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VIFF DAILY

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18TH INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
OF ASIAN
PACIFIC COUN-
TRIES
IN VLADIVOSTOK



**FEAST OF
PARTICIPATION**



task is to dignify the last moments of a person's life. People have not learned to overcome death, but they have learned to overcome pain. This seems to be an important medical achievement of the 21st century. However, regarding the legislation that regulates this issue in our country, we are a bit factored out here.

— **Do you agree that DOCTOR LISA is a new level of problematics for you in comparison with your previous films?**

— Globally, yes, because this story has an acute social level of storytelling, which is inevitable when the main character is a person of such a caliber.

In addition, I used to have only fictional characters before, but now I have a real person who lived not so long ago. Well, the questions corresponding to the caliber of this person had to be raised, too.

— **How did you end up in this story about Lisa?**

— After the release of THE GOOD BOY, I began to receive various offers from the producers – so I ended up at the KIT Film Studio. I met the producers Dzhaniq Fayziev and Aleksander Bondarev. They asked me to do a pilot episode for a comedy series. I shot the pilot episode, but they didn't like it. I thought that our working-creative relationship would end there, but it turned out that it had just begun. The next day, Alexander Vladimirovich called me and said that he had a script by Alexey Ilyushkin "Doctor Lisa". He asked me if I would like to read it and might find it interesting.

I liked the script, as well as the author's attitude to the female lead character, and the idea of showing one day in her life, and the original event. We began to work. I met with Chulpan Khamatova, talked with her, and agreed about filming. It was April 2018. We decided that we would start filming in a year. And before that, we needed to redo the script by about 80 percent.

— **Khamatova said in an interview that an angelic woman was described in the script. Was this to be changed?**

— Yes, this did not suit anyone, of course. Work on the script was hard. At some point, when we reduced the script by 70 pages, removed the long dialogues, sweetness and tenderness that I was terribly disgusted with, straightened the characters, dramatic arches, editor Alyona Sanko and I just rested our foreheads against each other. There was a feeling that the material had simply devoured me and that there was no more internal resource. Perhaps because I was pregnant. It was February and the launch was planned for April. I needed another person to whom I would tell in detail what is needed in each scene, and he would write it down. Then I offered to call Natasha Kudryashova – to help. Alexander Vladimirovich agreed.

We worked closely with Alexander Bondarev at all stages, starting with the script, because this film is his idea, for him it is a very personal topic. He knew Lisa very well, worked as a volunteer in her foundation for 10 years, and was friends with her. We made all changes to the script with his participation. I really do not like a producer's control, but here we



18 IFF PACIFIC MERIDIAN HAS OPENED

On the Primorsky stage of the Mariinsky Opera and Ballet Theater, the grand opening of the 18th International Film Festival of the Asia-Pacific countries Pacific Meridian took place. On the stage, decorated with cozy lanterns and bits and resembling an embankment, the general director and artistic director of the festival, Efim Zvenyatsky, remembered how almost two decades ago he and Sergei Stepanchenko invented "Meridian" in the courtyards of Taganka during a tour in Moscow.

Guests and presenters of the ceremony were joking a lot about the festival's coming of age: they said, 18 is the time to be responsible. Although it was already clear to everyone that, no joke, organizing the festival for so many years without responsibility, effort, perseverance and confidence would definitely not work out.

This year is a vivid proof of this: despite the epidemiological circumstances, it was decided to hold the festival. Move ahead a month, acquire masks, sanitizers and thermal imagers, miss many foreign guests, but not make the film program any worse.

The competition films were presented on the stage, and the audience was introduced to the members of three juries – the main one, the NETPAC jury and the FIPRESCI jury. They recalled Yul Brynner, the famous Hollywood actor, a native of Vladivostok, who became the mascot of the show. The audience was greeted by world cinema stars and former guests of the Meridians – Michael Madsen, Nastassja Kinski, Eric Roberts and Jacqueline Bisset. They all said that they would come back here more than once. President of the 18th Festival Andron Konchalovsky sent a cheerful and inspiring video greeting. The chairman of the main jury, program director of Kinotavr Sitora Aliyeva thanked the organizers for the opportunity to watch movies on the big screen, which was almost lost. The Governor of the Primorsky Territory Oleg Kozhemyako determined the first laureate of the festival – the Prize of the Governor of the Primorsky Territory "9288 km" went to Sergei Stepanchenko, a man who 18 years ago tried in the courtyards of Taganka so that we now all gather here every year. "It's hard to imagine the region without Pacific Meridian," concluded Oleg Kozhemyako. – Here we speak in a language that everyone understands – the language of cinema. And for 18 years the festival has been the conductor of this dialogue."

OKSANA KARAS

Director of DOCTOR LISA

— **Have you ever been scared of the topic of palliative care, hospices?**

— I have always thought it is very important. It seemed to me that it was very significant to leave beautifully, respecting human dignity at the moment of the last breath and look. The passing of any person, good or bad, is to be respected, because there is a deep meaning in it, as well as in birth. The topic did not scare me. I was rather scared by the idea that in Russia this is, frankly speaking, not the most important topic in the social sense, not on the agenda for sure.

— **Did the filming make you dive into it?**

— Yes, Liza Glinka was a specialist in palliative care, but in our country very few people know what it is. In the minds of ordinary people, the person who does this is not even quite a doctor. Because a doctor is the one who can recover you, give you a pill and send you back to work. And if you are a doctor, but you know for sure that your patient will not recover? Sounds like an oxymoron and absurd. A palliative medicine specialist a priori knows that they lost the fight for the patient's recovery. But lost to being, the Creator, rather than to someone else. And their





rather lived through what we wrote together. It was important for us to see the future picture in the same way, and this required working closely and carefully. We are both people of a furious temperament, hotly arguing, not inferior to each other. All this took a lot of effort, but it could not be otherwise, it was all for the benefit of the film.

— **It is said there is nothing worse than filming a biopic of a person with the participation of his relatives and friends.**

— It just so happened that there were some relatives and friends of Lisa around. They all knew her, but I didn't. At the same time, we didn't want to shoot a movie in the genre of "The Life of St. Elizabeth". On the contrary, the more I talked with her friends, with her husband Gleb Glebovich, read the diaries, watched documentaries, the more it became clear that Lisa was a difficult and versatile person and that it was almost impossible to fit the story of her life into one full-length film. Four 20-episode projects could be filmed about her, and these would be four completely different stories. Living in Moscow, living in Kiev, hospices, America, the Foundation, palliative care – everything was very intense. And it was necessary to grab something capacious and important. So the one day idea was very good. Of course, all her friends and relatives did not interfere at all, but on the contrary, they helped very, very much, told interesting and important things about Lisa.

