



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival

Festival Daily

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PRÁVO

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I wish there was more curiosity

John Malkovich says he'd like to work with Peter Greenaway

Veronika Bednářová

American film and theater actor, director and producer John Malkovich is at KVIFF this week to receive a Crystal Globe for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to World Cinema. He has enjoyed much success as a prominent member of Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company, appearing in award-winning productions of Sam Shepard's *True West* and Stephen Jeffrey's *Lost Land* as well as directing Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*.

He also has numerous film credits to his name, including *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Changeling*, *Burn after Reading*, and *Being John Malkovich*. As part of a tribute to Malkovich, KVIFF will be presenting a special screening of his directorial debut, the romantic thriller *The Dancer Upstairs*. He took time out to speak to the *Festival Daily* yesterday and also held court at a packed press conference in the Thermal Hotel.

■ **You're one of the charter members of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. Why did you establish that company? What was missing in the Chicago theater scene in the 1970s?**

Well, nothing really... It was a bunch of kids. We went to school together and we wanted to keep working together... I wouldn't have any career if it weren't for Steppenwolf. I definitely would not have become an actor.

■ **What did you learn there?**

Everything. How to act, how to work with people, how to work in a collective, how to collaborate, how to encourage and give respect and receive encouragement, which I was never very good at...

■ **Was there anything in par-**

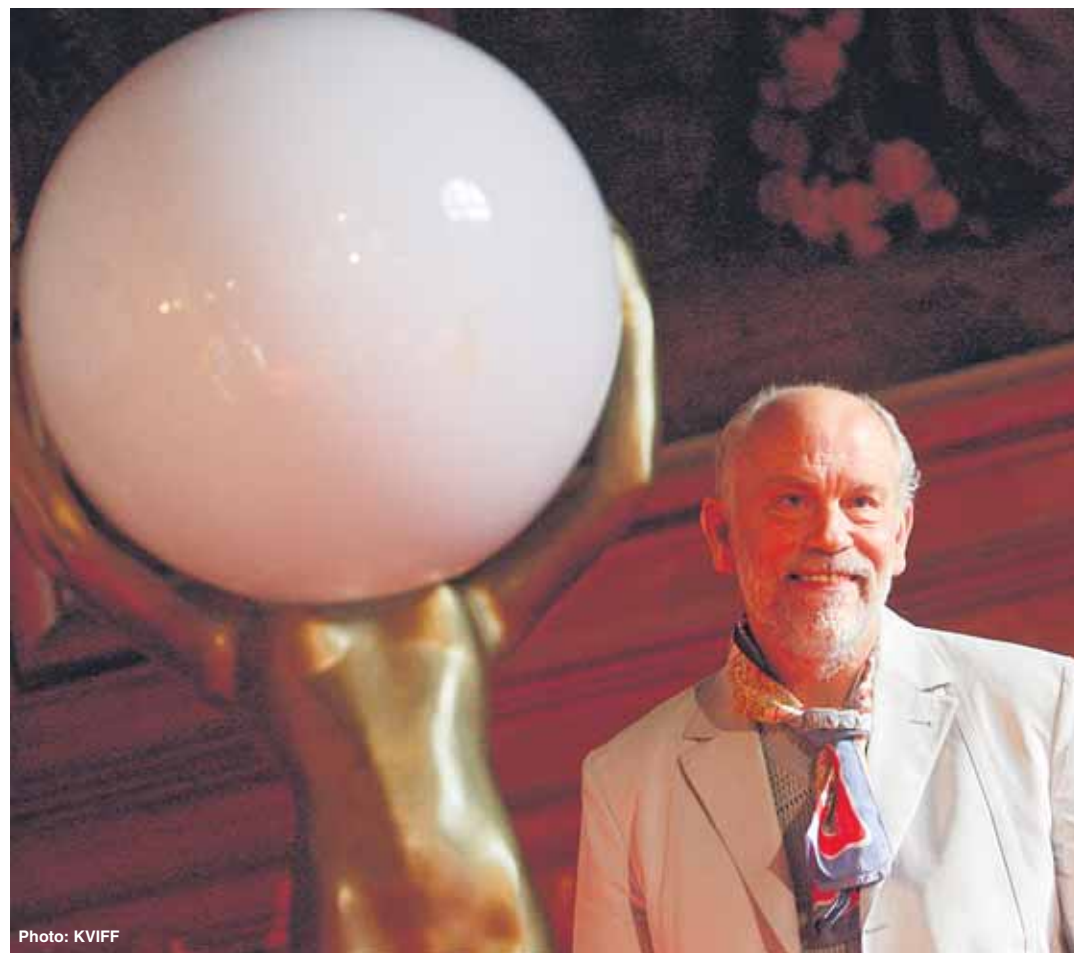


Photo: KVIFF
John Malkovich giving a KVIFF Master Class yesterday.

ticular you wanted to say about the world back in the 1970s?

I mistrust anybody who says anything about the world. I think we wanted to say that we – meaning people anywhere – are sufficient as a field of study.

■ **Why do you still do so much theater? It's time-consuming and hard work.**

Well, why do ice skaters skate? You know, Katerina Witt got famous but she still ice skates... But you don't do theater to make money. You do theater because you have to. Because you get enriched by theater in a way you couldn't get anywhere else –

I couldn't. It's not an obligation and I love doing plays elsewhere. I just did one in Vienna.

■ **And what is it that you like so much about acting?**

Well, it depends on if it's acting in the theater or acting in movies, but generally I like the chance to pretend to live other lives because apparently we only have one, as far as I know.

■ **The roles you play in *Changeling* and *Burn after Reading* were completely different, but they were both brilliant. What kind of condition are you in right now, as an actor?**

