



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival

Festival Daily

THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH DAILY OF THE 44TH KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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PRÁVO

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DENÍKU **PRÁVO**

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I won't settle for less

Altman protégé Alan Rudolph refuses to conform to the Hollywood mold

Will Tizard

Alan Rudolph is the kind of filmmaker the new generation comes to festivals to discover. Currently living a quiet life on an island in Puget Sound, Washington, Rudolph is these days bemused when hopeful writers send him a script, believing that he can get it made, he says. Although critics and film lovers heaped praises on his stylized stories and characters, as seen in such films as *Welcome to L.A.* (1976), *Choose Me* (1984), *Trouble in Mind* (1985), *The Moderns* (1988), *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle* (1994) and *The Secret Lives of Dentists* (2003), Rudolph jokingly says he has a knack for doing the last project of a studio or distributor before they go out of business. The soft-spoken, ironic and droll lifetime West Coaster, who was influenced and inspired by mentor Robert Altman, also says he has no interest in chasing funding to make films – and even less in making more commercially viable work to attract more backers.

■ **Even though you grew up in a film family and in Hollywood, in many ways you chose to turn your back on that, and you do your film writing from the Pacific Northwest. What's the trade-off in being that remote?**

I guess LA, for this conversation, is pretty much about the movie business. But the trap and the trappings of LA never interested me. I grew up there; that was enough. I haven't done a lot of film work lately ... Because of the kind of films I made, I was always living film-to-mouth and just barely hanging on. (As for my KVIFF Forum of Independents screenings) I'm going to see most of these films because I haven't seen them for 20, 30 years. These are the only prints in existence. I know because they're mine. I feel like the Claude Rains of American film – I'm the Invisible Man, you know.

■ **You've managed to achieve incredible atmosphere, mood, even soundscapes rich in blues, jazz and lyrical dialogue on such low budgets. Would that have ever happened if you'd had lots of big studio offers?**