— **Are there any personal items, everyday facts they have saturated the picture with?**

— Such details are there all the time. The first person we met was Sergey Petrovich Kurkov, a close friend of Lisa in the Foundation. A phenomenal character who spoke about her like no other did. An incredible storyteller, artistic, wildly charming, with a fantastic sense of humor. When I saw Petrovich, I thought that Evgeny Alexandrovich Pisarev, the artistic director of the Pushkin Theater, could play him. I needed a person with a strong inner core, a person

in whose life experience includes responsibility for the people's fate, making serious decisions. I have not seen any of Zhenya's acting work, but I immediately understood: this is him. I came to him at the theater. Fortunately, Zhenya agreed without even reading the script. Six months later, he timidly texted me: "You came to me then in the summer, but will there be filming? I have a theater tour in America, I have to understand what we are doing in April." I answered: "Everything will be fine, come to the audition." He came, got the scene, tried it. Zhenya asked me carefully: "Is Petrovich a homosexual?" I said: "Well, yes. So what? Any prejudices?" He replied: "No, but I need to see the character."

We agreed that we would meet in a cafe and get to know Petrovich so that Zhenya could better understand his character. I was late for the meeting. I came in and saw two very similar people who communicated as if they had known each other all their lives. Evgeny Aleksandrovich already managed to copy Petrovich's plasticity, intonations, gestures, demeanor and sense of humor. He was sitting, and mirroring his interlocutor.

Petrovich is a very serious resuscitator, brave and smart. He has been dealing with cancer patients all his life. About Lisa he told a huge number of very cool stories, jokes and tales. It helped a lot in writing the script. Another important source for me was the documentary film about Lisa, directed by Lena Pogrebizhskaya. A very detailed, deep and truthful film.

— **Did you film in Lisa's apartment?**

— We were looking for an apartment for a long time, and Gleb Glebovich, a holy man, said: "Come, guys, to me." We answered: "Gleb Glebovich, did you think well? We are filmmakers, we will turn everything into chaos here." And he joked: "Oksana, I have lived my whole life with Elizaveta Petrovna. What do you want to scare me with?" We didn't even break anything, I guess.

— **What's the story with the kettlebell in the elevator?**

— Lisa was very fragile, just like Chulpan, slim, thin-boned, transparent. In old Moscow houses there are elevators in which there is a weight limit so that the elevator does not move if a child comes in. When Lisa came in, the elevator did not respond. Therefore, we used a kettlebell that we carried into the elevator, and then it moved.

— **How did you set the task for Chulpan – how accurately did she have to play Lisa and how much to bring something from herself, from a person who is also engaged in charity work?**

— We immediately discussed with Chulpan that there is no need to literally imitate Lisa. And on the very first day, in the very first scene, I saw an exact copy of Lisa. That is, the task was not to be a copy; Lisa is a different person. But Chulpan is a genius, and even being unlike Lisa, she definitely took her character, gait, voice, laugh, manners. It gave me the creeps! We overdied Chulpan from brunette to blonde. All this took some effort, we had to dye our hair 6 times, the natural pigment did not leave immediately. We did not use plastic makeup, Chulpan had her talent and acting skills. Gleb Glebovich, who spent the first days on shifts, quietly cried over the playback. It must be a very strange feeling to see someone so similar to your loved one, who is no longer alive. We did not consider any other actress, there was no casting for this role. But Chulpan did not immediately agree. This film touches on a topic that is a huge part of Chulpan's life – charity. It's something she can't risk. She has been doing this for so long that it is important to speak correctly not only about the results, but also about the process itself. Here we are in the cinema looking for a new language, and charity is also the art of helping other people. And here, too, you need to look for new forms. In the nineties, one could go into a rich man's office, ask for money, receive it in an envelope, and so save someone. Then foundations appeared, all this began to be systematized, it became more transparent and understandable. Including thanks to Chulpan, who, despite any obstacles, explained to the officials why this is all impor-

tant. For example, earlier parents were not allowed to enter the intensive care unit for their small children, but now it has become possible. And thanks to whom?

We all live in an active information field, we react very sharply to what happens in this field. And Chulpan could not agree to star in our story until she was fully convinced that the script had developed and we were telling the story truthfully. Of course, this is a huge plus – the fact that she knows what she is playing about, and has been through a lot herself. Including through the monstrous people's harassment, through a general misunderstanding: what do you do? Why do you need that? Through a conflict with loved ones who require your attention, and you need to make a difficult choice. Through understanding that human life is much more important than getting on a high horse, wearing a white coat and being afraid to get it dirty, and making very difficult decisions for yourself. Through situations when you understand that if you need to throw yourself at the executioner's feet to save children's lives, then most likely you will. And then, we must not forget that we, common folks, are vindictive, ungrateful, insensitive, aggressive and judge by ourselves. We do not like those with big hearts. We always have many questions for such people with a big heart. Why is she helping everyone? Maybe she is forgiving some sins? Maybe there is a selfish motive and she gets some kickbacks? Or maybe she is showing off and all her charity is just PR? Does she want to be holy? We will find a thousand prepositions, explanations and versions, but it never occurs to us that in fact it is simply difficult for this person to look into the eyes of the parents of children who are dying, and no one will help them.

— **Where did the goatling story come from?**

— Lisa was also unique in that she did not refuse anything to people – patients, as she called them – who turned to her. Even if their requests were at first glance completely idiotic, like buy a dog, give a letter, bring a goatling. There is a wonderful book of Lisa's memoirs, and I took the story about the goatling as the last request of a dying person from there. We added it at the last stage, when Natasha Kudryashova helped me work on the script. I remember I came to her: "Natasha, let's add about the goatling in these scenes?" Natasha clutched her head: "Oksana, what the hell a goatling?"

— **Was it too much?**

— Well, yes, but I should pay tribute to Natasha – what I love and admire her for – at first she always honestly brushed me off, but then she got at the computer and wrote everything very talently.

— **Let's reduce the degree with a funny question: did you think that Andrey Burkovsky looks like Benedict Cumberbatch?**

— Seriously? As for Burkovsky, we had a "war" with Alexander Vladimirovich. Unlike me, he was very familiar with the work of Burkovsky, knew him, was friends with him and loved him as an amazing comedian. When I said that I wanted to film him, he began to send me links to his old performances. Unfortunately, I was not so familiar with Andrey's works. I saw him only his amazing acting with Yulia Peresild. I loved him madly. Later, after filming the movie, I came to the Moscow Art Theater and realized what Alexander Vladimirovich had in mind. That is, Andrey is truly a fantastic character actor who, like no one else, knows how to make funny things on stage, just like in the play "The Man from the Fish" by Yury Butusov, for example. I realized that I was just breaking his acting nature. When he did something on the set, it was involuntarily funny, and I asked him to be less funny. Although in another situation I would be happy with this unique quality of Andrey – to be funny in everyday circumstances. We deliberately removed his character and pulled out a dramatic hero. We dyed the hair a dark color to hide the red hair, added stubble to make him look more mature, added fatigue and exhaustion.

— **Does he play the personification of power, law, state?**

— The state is represented there by another character – the Official. I called this role cursed, because no matter what actor I called, everyone refused to play it. Alexey Agranovich, the man with transparent karma, agreed. I will return to the character of Andrey Burkovsky. The fact is that our heroine Lisa does not change throughout the film. But the movie will not work without a character arc. Therefore, it is not the main character who changes, but the world around her is under her influence. And it changes the main antagonist, the character of Burkovsky. He becomes different after encountering such an emotionally strong character like Lisa. These are qualities Lisa possessed: she was able to appeal to the brightest sides of a person's soul, which he, perhaps, did not even suspect to have before meeting her. It's like they were atrophied before. Imagine that you were born with one right leg and lived like this your whole life, and then suddenly you met Lisa and realized that you still have a left leg. You couldn't walk before, but now you're running and dancing.

