

Many films screened: some are good and some are different

20th *Listapad* Film Festival gathers guests from around the world in Minsk



Fashion parade of Belarusian actresses during *Listapad* Film Festival opening

By Natalia Andreeva

The red carpet of *Listapad* was this year laid out in the lobby of the Palace of the Republic, to avoid disappointment from the weather. There was even a special dressing room, to allow celebrities to emerge immaculate, and French couturier Denis Durand was on hand to dress our Belarusian actresses. In such small ways, our Belarusian stars tried to emulate the grand events of Cannes and Berlin.

Happily, this year ends *Listapad's* interim accreditation with the International Association of Film Producers. The Director of the Minsk festival, Angela Krashenskaya, is delighted that the event now ranks among the world's leading film forums, although organisation requires a huge amount of work, which she compares with that for the Olympic Games. Belarus hopes to build on its reputation as a home of film-making and appreciation but, of course, this will

take time.

The festival's Programme Director, Igor Sukmanov, tells us, "We fought for the right to use various paintings and names and gained this in most cases, creating the best art film of last season; our programme contains even some films which were nominated for an Oscar."

Belarus presented *The Role*, by Konstantin Lopushansky, made in co-production with Russia, Germany and Finland, among 12 screenings in the fiction category, as well



Director Brillante Mendoza (R)

as documentary *Military Music* by Galina Adamovich, and *The Kinder-ville Ghost* by Yelena Turova, in the children's nomination (an exclusive effort by the national film studio Belarusfilm).

Chinese filmmakers for the first time participated in the *Listapad* and the rich non-competitive pro-



Juozas Budraitis

gramme included master classes by film specialists from Poland, Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Estonia, and elsewhere. Meanwhile, cartoons were screened, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of Belarusian animation. The 85th anniversary of Belarusfilm is also marked this year.

Ornella Muti, Emir Kusturica and Krzysztof Zanussi were sadly absent but the fabulous programme made up for a lack of stars. Kira Muratova spent almost a week in Minsk for the festival, noting that she plans to return, and Alexander Zeldovich and Galina Daneliya headed the jury for the fiction and children's nominations. Various foreign filmmakers came personally to submit their films.

Unique monument in the city located over the River Bug



Unveiling of bust of Menachem Begin

By Andrey Smirnov

Sculpture honouring Nobel Prize for Peace winner Menachem Begin unveiled in Brest

The monument marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Menachem Begin, an outstanding politician and statesman; the seventh Prime Minister of Israel was a native of the city over the River Bug. The ceremony

was attended by representatives of the Foreign Ministry of Belarus, Jewish organisations, Israeli diplomats and sponsors.

Herzl Makov, the Director of the Menachem Begin Heritage Centre arrived especially for the ceremony, while the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Israel to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Yosef Shagal, read a letter of greeting from the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netan-

yahu.

Menachem Begin's monument is the first of its kind in post-Soviet territory. Located in the historical centre of Brest, near to the school building in which Menachem Begin studied, the sculpture was designed by architect Leonid Levin, winner of the Lenin Prize of the USSR and Chairman of the Union of Belarusian Jewish Associations and Communities.

To mark the occasion further, first-day-of-issue stamps were presented and released under the theme *National Leaders of the State of Israel — Natives of Belarus*. Issued by the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation of Belarus, at the initiative of the Israeli Embassy, these are devoted to such outstanding Israeli politicians as Chaim Weizmann, Zalman Shazar, Yitzhak Shamir, Menachem Begin and Shimon Peres.

Menachem Begin was born on 16th August, 1913, in Brest-Litovsk. From June 1977 until September 1983 he was the Prime Minister of Israel and, in 1978, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. He died on 9th March, 1992, in Tel Aviv.

Winter to Pass Away focuses on mercy



Nina Bliznyuk

By Inna Ilyashevich

Minsk premiere for documentary promoting compassionate attitude in modern society

Nina Bliznyuk — a Red Cross Sister of Mercy and a holder of the Florence Nightingale Medal — is the film's protagonist, shown caring for the sick and lonely. Shot over a whole year, in Belarus, the film explores her devotion, placing the welfare of others above her own, explains production director Alexander Tereshchenko, who came up with the idea. He tells us, "The theme of the elderly — their life and

death — is topical as never before. Our life is never black and white: each grief is inevitably followed by joy — as spring comes after winter. This is natural. Our *Winter to Pass Away* documentary is about life and hope."

Before writing the script, director Tatiana Kirakozova spent a great deal of time with the main family featured and followed Nina on her visits to the elderly and disabled. "Nina is an extremely strong, yet reserved, woman. While shooting, we wanted to show another side of her personality: tender and romantic. Edvard Grieg's music helped us reveal the depth of her soul," says Ms. Kirakozova.

The film was inspired by Austrian director Michael Haneke's *Amour*, with Mr. Tereshchenko deciding to shoot a documentary featuring real life characters with sadness in their lives. The film won't be screened to the public but will take part in the 2013-2014 international documentary festival.

Sponsorship was provided by MTBank, the Belarusian Trade Union of Health Protection Workers and the Belarusian Red Cross Society.