I've never received a call – ever – where

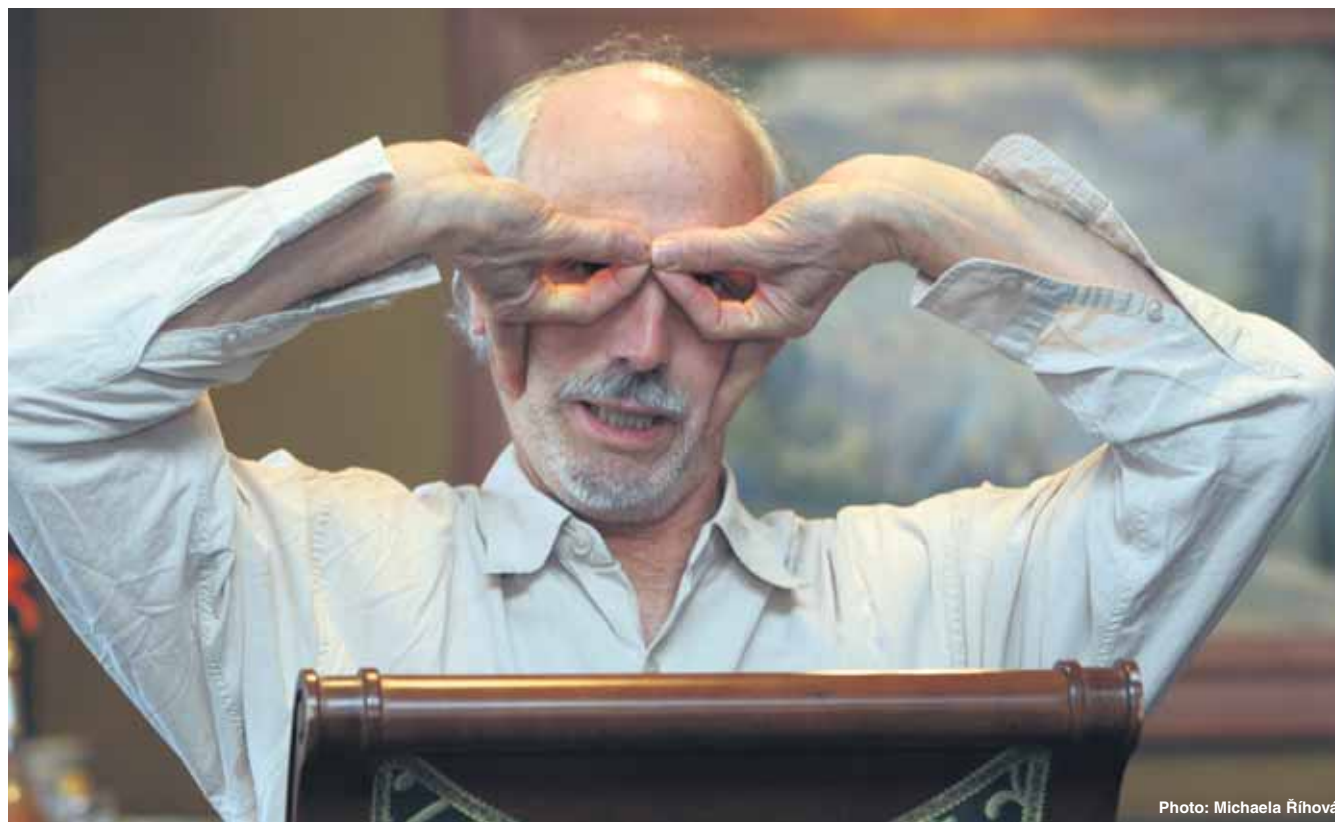


Photo: Michaela Říhová

Director Alan Rudolph, in KVIFF this week for a tribute by the Forum of Independents sidebar.

someone says, "Well, what do you want to do next? We want to make your movie with you." Raising money is just no fun and I just don't have the connections, the juice, any more. I'm not interested in that. I want to make films, of course... Altman used to say, even said it when he got his Oscar, "Nobody ever got a better shake than I did, had a better run than I did." Because he did everything on his own terms. Well, I can't say that, but I can say it with an asterisk. I at least got to make most of them on my own terms, even though they might have been better or whatever, that's the most valuable thing.

■ **Many credit you with being one of the first true American independents. Did you think of yourself that way as you were getting started in the 1970s and stepping out on your own after assisting and writing for Altman?**

I don't like the label because it was com-

pletely appropriated by all the wrong people – by Miramax, by people who didn't want you to be independent but wanted to dine out on the illusion of that. So what is a name? But when I started doing this, there wasn't that convenient label. In fact, there was nothing convenient about it. And I thought this is really terrific. So to make really low-budget movies – I mean, I made five, six movies under 1 million USD – with really good actors. And no one else was interested in doing that and everyone who puts up financing was, at the time, reluctant but tempted to see what might happen. That seemed to be a way to keep going. And it got very crowded.

■ **How did you achieve that amazing ensemble chemistry with the core of excellent, unconventional actors you often used – Keith Carradine, Geneviève Bujold, Lori Singer, Kris Kristofferson?**

Actors like working on my films. Altman never once said to an actor, "Say it like this, look over here." He'd say, "Insult his shoes in the middle of this scene." So the actors knew the characters were theirs exclusively. Paul Schrader's characters are very troubled from the start. Mine are more like blank slates I keep heaping stuff onto.

■ **How was your writing shaped by your service with Altman?**

I think we overlapped some when we were writing but we were completely different people. He worked from the inside out – this is a movie about country music or reinventing the western. I say it's about the color blue or this guy who lives in a hole. The greatest thing I ever learned from him was this: Know what you want and don't settle for anything less. Doesn't matter what's in your way. Those people don't even exist unless you let them.