— **"Diploma for the fight against world evil, arbitrariness and theft". What do you think is the world's evil here? Barely a disease.**

— Certainly not a disease. The world's evil is the entire bureaucratic apparatus, all the officials. All that soullessness that is embodied by any system that does not see a human in a human being, but watches over itself. That is, some order for the sake of order. Lisa knew how to talk with such people like no other. She immediately stood on the same level with them. She raised them to such a height that at that moment they felt their significance.

— **Did you manage to understand why it is impossible to do something good in our country without breaking the law?**

— Well, the movie is about that. In our country, like nowhere else, it is obvious that kindness is always above the law, mercy is above justice.

— **Liza does not answer this question in the film, but still: why did she do this? What was her philosophy?**

— It seems to me that she could not do otherwise. As well as Chulpan. This is no longer just a conscious choice, it is a vocation. It will sound pretentious, but it seems to me that such people are helped by higher forces, otherwise I do not understand how a person can cope, how to survive, how to pass so much other people's pain through your heart. This

a society, indirectly through lawmakers decide that we would not help our children?

— **You showed the picture in the State Duma – did you manage to understand why this is so? You also have gratitude to these people in the credits.**

— Yes, there is gratitude in the credits. We went to the State Duma, showed them a movie. For me it was a big internal problem – how to behave there in general. But we talked with Alexander Bondarev and Tatyana Dogileva and decided that the film should be shown first of all in the State Duma. You cannot deprive the viewer of the chance to see the picture.

— **Well, have you managed to make the world of lawmakers a little better?**

— I do not know. I could tell from their emotions that they liked the movie. There are very different people sitting there, there are a lot of doctors among them. In general, this year is the year of doctors. I want my film to change the attitude towards them, so that they do not continue to exist on the ballast of the state, receiving an average salary of 30 thousand rubles a month. Even better – if you manage to make decisions on the situation with the pain relief of children with cancer, incurable ones. I really believe that Dr. Liza will be able to influence this even after her death. That's what a person she was.



is all very energy-consuming, and there is little love in the world. It's all for love, not for a salary. Where to get love to cover all this – harassment, someone else's inferiority, envy, spiritual cracks?

— **Curiously, palliative care staff are quite constrained in their actions – they can recommend what to do, but they cannot, for example, write a prescription.**

— That's right, we just have anti-human legislation. Do you remember the series of showcase criminal trials? When doctors were imprisoned for five years for writing a prescription to the pharmacy where the drug is available, rather than to the one that is according to the patient's registration but has no drug? Or here's another: the child was prescribed medicine in Moscow, but he is registered and lives in Syktyvkar. He must travel there with his parents for 18 hours by train. The effect of the drug taken in the hospital will end in 4 hours. What should the child and his parents do for the remaining 14 hours? People who sit in the State Duma and pass laws, how do they imagine it? A law is a norm of behavior, enshrined by those people to whom we, as a society, have delegated the ability to make decisions about which rules are better for us to live by. Why did we, as

— **Let us end on a positive note. Ballerina Volochkova – what is this character?**

— I really wanted two actresses to star in the film: Elena Koreneva and Tatiana Dogileva. I just called Dogileva and asked: "Tatiana Anatolyevna, if you are to be filmed in my movie, I will register such a person." It was a real character, the homeless woman Tanyukha in the film by Lena Pogrebizhskaya. Kudryashova and I wrote. And I offered Elena Koreneva to play Volochkova. And this is also a real character who regularly went to Dr. Liza's Foundation. We were very worried whether the namesake would react badly to this. And then we decided: the world has a number of Volochkovas.

— **Really, ballerinas from the Bolshoi Theater?**

Exactly! For Elena Alekseevna it was also an interesting entertainment. What a gorgeous actress! Such a pleasure and bliss working with her. But we decided not to change the name of the heroine.

YURY GONCHAROV

Program Director of Pacific Meridian

— What were the chances that the festival would not take place?
— 10% to 90%.

— With the beginning of quarantine, many festivals began experimenting with different forms of virtual existence. Did the Pacific Meridian have such options?
— Probably, initially we were in a slightly more advantageous position. It all started in March. It is October now. We were not going to relax, but we did not go that far. Was it necessary?

— Do you think if the change in the model of visual content consumption, which has also occurred in cinema, will affect the festival movement?
— Well, no! In that respect I am even ready to deceive myself and "pretend" – however, the festivals stand apart, – they are between the Scylla of cinemas and the Charybdis of on-line platforms.

— Could you name the most important changes in this festival? In what way will it be unusual in comparison with others, and what, on the contrary, will remain unaltered?
— At the top – the competition, PANORAMA, RUSSIAN CINEMA. At the same time, alas, there won't be a single foreigner. What is unusual – the main jury is incomparably Russian. We are very curious about what will come of this. And also THE BRYNNER READINGS – for us it is an entry into the unknown.

— Yury, you hold press conferences with the participants of the COMPETITION section every year. How will the press conference format change this year?

— Press conferences with the NETPAC and FIPRESCI jury will be partly held online, – representatives of Russia will fly to Vladivostok. The main jury and Russian representation in the COMPETITION – as usual.

— In general, how to preserve this experience of shared feelings and communication, which nevertheless are integral parts of both theatrical film screening and the film festival?
— Such experiences – the way we feel – only multiply. This is the first time we're facing the absence of foreign participants and guests, but it seems like it will not be as sad as if we "went off" to the "social distance" of tens, hundreds, thousands of kilometers.

— How has the pandemic affected the selection of films?
— However, it may sound – positively. Tired of the uncertainty with the settings, tired of waiting for confirmation, many participants sent their movies to us. The pandemic has rallied the festival community, people realized that this is the audience that matters, not the place.

— The year is special, the festival is special. Will the COMPETITION section be special?
— Perhaps so. The contest this year is very motley, very bright. In a way screaming, laughing, crying. Sarcastic. Emotions are running high, decisions and final choices are paused. Our COMPETITION froze. In a leap.

— Can cinematography be divided into pre-quarantine and post-quarantine? Both in terms of production technology and in terms of the topics and meanings covered?

— I don't think so. After all, "pre-quarantine" and "post-quarantine" are just the proposed circumstances. A certain background that has arisen naturally, that possesses a conflict, so grandiose. Will creative people be interested in this conflict, this clash? Would they want to explore it? Most likely. But, for sure, in their own interpretation. And technology certainly doesn't play a major role here.

— Among the films that participate in the COMPETITION, and rather among those that apply for this participation, there are many of them which were shot in a non-traditional manner. Their authors experiment with both form and content, as, for example, Michael Arcos, director of the competitive film VALERIO'S DAY OUT, does. Tell us about those films that, perhaps, were not included in the COMPETITION, but were memorable to you due to their originality?
— Frankly speaking, we did not find anything original in the "full length". There were: sincerity, courage, provocativeness, narcissism, self-flagellation, self-exposure. Among short motion pictures one was extremely unusual – for the competition – work of the director from Hong Kong Wong Ping WONG PING'S FABLES 2. Not taken. There were quarrelling, arguing. But – did not pass.

