



PRAGUE IFF – FEBIOFEST 2020 MAIN COMPETITION

The 27th Prague IFF – Febiofest presents for the first time its Main Competition, which will feature seven of the latest authorial pictures by emerging world-class directors. Across seven festival days, viewers will get the chance to watch the competing films both during a regular main competition time and in other time slots. The expert jury evaluating contenders will comprise three film professionals – Czech actor and director Jiří Mádľ, Hungarian director Ildikó Enyedi and Canadian director Denis Côté.

You Will Die at 20 (2019), dir. **Amjad Abu Alala** – screening attended by actor on 25/03 at 8:30pm

When a little boy named Muzamil is born in a small village in the Al Jazirah province in Sudan, a local prophet forecasts that he will die at the age of twenty. Muzamil's father cannot bear his son's curse and leaves the family. Muzamil lives only with his overly anxious mother and they both try to find the balance between growing up and the inescapable awareness of the end. The time flies mercilessly with tense expectation of the day of the boy's 19th birthday...

Amjad Abu Alala - the Sudanese director and producer was born in the UAE where he graduated from college and worked as a documentary director for Western as well as Arabic televisions. He has made numerous short films which are considered the new start of Sudanese cinema and were successful at many festivals. His feature debut, *You Will Die at 20*, premiered at Venice IFF and Toronto IFF.

Beanpole (2019), dir. **Kantemir Balagov** – screening attended by producer on 23/03 at 8pm

The siege of Leningrad during WWII took almost three years, and after it ended in 1945, it left the city and its inhabitants both physically and mentally in ruins. Looting, murders and cannibalism were a daily occurrence. Although one of the bloodiest sieges in the history of humankind is a thing of the past, life and death continue their battle. Two young women, Iya and Masha, strive to find a meaning of their existence again and build a new life amidst the rubble.

Kantemir Balagov - one of the greatest directing talents of today's Russia. His interest in photography and cinema led him to the Film Studies department, founded and run by director Alexander Sokurov. He debuted with *Closeness*, which earned him a FIPRESCI award at Cannes. His second feature *Beanpole* won the Best Director award in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes IFF.

Hope (2019), dir. **Maria Sødahl** – screening attended by director on 22/03 at 7 pm

An elderly artistic couple, Tomas and Anja, live in a seemingly content marriage, surrounded by a large family consisting of a dynamic mix of children and step-children. When Anja is diagnosed with brain cancer in its final stage just a day before Christmas and she realizes she has three months to live at most, she suddenly sees everything in a different light. Is it possible to catch up with years of neglected relationships and find lost love again in such a short time?

Maria Sødahl - the Norwegian director and screenwriter graduated from a Danish film college. She has made several television dramas, documentaries and short films based on her own scripts, winning numerous awards. Her feature debut, *Limbo*, won the Best Director award at Montréal IFF. *Hope* premiered at Toronto IFF and this year's Berlin IFF.

Martin Eden (2019), dir. **Pietro Marcello** – screening attended by lead actress on 26/03 at 8.30pm

This film adaptation of Jack London's novel is set in an unspecified period of Italian history. Martin Eden is doing everything he can to rise above the miserable conditions of the working class he comes from. He hopes intense self-studying will open the door to the world of the literary elite, and he will be able to marry a rich young woman. This



visually captivating narrative creates a fresco that resembles the greatest classics of the Italian cinema in many ways. Luca Marinelli as the lead won the Best Actor award at Venice IFF.

Pietro Marcello - the Italian director studied fine arts at an academy in Naples and got involved in cinema as an assistant of director Leonardo Di Constanza. After several short and mid-length films, he debuted with feature documentary *The Mouth of the Wolf* which won at Berlin IFF. *Martin Eden* is his second live-action film and premiered at Venice IFF.

Servants (2019), dir. **Ivan Ostrochovský** – screenings attended by artistic delegation on 20.3. at 8.30pm and on 21.3. at 7pm

Michal and Juraj are theological seminary students in the totalitarian Czechoslovakia of the 1980s. Their teachers worry that the regime could shut the school down, so they urge the students to behave in such a way that would be satisfactory for the Communist Party. Both young men are nearing a tough decision. Will they succumb to temptation, choose the easier way and submit to pressure, or will they refuse to bow down and be forced to face the ever-vigilant Big Brother?

Ivan Ostrochovský - the Slovak filmmaker graduated in audiovisual studies and documentary film in Bratislava, and continued working there as a director and producer. After several documentaries, he directed his first live-action film, *Goat*, which premiered at Berlin IFF. He worked on his latest film, *Servants*, as a screenwriter, director and producer. The film premiered at this year's Berlin IFF.

Honey Boy (2019), dir. **Alma Har'el**

Based on actor Shia LaBeouf's own script, the film tells the story of his tumultuous childhood and growing up, the path to fame, and his eventual breakdown in adulthood. LaBeouf rose to the considerable, yet therapeutic challenge and portrayed his own abusive father. He attempts to reconcile with him through the film and rediscover his inner balance. This biographical drama explores the therapeutic possibilities of art and shows imagination as a way to preserve hope.

Alma Har'el - the Israeli director and producer, mainly of music videos, established her reputation with her documentary feature debut *Bombay Beach* which won the Best Documentary Award at Tribeca festival. Her live-action debut *Sladký chlapec* won the Special Jury Award for an international live-action film for its unique vision and craft at Sundance.

Kill It and Leave This Town (2020), dir. **Mariusz Wilczyński** screening attended by director on 24/03 at 8:30pm

After losing his loved ones, the main protagonist shuts himself away in the land of memories where everybody is still alive. As years go by, the dreamed city keeps growing and gets inhabited by uninvited literary characters and comic book heroes. The characters, who are forever the same age in the stories, suddenly start ageing. The main protagonist decides to return to reality – but will it even be possible? This animated feature by a legend of Polish animation world-premiered at Berlin IFF.

Mariusz Wilczyński - the self-taught director has been making auteur animated films for over 20 years. Retrospectives of his work have been hosted by such institutions as MoMA in New York, Tokyo International Forum, and the National Museum in Warsaw. He teaches animation at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, and worked on his first feature *Kill It and Leave This Town* for the last 11 years.