THE LOWDOWN

Want to get **up-close-and-personal** with your favorite directors? The Lowdown has a foolproof tip: Just cram onto the last bus out of the *Variety* party, held each year at the posh, if rustic, Poštovní dvůr. Hacks and filmmakers gather there each year to cheer on the awarding of plaques to 10 emerging filmmakers from Central and Eastern Europe and rock out to the great sounds that invariably take the stage here – this year it was the Balkan groove-masters Gothart, who got the crowd dancing despite a steady drizzle.

But let's return to that 2am bus back to town, which was **stuffed like a klobasa casing**. Intrepid Lowdown scouts report standing cheek-to-cheek with cinematic luminaries and *Variety* guests such as **Tom Shankland**, director of *The Children* and **Darko Lungulov**, who made *Here and There*. And, no, we won't say which cheeks.

But hot action isn't limited to the **invitation-only parties**. In fact, one of the most refreshing sources of giddy atmosphere – and no shortage of affordable, convenient sustenance – is, of course, the tent in front of the Thermal serving mountains of the Slovak gnochki known as *halušky*. For all-night fueling, there's of course the **Captain Morgan Tent** just south of the Thermal. Though it must be reported that they were closing up shop at 5am, Tuesday, while trying to get the last customer out after he crashed through a table...

NOTICE: Today's scheduled screening of *The Physics of Water* at 7pm in the Espace Dorleans Cinema has been **cancelled** due to technical difficulties. KVIFF apologizes for any inconvenience caused. At 7pm tonight there will be an special unscheduled screening of *Looking for Eric* in the Espace Dorleans Cinema.

SEE YOU THERE

Davide Ferrario

Director, *Freedom*

I saw *Intimacy* when it came out and at the time there was a scandal about the fact that there was real sex in the movie... I think the really important thing was trying – and Chéreau did it very well – to show a new kind of relationship between men and women. It's easy to show sex, but once you've shown that, it's what's behind it that's interesting. There are four Italian films playing and they're very different, *La Pivellina*, *Mid-August Lunch*, *A Whole Life Ahead* and *Escape from the Call Center*. I don't know if it's possible to see all of them, but together they create an interesting portrayal of Italy today.

Intimacy screens today at 11.30am in the Thermal's Grand Hall. *La Pivellina* screens today at 11am in the Karlovy Vary Municipal Theater. *Mid-August Lunch* screens today at 9.30pm in the Thermal's Small Hall. *A Whole Life Ahead* screens today at 4.30pm in the GH Pupp Cinema. *Escape from the Call Center* screens today at 4pm in the Espace Dorleans Theater.



THE KNOWLEDGE

Beyond movie theaters: KV's other attractions...

The **Diana Lookout Tower**, located in the forests behind the Grandhotel Pupp, offers a fantastic view of the town and its surroundings. If you're feeling energetic you can trek up to the tower on foot or take a cable car from the station near the Grandhotel Pupp. The cable car runs from 9.15am to 6.45pm, at 15-minute intervals. A return ticket costs 36 CZK.

Another option is a trip to the **Jan Becher Museum** (pictured) located at T. G. Masaryka 57. Becher traditional herbal liqueur, or Becherovka, is manufactured only in Karlovy Vary, having first been produced by Josef Becher at his chemist shop in 1807. A tour includes a short film about Becherovka, a walk through the original cellars, where the liqueur matures in oak casks, and the production premises.



can take a tour, and a large shop where you can purchase a wide range of Moser goods. The museum is open to visitors daily from 9am to 5pm, the glassworks from 9am to 2.30pm and the shop from 9am to 6pm. The entrance fee to the museum is 80 CZK (50 CZK for children/students), to the glassworks 120 CZK (70 CZK), or a combined ticket for the museum and glassworks is 180 CZK (100 CZK).

There is also an exhibition of objects historically connected with Becherovka. The museum is open daily from 9am to 5pm. Admission is 100 CZK for adults and 50 CZK for children and students.

The **Moser Visitors' Center** at Kpt. Jaroše 19 consists of a museum that charts the history of the Moser glassworks, the glassworks itself, where you