. From its very beginning, we recognize the classical pattern of the interview. On the terrace of a café, Claude Chabrol speaks to the director while facing the camera. The way our subject is framed leaves no room to spontaneity. Poetry stems less from the moments captured on the screen than from the encounter. We enjoy less the *mise-en-scène* than we delight in the fascinating character. We wander through his childhood without intruding on his privacy.

"Making a film, as well as watching a film, should first rely on the brain and trigger emotion. I do not mind people crying when watching a film, as long as they are genuine tears, not manufactured, vile ones". The tone is set: the film will avoid complacency. Far from idolizing him, Jean-Bernard Thomasson constructs a modest film, but leaves things out of focus in the process. God knows how much Thomasson respects Chabrol, whom he worked with as a sound engineer. Yet he confesses that "you can't make a film about Chabrol if you worship him". Thomasson will not build a shrine to someone who will not bow to a God. "I'm sorry, I have no Lord".

Jean-Bernard Thomasson chooses to remain distant from Chabrol and give the viewer some space to create his own character. If we end up being drawn to this clear-minded and spirited Chabrol, it is up to us. It is true that his face is beautifully sketched: the mischievous eye, the childish hunger for life, the heavy brow. His mood can change in the blink of an eye, from rapture to indignation. Beyond the movie-maker, one stares at the shooter being shot through the eye-piece. Chabrol is always ready to make fun of himself. And if we prick up our ears, we relish in his lively laughter and marvellously embodied voice. So much so that the voice-over almost gets annoying: it is scarce and yet didactic and drags us away from our encounter.

Thanks all the same to Jean-Bernard Thomasson for this great meeting.

**Raphaëlle DE CACQUERAY**  
**Translated by L. FUCHS and H.TELTAU**

## LAST NIGHT AT FIPA

### The world is a stage



Can we still be surprised by television? The members of the 2008 FIPA jury will soon find out.

7:30 P.M. Festival goes slowly shuffle into the entrance hall of the Gare du Midi.

Biarritz is in full dress for the opening ceremony. A tuxedo is casually chatting with a -slightly damp-mink coat, invitations are swapped for seats in front of the auditorium doors and each person takes place facing the stage, facing the screen. But most of all facing Pierre-Henri Deleau! Our Master of Ceremony for the evening is resolutely enjoying his job and pays tribute to Michel Mitrani, the founder of the FIPA festival before presenting the members of the jury. There is one minor drawback: Caroline Huppert, the president of the FIPA, will only be arriving at the end of the week. But the show must go on! The presidents of the different juries bounce onto the stage to the sound of hip hop-samba. Each member is greeted with a round of applause as P-H. Deleau reads

off their CV. It's a big night, so you get to clap even when you don't know who you are clapping for. Even the audience is playing tonight. Time for the group photo. The Senator declares the festival officially open. Protocol is rigorously respected, the show is total and absolute, the masquerade is clearly asserted! The FIPA loves television and shouts it out loud and clear, some even qualify the festival's line up as "the perfect TV schedule". Great! Cue the film! The result: an uneven mismatch of a film. The black and white sequences destroy the film's rhythm, the film fades slowly into emptiness...Television formatting strikes and a film that should last 30 minutes is turned into an hour long irritating endeavour.

9:25 P.M. Outside in front the Gare. Unfurl your Umbrellas. Fingers crossed for tomorrow.

**Thomas HATCHER**

#### What did you think of this year's opening film?



**Manuel LOPEZ-MONROY, (Mexican) Screenplay Teacher at the International Film School of Mexico**

"The CUEC is very interested in documentaries and especially in art documentaries. Our two Mexican students were keen to discover the perspective of another film-maker on that subject."

**Chantal MARCHON, (French) ADL Production**

"I wasn't expecting this, especially on a subject like this one. You know, it is the piece of music every little girl learns, that of the commercial. This beautiful film taught me about all the work which is at the origin of the piece. I felt like reading the book by Jean Echenoz."



**Marina ZURIÑE SÀEZ LÓPEZ (Spanish) Modélka Produccion Audiovisual**

"We were surprised because it was a documentary that opened the festival. That was a good surprise, usually, it's usually a drama."



## YOUNG EUROPEANS

### The seventh jury

There are 13 members representing 13 states of the European Union. Each one studies French in high school, but this was not their strongest reason to be here on the Basque Riviera. No, it is their interest for the audiovisual world that brought them here. And also their plans for their future career as directors, producers, and writers. Yesterday upon their arrival in Biarritz, I met the jury (six women and seven men). They were full of energy and very excited about the important task that had been given to them. This Saturday, they will be awarding the "Young Europeans Prize" in the category "Reportages and Current Affairs."

Their winner might very well bring to light the young Europeans' point of view and what they are expecting from television. Antoine, a Belgian student, answers in a bitter tone "Surely not a lot of worthless entertainment". Rauno, an Estonian student, criticizes the number of mind-numbing talk shows on everyday television. And Kristina is enraged at the remaining Soviet influence on Bulgarian television. While waiting to award their prize, the young jurors are leading the way against a television that they would like to see more courageous, more demanding, and in short; more ambitious.

**Pierre DENOITS**

**Translated by: Lindsay FUCHS**

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