I've always been in a good con-

dition. It really depends on what you're offered, you know? And what you get to do, really. I've always worked hard, I've always been interested. I have several actor friends who really don't care about it at all.

■ **Is there a director you'd like to work with?**

Well, I may do a film with Peter Greenaway, who's always interested me. There are many I'd like to work with again. I'd like to work with Raoul Ruiz. I actually loved working with Bernardo [Bertolucci] too, with Manuel de Oliveira... I never got to work with Herzog, so far, which I regret because I think he's fantastic. He's so unique. I find him extremely funny, one of the great comic directors. I never worked with Jim Jarmusch. I never worked with any of the Spanish. Not so many French either.

■ **Having lived on both continents, what do you think are the biggest prejudices Europeans have about Americans and vice versa?**

That's probably too complicated to address in a forum like this. Europeans have a tendency to know a lot more about America than let's say Americans know about Europe, but it's also true that a lot of what Europeans know about America is wrong. America is a country that was founded to a great, great extent to escape Europe... and to escape Europe's history, strife, and struggles... America's also very big so it's not a surprise that they don't know a lot about Europe. It's sometimes sad for me, as it is on any topic, when there's a sort of lack of curiosity about others, about their history and their culture. Of course there isn't time to learn everything about everybody. But sometimes I wish there was more curiosity and I wish there was more experience.

■ ***The Dancer Upstairs* screens today at 5pm in the Thermal's Grand Hall.**

THE LOWDOWN

Checking out the real side of the stars is one of the great joys of film fests, surely.

At last year's Transylvania fest, for example, the grand dame of French cinema, Catherine Deneuve, revealed her true colors just moments after landing. Apparently unaware that most Romanians speak French, she settled into the car sent for her at the Cluj airport and complained that the festival head wasn't there to greet her. "What is this?" she said in Gallic. "They send the cleaning woman for me?" But journos who packed the press conference with John Malkovich Thursday at KVIFF hoping for similar snottiness left utterly charmed by the self-effacing Chicagoan. He was eloquent and informed about European cinema, writers, opera... he answered every question graciously and thoughtfully... and actually seemed to enjoy riffing on the odd nature of celebrity and the expectations of the masses. When asked about what roles in his substantial film career he has most identified with personally, he confessed it is probably the character Alan Conway in the 2005 comedy *Colour Me Kubrick: A True...ish Story*. The man jets around Europe pretending to be the great filmmaker/auteur, despite knowing almost nothing about Kubrick films and looking nothing like him. Like Conway, said Malkovich, "I go around pretending to be John Malkovich." ■