— You watch domestic and foreign films – can you point out what Russian films lack to be relevant? And vice versa, in what ways do domestic authors outperform their foreign colleagues?
— I think that the films filmed in Russia are all right in terms of relevance. But such films are not released widely, into the mass, across the country. It's troublesome. Not so easy. And absolutely not commercially profitable. It is as if you are watching an endless "sitcom" with the artists of the "Comedy Club". And there are also – and it is wonderful that there are some – very honest films. From my point of view, it is honesty that is lacking for foreign colleagues who, in good faith, but not very successfully, are trying to get out of the general trend – lies, hypocrisy... It does not work.

— Harassment, LGBT, politics, war – is Russian cinema keeping up with the agenda?
— We are lagging behind. But it is unclear should we be upset about this, or should we rejoice.

— Can Pacific Meridian somehow react to the boom of serial content in the future? Or is it not your goal?
— I would like to. Really. I believe that it is not only possible but necessary to shoot serials in Primorye – and, moreover, using our own resources. And for this we need our own film school and film studio. We would be interested in such serials; we would be happy to present them at the Pacific Meridian.

— It seems that the person who is worried the most about the inability to come is Rock Brynner. How is he doing?
— A huge regret is the absence of Rock. He continues to struggle, even to fight with a serious illness, and will miss this film festival. Incredible disappointment – the 100th anniversary of his father, THE BRYNNER READINGS, the premiere of his, Rock's, play...

— How was Yul Brynner's 100th birthday celebrated this year? And how will the anniversary be held within the framework of the festival?
— Celebration began on July 11, on the actor's birthday, in the park that was named after him. THE BRYNNER READINGS is the format that Yul deserves. Not to mention showing films with his participation and a photo exhibition dedicated to him. He was a great, sublime person, and we want to convince his fellow countrymen and his compatriots of this. We want to "discover" Yul Brynner for them.

— When people talk about readings, they also mention plays written by you. Can you tell us what they are about and how you worked on them?
— A play by me. It is being rehearsed at the Gorky Theater and is being prepared for the premiere. The play is called COWBOY. KING. MAGNIFICENT, – 25 episodes about his life, his family, his women and his love.

— How was your self-isolation? What did you manage to do during this time, and what, on the contrary, did you miss?
— There wasn't a day that I've spent at home. Since March. There was a lot to do, but mostly work.

— Did you suffer without the opportunity to go to the movies?
— No. The films that came to the selection did not leave time – for suffering.



ACT OF ART

"Many people seem to believe that directors and actors interact like superiors and subordinates. But that is not true, they are equal artistic beings," Veniamin Filshinsky, the professor of the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts (RGISI) explains. The expert from this renowned theatre school in St. Petersburg will visit Vladivostok during the Pacific Meridian Film Festival. His two-day workshop Sketch Method in Acting, that will take place in the Far Eastern State Institute of Arts on October 12-13, will become one of many events, preceding the opening of the RGISI branch in Primorye – College of Music and Theatre Arts. Such RGISI branch offices are a part of the Culture National Project, and the first one has already been opened in Kemerovo this September, another one will start working in Kaliningrad on October 15, and the Vladivostok office is next in line; it will welcome its first students next year.

"Our theatre institute is well-known both in Russia, and abroad – for its famous alumni, best teachers," the RGISI President Natalia Pakhomova says. "Today Primorsky Krai is developing very fast, and we are happy to have an opportunity of sharing our experience in teaching the art of theatre with its creative young people and professional community."

The Bachelor's and Specialist's Degree Programs will properly start in 2024 and will have nine majors: acting, theatre directing, set design, technology of set design, theatre studies, producing, cinema and theatre directing, sound engineering in multimedia arts, music and instrumental performance. There are Master's Degree Programs as well. The education starts at the School of Creative Technologies for the 12-17 age group. Students will have a chance to try their hand in theatre and theatre technologies, photo and video production, animation, motion design, sound engineering and modern electronic music, virtual and augmented reality. All courses will be free of charge. Upon completing the two-year course, the participants will get a certificate of supplementary education and an opportunity to continue their studies in the Primorye Division of the College.

"Our mission is to provide the same high standard of education that they have at the RGISI in St. Petersburg," Russian

Kolousov, the director of the Primorye College of Music and Theatre Arts says. "We are going to employ both young specialists and experienced local instructors, organize workshops and lectures from the leading RGISI professors, develop one-of-a-kind advanced training courses for the culture sphere professionals of Primorsky Krai."

Veniamin Filshinsky's workshop is a perfect example of that. The professor will talk to a group of 15-20 people about the actor's mission and Stanislavsky's heritage. But it will not be all theory: according to Stanislavsky himself, today you read the play, tomorrow you act it out. That is

why Filshinsky will analyze the scenes from Shakespeare, Chekhov and Ostrovsky.

The professor himself, who taught Konstantin Khabensky, Ksenia Rappoport, Mikhail Porechenkov, Mikhail Trukhin, to name a few, have never been to Vladivostok and is not familiar with the local theatre world. But this is not for long: the workshop welcomes both students and experienced actors, so it promises to be very entertaining. "I am really excited about this trip," Filshinsky shared. "Recently we have been to Kaliningrad, now we go to Vladivostok – the scope of our country and this project makes me not only excited, but also hungry."



Foto by Yevgeniya Tsipenko

FESTIVAL WITH CLOSED BORDERS

The coronavirus pandemic has altered the programs and events of the Pacific Meridian. This year it has been shifted from September to October, so as Efim Zvenyatsky jokes, the red carpet will be "in fur-coats and coats". In addition, this year the festival guests will be from Russia only. Alas, foreign film stars and filmmakers cannot come to Vladivostok.

For the first time in the Festival history the jury members are only from Russia. All press-conferences with the contestants, with the jury members from FIPRESCI and NETPAC will be held online. And the films will be preceded by the authors' video addresses.

All film screenings will comply with the recommendations of the Russian Consumer Protection Agency – masks, sanitizers, thermometry and social distancing.

However, the pandemic has had no effect on the major thing – on the amount of the films submitted to the festival. According to Yury Goncharov, the program director of the festival, this year even more films have been submitted. Altogether, there were 1824 submissions from 112 countries; over 200 from 49 countries have been selected. And it is also more than was usually selected.



Vladimir K. Arseniev Museum of Far East History website

BEHOLDERS OF THE SPLENDID TIMES

Guests and participants of the Pacific Meridian can enrich their social events with a visit to the exhibition – The Fashion of the Silver Age in the Arseniev Museum of Far East History. Alexander Vasilyev, a collector, a fashion historian (and a frequent guest of the festival) has brought this exposition to our city. He says that for the first time ever has he brought such a splendid and grand-scale exposition – 50 unique, hand-made dresses and over 100 accessories, pictures, shoes, hats...

"Our exhibition really knocks you down – with the well-preserved garments, expensive materials, hand-made work and names of couture houses", he said at the opening ceremony. "I am sure that it will make a huge impression on people."