NOTICE: Tomorrow's scheduled screening of Felice Farina's *The Physics of Water* in the Espace Dorleans Cinema at 7pm has been cancelled. There will be an additional screening of the Czech film *Guard No. 47* tomorrow evening at 6:30pm in the Thermal's Cinema B. ■

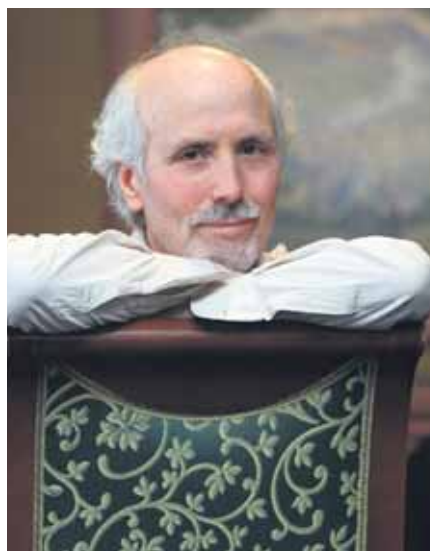
SEE YOU THERE

Alan Rudolph

Director

I'm at a film festival in the beautiful town of Karlovy Vary. At film festivals, it's the filmmakers' job to drink and talk and never see other people's films, but were I to see a film or two, I'd go to *Himalaya, Where the Wind Dwells*. I like the sound of this film – someone on a trek who doesn't talk. Sounds like my life! I would also like to see *Cold Souls*, because Paul Giamatti is one of my favorite actors. He's probably a very warm soul, so I want to see how it got cold. I'd like to see *Humpday* as well, because the filmmaker Lynn Shelton lives in the city of Seattle where I live and I root for my hometown!

Cold Souls is playing today at 10am in the Espace Dorleans Cinema and this screening is followed by *Himalaya, Where the Wind Dwells* at the same venue at 1 pm. *Humpday* screens at 7pm in the GH Pupp Cinema. You can also see Alan's *Trouble in Mind* today at 1pm in the Thermal's Congress Hall.



THE KNOWLEDGE

How does KVIFF select its program?

Selecting films for a big operation like KVIFF is no easy task. The KVIFF programming team spends the whole year between each festival viewing potential films and travelling to other festivals in order to narrow down the selection. "We start almost immediately after the previous festival," says program director Julietta Sichel. "First we start working on the retrospectives and on ideas for special focuses and sections which change every year." Sometimes encounters at the festival one year will lead to a whole new section the following year. "For example the Japanese section that we did this year, we already agreed on it at last year's festival because Kanako Hayashi from the

TOKYO FILMeX festival was a jury member here, so almost immediately after the festival we decided to do this little section together," says Sichel. "The same with the section focusing on Russian female directors. After *Mermaid* won the Independent Camera we saw that it could be good to take a look at what's happening in Russian cinema, especially focusing on female directors," says Sichel.

When it comes to deciding what personalities will feature in special tributes it is usually connected with some anniversary or with somebody really interesting being available to attend the festival. "Like we have been thinking of Alan Rudolph for several years... so we are happy that he



agreed. He was the perfect choice for the Forum of Independents," says Sichel. "And we had been thinking of Patrice Chéreau and as soon as he said he was available to come the retrospective was prepared." Filmmakers are also invited to submit their work directly themselves.

"Immediately after the festival we open our website and our offices to submissions so people start sending DVDs," says Sichel. "I have actually already got some DVDs here for next year! Films that are in post production and will be ready soon." ■