The Silver Age fashion is a fashion of the wonderful and splendid epoch that had not yet been touched by the war, mass destructions, tanks, famine or revolutions. That was the time of admiring the women who devoted their lives to their families only. They gave birth to children, took care of their husbands, grew flowers, played music, enjoyed embroidery, played with their dogs... and at the same time, they didn't cook, didn't clean, didn't wash – they had servants for those things. It is true that only wealthy women could afford such dresses. They all hide, if we can say so, the tears of the women who pleaded their husbands to buy them, and the manly tears of those husbands who signed the bills.

The garments were made in Paris and worn by the women who belonged to the privileged circles of the USA and France. There are very few dresses from Russia and the reasons are obvious. "The point is in our history, the revolution when the holders of those dresses cared more about saving their lives and not about saving their dresses", says Alexander Vasilyev. "Many of the Silver Age dresses from Russia either vanished into oblivion during emigration or were altered into kid clothes, wedding dresses of 1920-30s and especially, of the time of the New Economic Policy".

Quiet colors and natural fabrics are the main features of the fashion in the late 1890- 1920s. There were no corsets and the dresses became much shorter. The fashion reflected the spirit of the time that was saturated with emancipation and liberation of women. "Emancipation brought rights to women but took away many privileges of the past – wearing laces, luxurious hats and jewelries and looking like goddesses," says Vasilyev. "Nowadays, women have a different pace of life. The dresses of this exhibition were designed for women who could change up to seven times a day. Modern ladies simply have no time for that".



TOGETHER WITH YUL, A COWBOY AND KING

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of the famous actor Yul Brynner, the only Russian-born artist who received both the Oscar and the Tony.

Of course, Vladivostok, where Yul Brynner was born and lived the first six years of his life (and which – according to the recollections of his sister and his son – he never forgot, dreaming of visiting here), could not stay away from such a date. And the Film Festival Pacific Meridian, where one of the most loyal fans and the most frequent guests is Yula's son Rock Brynner, all the more could not leave such a significant date unattended. One of the Festival's programs is called Brynner Readings.

"We will celebrate this anniversary jointly with the Arseniev Museum," said Natalya Shakhnazarova, an executive producer of the film festival. – Screenings of movies starring Yul will be held in the park, where the monument to the actor is erected. An exhibition about the Brynner family from the museum foundation will open in the Arka Gallery. And in the salon Clio, in the museum, readings will take place for three days: Rock Brynner's books about his father – "The Man Who Would Be King", Yury Goncharov's plays about Yul Brynner and a play written by Rock Brynner himself in his youth, and translated by Max Nemtsov."



MADELEINE SIMS-FEWER AND DUSTY MANCINELLI

Directors of CHUBBY



—You have said in the interview that this film is in many ways very personal for you. What did you understand about yourself while working on this film?

— One thing we definitely took away is that trauma is a process – it takes so long to work through it, and you are constantly being pulled back in. Another important takeaway for both of us through making CHUBBY is that we learned the importance of surrounding yourself with people you trust and who really understand and support you when making films that are this connected to personal experience.

— Do you see cinema as a therapeutic activity? Does it help analyze and heal mental wounds?

— Absolutely. Because making a film or watching a film that is close to you helps you to gain distance from your own internalized wounds. Seeing it from the outside gives you perspective, and also helps you to see that you are not alone.

— In the film we see a family gathering for Christmas. Is it difficult to shoot such a chamber and crowd scene naturally?

—Performance is the most important element of filmmaking for us. We put such an emphasis on building these character relationships so that the audience really feel that they are there. We used a lot of improvisation in this scene, while integrating the scripted moments within that. Our DOP, Adam, is essentially another actor in the scene, weaving amongst the action and capturing these candid family moments.

— Could you tell some about this young actress Maya Harman? How did you find her? What did she have to do on audition?

— We knew that casting Jude was going to be incredibly difficult. Not only did we want to find a precocious young girl with an infectious energy who was able to be herself on camera, but we needed to find someone who was comfortable with the difficult subject matter. We posted our casting call everywhere we could think of, and auditioned hundreds of young girls before we came across Maya Harman. We had seen Maya's headshot when searching local after school acting programs, and asked her to tape an audition. She was in Montenegro with her family at the time, but she recorded her scenes with her older brother on vacation. Maya's mom included a bloopers reel of outtakes with her tape, and as soon as we

watched it, we knew – she was Jude – we had to cast her.

— How did you agree with Maya's parents? How did you explain what you shoot about?

— We were very open from the beginning about the sensitivity of the script and the reasons we wanted to make the film. Maya had never acted in a film before, and was very nervous, so we had a lot of Skype sessions just getting to know her, so that we could all get comfortable with each other. When she initially auditioned, she said that she felt it was important for her to play the character of Jude because it will hopefully inspire other young people to speak out if they have been abused. She had such a maturity and understanding of the role that we knew we could get her to the place we needed.

— The scenes with Maya and Jesse LaVercombe are primarily associated with the relationship between the heroes of Natalie Portman and Jean Reno in LEON THE PROFESSIONAL. What references and instructions did you give to your actors?

— Creating a believable and unique dynamic between Jude and Noah was integral to us. We wanted the audience to become enchanted and intrigued by their distinct bond so that the moment of abuse is as much of a betrayal to them as it is to Jude. We always had Jesse LaVercombe in mind for the role of Noah, as we worked with him on our previous short SLAP HAPPY, and during the rehearsals we spent most of our time just hanging out with him and Maya, sharing stories and playing improv games. On set we often directed Maya through Jesse – getting him to do specific things that would impact her during the take – and his energy and commitment to the role helped immeasurably in getting Maya to the level of comfort you see on screen. We shot 20 minute takes (over 20 hours of footage), improvising in and out of scenes, playing games on camera, and trying lots of different techniques to capture the right energy and spontaneity. Jesse and Maya developed such an incredible bond that Maya was devastated when he wrapped shooting. We filmed her really emotional confession right after Jesse left – we didn't plan it that way, but it definitely helped to get the scene.

— Your full-length debut VIOLATION touches on the topic of sexual violence and abuse. Is there a thematically connection between CHUBBY and VIOLATION?

— Definitely. Violation is a culmination of the themes in all our

shorts, but going a bit deeper! It's again painfully personal work that explores sibling rivalry, trust, abuse and betrayal.

— Could you tell about the film RAPE CARD, which is made by Madeleine and Nathan Hughes-Berry?

— RAPE CARD is a cautionary tale set in a chilling dystopian future where rape has been legalized. Frances tries to control her fate by planning her own assault, by targeting a young boy who just got his rape card.

— In general, you return to the topic of violence quite often. Why has it become so important and central to you?

— We are interested in tackling challenging topics that don't often get discussed, in order to inspire dialogue and empathy. We are strong believers that arts has the ability to change perspectives, and we want our work to get people to communicate with one another, and perhaps even experience someone else's perspective.

— How did you two, Madeleine and Dusty meet each other and how did you understand that you can work together?

— We met at the TIFF Talent Lab in 2015 where we experienced an instant creative connection. We spend most of the lab walking around Toronto sharing ideas in-between watching films. Shortly after we decided to work together on two short films, SLAP HAPPY and WOMAN IN STALL. Until directing these shorts neither of us had really had 'fun' making a film. Filmmaking was a drive, but it wasn't a joy. These shorts gave us a totally new perspective, where we actually had a good time workshoping the script, creating a visual style, and just challenging each other. By the time we were making CHUBBY we had decided to officially form a creative partnership.

We definitely approach filmmaking from different perspectives and with complementary strengths, but we don't say 'this is your thing and this is mine.' We work collaboratively on every part of the process, and we built this unique way of working through our shorts, so that when we got the funding to make our feature we already had a solid 'method' that works for us.



— **Let's start with the nineties. Is this something personal?**

— Masha is still not about the nineties, it is about the children of the nineties. About how a girl grows up in the nineties and dreams of singing jazz. MASHA is about those who were 12, 13, 14 years old back then. They are no longer so small as not to see or understand anything at all, but they are not yet 20 or 17 years old to participate in everything on an equal basis with adults. You see how it happened: while the big papas and older brothers were doing what they did in BUMMER, BRIGADA and Balabanov's movies, there were children somewhere nearby. The ones who were somehow forgotten by the adults. The children grew up bigger and bigger, and now they are 35-40 years old. Like an adult Masha.

— **However, the new interest in the nineties is obvious to you, isn't it? For example, the film BULL won at Kinotavr last year.**

— Yes, of course, it is obvious. There was also a great movie CRYSTAL SWAN, the very first one about the "new nineties". Also, THE LIVER that I haven't seen yet. But MASHA doesn't need any details of criminal showdowns, everyone has already seen it a hundred thousand times. It is important to me how the murders, the seized markets and new adults are reflected in the girl who is hanging around there between them and gradually becoming a woman.

You do realize: what will happen to the country in the near future will be determined by the generation of those who grew up and matured in the nineties. My generation is referred to as younger guys, as current 30-year-olds, as if we are together with them all about non-Sovietism, about non-forbidden music and movies, about computers, online platforms, as if we are all together children of a new country. But this is not entirely true. Almost every day when I would walk to the bus stop to go to school, there was shooting in the street. And I would instantly fall under a parked car, in a very casual way, and habitually wait out. All my peers knew how to do this. At least those who grew up in provinces. Then I would calmly dust myself off and went to a lesson to discuss Eugene Onegin. Such things should leave a mark, I think. They form some other attitude towards society, towards death, towards freedom.

— **Your female lead character, in fact, drastically says goodbye to the past. Is it worth doing if it remains here and now?**

— It does not remain, just any present carries the past in its anamnesis. Saying goodbye to the past in such a way as to make correction work and let it go is not something we are good at. Therefore, we say goodbye as best as we can. In this sense, Masha, the heroine, is very similar to the country where she grew up. I won't spoil, but the script had a different ending. The ending that I humanly dreamed of. If you like, the ending that I would like the nineties to have ended. But when I watched the material from the set, how Anya Chipovskaya was performing the last song, I realized that the film wanted to end differently. So three days before filming, the group and I decided that we would shoot two versions of the ending. During the editing, I tried to push through the ending, which I had once written in the text. But the film did not allow it to be done. The film said: "Palchikova, get lost with your opinion," and ended the way it ended. Probably, if we left the nineties in a different way, the film could have a different ending. We will never know.

— **You said that you had been writing the script for a long time, almost all your life. How did this story of yours ripen?**

— Six years ago, I first started talking about my childhood and was surprised to see that many were interested. Then I began to collect, change, complete and make up these stories. That's how a script called Masha appeared. Synopsis first, to be precise. For a long time, the text was circulated among producers and directors. Many wanted to do it. Eventually, it ended up with Valera and Zhenya (*Valery Fedorovich and Yevgeny Nikishov. — VIFF Daily*). And then with Ruben (*Ruben Dzhishishyan. — VIFF Daily*). And they finished it..

— **The story is about your childhood. Can you draw the line between reality and fiction?**

— I can not. I promised my mother that I would not do this. Just watch a movie, it doesn't matter at all what is fiction and what is not. I can say for sure about one truth: laughter, dances and songs that are there are my reality. And this is my mother's merit, she passed it on to me. We had a period in the nineties when we were completely impoverished, my mother literally had nothing to eat, she fed me old tourist soups that remained from her and dad's tourist rallies, and she herself had not been eating for several days. But even then we laughed a lot and listened to a lot of music, even when we were hungry.

— **You told how you left home at the age of 13. What was that?**

— At 13 and a half. Yes, but this does not relate to the film, it relates to my bad temper and my attempts to live on my own.



ANASTASIA PALCHIKOVA

Director of MASHA

I just started putting on airs early and living as I want. Then my mother said: since I live at her expense, I must comply with the conditions that she sets. If I don't want to comply with the conditions, then "go live on your own, but also feed yourself". Mom was sure that a person of 13 and a half years old would not go anywhere and would be forced to make concessions. And I said, "Ok, I understand," and left home.

— **Where did you live?**

— In an abandoned house. Alone. With a violoncello. I went to school, studied.

— **What did you do for a living?**

— Nothing. I started working later, at 14. But the child will quickly find food for herself. I had a feed from my grand-

mother. And one woman at the market fed me with watermelons. This saleswoman, when she found out that I had run away from home, did not lament: "Oh, what a nightmare!" She just said: "I see, take my watermelons and eat for free." And I was grateful, not so much for the watermelons, as for the fact that she treated me with respect. I still enjoy watermelons.

Then my mother and I made up, revised the terms of living together, and I returned. I had a very nasty relationship with my mother until quite a late period. But at some point, I grew up and realized that I loved her very much. My mother and I are doing well now. Mom, if you read this, forgive me for telling so much about us, I know you will be unhappy, but believe me, there is nothing terrible and shameful. Dad would approve of it, and I love you.

— **What else is important to consider when showing such a harsh time through the eyes of a child?**

— There was a moment when it seemed to me that in this film everyone should be examined in detail: the guys, their girls, the kidnappers, the women on the market. I saw Masha only as a guide. In the script it was like that: a large canvas, where each character could be seen in detail, the folds of their clothes and their faces. Everything changed on the storyboard, and even more – on the set and editing. The girl became the center, everyone else, the whole era, was snatched out through her.

— **What about the music of the nineties?**

— At first I had no plans to use any other music other than jazz at all. But during the editing, it became clear that we needed a musical counterbalance.

— **How expensive is the music of the nineties on the wave of interest in them?**

— This is ridiculous money compared to the world's jazz standards.

— **Even a band Nancy?**

— "The smoke of menthol cigarettes" was just there from the very beginning. I wrote a scene for it, and we included it on the set when we were filming. And the jazz standards were performed by the artists themselves. Chipovskaya even sang live, right on the set, take after take. She sings brilliantly. It is a delight to shoot Anya singing. When a person approaches a microphone, it is always clear whether they are approaching it for the second time in their life, or they really know how to handle it. Anya can. With Polina Gukhman, we recorded some songs in advance in the studio, but she sang all by herself, well, she also sang something right in takes, live. Olya Fedotova also performed herself a song At Last.

— **Do you occasionally play violoncello now?**

— My husband (a director and actor Alexey Smirnov. – *VIFF Daily*) gave me a cello and makes me play again. We have

— **As a musician, how did you decide to go into cinema?**

— I didn't want to go to music school at all, I was forced to, but I don't regret it, though. I lived in Saratov and studied classical music and at the local philology department at the same time, I really liked doing scientific work. Studying the poetics of Gogol, doing a linguistic analysis of Dostoyevsky's texts. But at the end of the third year, I began to feel like a pathologist who delves into texts like in corpses, but does not create anything herself. In music it was the same, we played someone else's. And I wanted to do it myself.

Cinema in my life appeared by accident. I fell in love with a guy, a musician who studied at VGIK. At first we wandered between cities, then it became clear that we had to move to him in Moscow. Since I have been engaged in scientific activities for a long time and participated in many readings at Moscow State University, I decided to transfer there. At the same time, I applied to VGIK, simply because the guy I fell in love with studied there. And then some organizational problems began – it was not a copy of the diploma that had to be given to Moscow State University, but the original, the original was already at VGIK, it was necessary to pick it up, make photocopies, certify something, deliver it back to universities. And I thought: well, whatever, if I don't enter VGIK, I'll return to Saratov. But I did.

Until that moment, I was terribly far from movies. In Saratov,



— **What did your actors, especially the witnesses of that time, bring to their characters?**

— Actors always bring something of their own. Maxim Sukhanov offered a lot. I answered my questions about the nineties, and he answered his own. Just like everyone who starred in this movie.

— **That is especially true for the former policeman, and today's actor Sergei Borisov.**

— Oh yeah, Seryozha first of all. When the arson scene was filmed, he was also on the set. He watched the hero get into the apartment and said: "You are doing everything very correctly with the picklocks, but you need to close up the peephole with chewing gum in the next apartment." And exactly, we almost screwed it up! It is the scene in the film. You will see how the character of Sasha Mizev glues the peephole. So thanks to Borisov for this detail.

— **As a musician, it's interesting to ask you: how did you work with the music in the film?**

— Jazz is the second thing that appeared in this story after the female character. Initially, the script was generally divided into chapters – by song titles. Cheek to Cheek, At Last and other compositions – I spent a long time choosing jazz standards. It was immediately clear that such an amount of famous jazz in the film is expensive. Fortunately, the producers agreed with the music, they realized that jazz is a character in this story.

a home joke: when I stop playing the cello, the world descends into chaos. When the pandemic began and the borders closed, my husband said: "Well, it's clear why this is all going on. Because you don't play the cello." But, you see, you don't necessarily have to play the piano or guitar for three years. You can pick it up one day and play something. Not excellent, with the loss of technique, but you can. But this will not work on the string instruments: in order to periodically play the cello, you have to practice every day for two hours. And then, after a while, there is a chance that you can play something. So far I have restored half of Rachmaninoff's Vocalise, that's all. You need to get your fingers running, and put the sound again.

— **You are said to have some kind of active orchestral past in Saratov.**

— (*Laughing*) That is, apparently, said by those who had read the script of the series QUARTET.

— **Or saw its pilot episode at the "Dvizhenie" festival.**

— Of course, the Quartet has a real basis, but an active orchestral past is the usual life of a classical musician in a music school. All the notions that these are people walking on air and pooping oranges is a lie. These are some of the most trashy people in the world. The number of situations they get into, the booze they drink, and the degree of freedom with which they interact with life are simply astonishing.

our television broke down and we never got it fixed. I read a lot, but I didn't watch anything at all. I have not even seen THE IRONY OF FATE. Sometimes at my grandmother's house I got into films of category B, American action films about police officers, I still love them very much. Before VGIK, I saw ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST, SOLARIS and 8½. These were the only three films from the film program that I saw at that time. And I entered the Screenwriting Department because I understood at least something about a word. Later, of course, I broke up with the boy, but stayed in movie industry.

— **What used to scare you away from a feature film and what fears were in vain?**

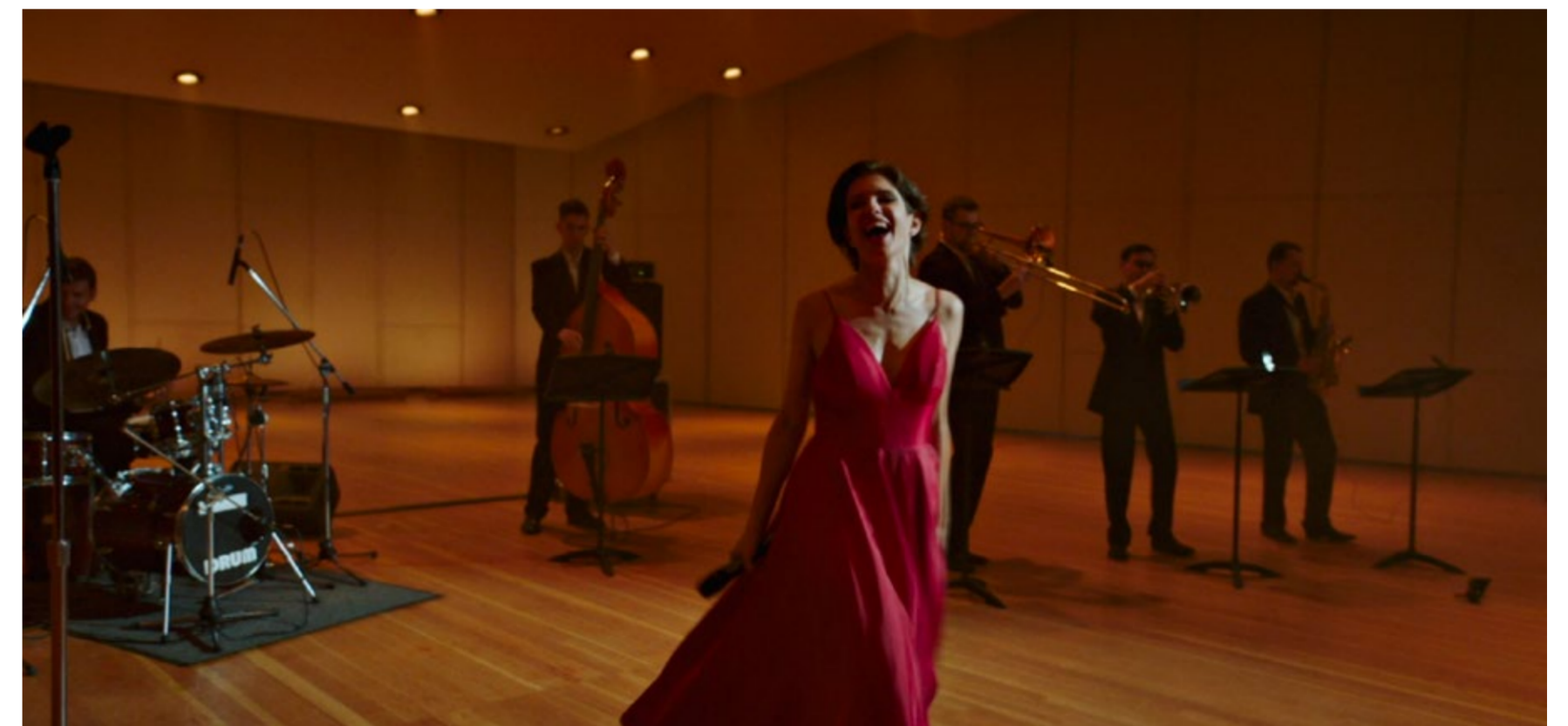
— Nothing scared away. I just never thought that I would film myself. Although in my fifth year at VGIK I shot a short film with familiar artists and a cameraman for free. I wanted to understand what is like to be a film director so that I could better work on the script later. That short film then, by the way, went through the festivals very well, we received prizes. When much later Lyosha (*Aleksey Smirnov. – VIFF Daily*) saw my short film, he said: "If I didn't know you, I would say that this girl has to become a director, just need to find a normal screenwriter, – everything is in this film excellent, except for the story. " I was laughing. Although, it seems to me, everything was fine there with the story. In general, apparently, I was just waiting for the breakthrough and the need to shoot.

As for my fears, I was terribly worried that the screenwriter was too much a screenwriter on the set, you see? Sticks to his text, does not interpret it, but forces everyone to strictly follow it.

The only person on set who didn't give a damn about the script was me. The cameraman Gleb Filatov and the second director Ksyusha Kukina periodically approached me and said: "Nastya, is it okay that in the script here it is written differently? Maybe we will stay within the script? " And I answered: "Do you see the scriptwriter here on the set? I do not".

— **You describe your work with Valery Todorovsky on the film Bolshoi as an accident and a miracle. Do you still understand what was the key to this cooperation on your part?**

— Because it really was a miracle. They searched for me and called me for a whole month, and I didn't understand what they were offering me, I was very reluctant to answer: "Well, let's try it." It's a miracle indeed they didn't hang up after the first conversation. And it is a pleasure to work with Valera on the script. He is one of the few Directors and producers in this country who understand scripts. He perfectly feels the text, knows that the text and the film are primary, respects the story, knows how to talk with the author, knows how to properly motivate the author.



— **Some young authors very easily weaken their position in working with experienced producers, agree to any edits, and also work for free, for the sake of filmography. Can you advise: how can a young author defend their interests – both artistic and financial? We know that you are very good at it.**

— You put it tactfully.

— **Of course, you can say otherwise: how to ask for such crazy cash for a script?**

— You just need to write this script cool. (*Laughs*.) But let's divide: there is a defense of the artistic aspects of the work. And there is the creation of conditions, including financial ones, in which you can give the best text. When it comes to defending artistic moments, this is always an important thing for me. I will fight desperately but not because I, Nastya Palchikova, want it, but because the text requires it. If you are a really good screenwriter, then you cannot afford to add any twist that the producer imposes on you to your story. Of course, I was terribly lucky in my life with both producers and directors. I have never worked with someone who did not understand that the character does not act according to the will of the producer. But anyway there will be things in the script that you need to rewrite, look for, defend. And this is part of the scriptwriter's job, his responsibility to the text. You are obliged to explain this to both the director and the producer, if necessary. You get paid for this, too. And I really don't

understand when the writers say, "I only make three edits – and I don't do any more." What is it like? And if there are four edits? Why don't you make the fourth edit? You did three, and then stop? Nonsense. I don't understand at all how you can count the edits to the script. It's not sewing shoes: here glue the sole to the right, here the lace should be longer, and it is ready. Script writing is a complex creative and mathematical process. And there are always a lot of edits. You need to write a script until you feel it on your own: Yes, that's it! And to feel it correctly, you have to deal with yourself, your spiritual life. This is basically exactly what crazy cash is spent on. When you realize how deep and long you are working on a script, you simply cannot do it for little money.

— **And what if the edits entail rewriting the script by 80 percent? And if, because of one edit, everything falls according like domino?**

— So, you have to rewrite everything, yes. I'm talking about this. If you start writing the script for real, rewriting it as much as necessary, bringing it to perfection, and immediately, believe me, you will begin to defend your fee, because your long torment will stand before your eyes, and your good text will stand before the eyes of the producers. Just recently I wrote the pilot episode of the series. And it turned out to be a good pilot. Both me and the producer liked it. But we did not calm down and began to look for a different form,

an informal style and occupy my own niche. But I soon realized that this was not the case. Our music market is tightly formatted and even a big label can't put a non-normative song on the radio. And what is considered a norm, the song that I had the most played on the radio. was my toughest compromise with myself. Yes, it was possible to make and promote your music on the Internet. Then it was just beginning, now it's absolutely real. But I just didn't have enough time for this. I guess I'm not a real musician.

— **Which song was a compromise with the format?**

— (*Sings*.) "Dance, give, breathe the same air with me, be with me for love."

— **I see.**

— Yes, I realized that nothing had started yet, and I had already exhausted all my stock of compromises. So she asked the label to let me go. And they did. As for solo work, it began in England. We performed with a band in London for the Russian-speaking audience, and one of the spectators brought there his English ladies, music managers. After the concert we drank with them. They said: "You need to sing in English, come, we will give you a studio. We'll try and record it". I replied, "I don't think I can write songs in English." They said: "Just come and we'll figure it out." I thought: well, why not? And I went. Then we sat down in a studio with different sound producers, and suddenly it turned out that it was

a different presentation, a different approach, with an eye to the whole season and so on. We searched, groped: and if we do this, will it be better? I rewrote this pilot completely four times. Completely. And every time it was a good script. We just wanted to make it more precise. The main thing is that the people who work with you are adequate. So that their edits come from the film, and not from petty tyranny. If it comes from petty tyranny, from the fact that it seems to them that they understand drama, or it seems to them that they need to correct it a little, not realizing that this will entail altering the entire text, run away from them. But in general, my main scriptural pain is that some of our producers are in a hurry to finish and submit the script. What for? Screenplay is the cheapest production stage, even with very expensive screenwriters. (*Laughs*.) And the most important stage. Give the writers time. They work for a long time not because they are lazy (when I write, I actually work every day), but because a good script takes time: to endure it, rewrite it, find the right solutions. In the West, TV series scripts are written for several years. It is right. If there are gaps and inaccuracies in your script, then everything will pop up on the set and, as a result, on the viewer's screen.

— **What place does music take in your life now? What about the band of Sukhie?**

— So the band ended long ago, and I left the label. When we were invited there, I had certain illusions that I could stay in

cool. The fact that the language is not native, oddly enough, turned out to be not a hindrance at all. We recorded an EP of three songs and one instrumental, and I returned back to Moscow. And then this EP went really well, took places in the European and British charts, and I was invited to write an album. I lived in London for a while, recorded an album, and then Masha started. And movies, of course, became my priority over everything.

— **Are there any prospects there?**

— On the one hand, there are a lot of cool musicians there. It feels like you are just one in a million. On the other hand, there are so many opportunities there to make any music and show it as nowhere else. Competition has never depressed me, I enjoy it. Well, London, of course, is still the capital of world music. If you want to be serious about music, you have to live in London or focus on London. No frames, no formats, no borders. You are writing in the studio, while a musician from The Prodigy sits in the next room. He can come in and say: "Oh, what is the processing on your drums? Cool sound!"

— **Where do you need to live to make movies?**

— In America, definitely: the most systemic film industry is there.

— **But you are here.**

— I'm here, yes. So what? But only here a girl from the street, a screenwriter, can kickstart herself and shoot her feature film.



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