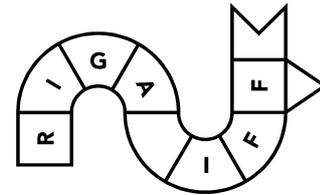


15th of December, 2014



Riga IFF attracts attention of the local audience and the foreign press

The copious offer of film industry events in December has attracted not only attention of the local cinemagoers but also has fostered the foreign media interest about the film industry in Latvia. Foreign journalists and film experts, interested in the EFA awarding ceremony held in the Latvian National Opera, in their articles have also reported on the Riga International Film Festival (Riga IFF), its industry section events ("Riga Meetings" by the National Film Centre and "European Script Meeting" presented by the festival 2ANNAS) as well as commented the best recent Latvian films, the prize-winners of „Lielais Kristaps”, the National Film Festival, held within the Riga IFF.

Aija Bērziņa, festival's producer and the author of its idea comments: "It is clear now, that Latvian film professionals' idea, which we have been cherishing for more than a year, to benefit the fact that the EFA's awarding ceremony would be held in Riga as an opportunity to present to the world local achievements in the field, has been successfully accomplished." Bērziņa continues: "I am very glad that the first edition of the Riga IFF was held in such an important moment when Riga was at the limelight of the film industry journalists, producers and other film professionals. During the festival, the audience had a chance not only to attend screenings of the most significant Latvian film productions but also to take part into the abundant industry events programme "Riga Meetings" presented by the National Film Centre."

The first Riga International Film Festival, held right before the awarding ceremony of "European Oscars", from 2nd to 12th of December, was covered in a list of prestige foreign film industry media. For example, the noteworthy "Screendaily.com" describes the Riga IFF as a Latvian attempt to revive the presence of a significant film festival after the termination of the favoured Film Festival "Arsenāls". Furthermore, the article expands with a special interest on the prizewinning films of the National Film Festival "Lielais Kristaps" which was held within the Riga IFF: "Mother, I Love You" by Jānis Nords and "Modris" by Juris Kursietis. The article offers an extensive review on the "Riga Meetings" programme by the National Film Centre and the upcoming film projects of "European Script Meeting", an industry event presented by the film festival „2ANNAS".

To continue, "Cineuropa.org" offers a special focus on Latvian films and the prize-winners of the National Film Festival "Lielais Kristaps". It also emphasizes the presence of festival's guest of honour Liv Ullmann, Norwegian actress and director, who was entitled to grant the award for a lifelong contribution to Latvian cinematography to the creative tandem Ivars Seleckis and Maija Selcka. Latvian film industry is also reviewed by the prestige "Hollywoodreporter.com" in the article "Tiny Latvia Looking West as Film Industry Expands" which stresses the fact that Riga, which this year enjoys the privilege to be both, the European Capital of Culture and the host of the EFA's awarding ceremony, is strengthening ties between its local film industry and international partners. The article also mentions the Riga IFF which, during 10 days before the EFA's ceremony, offers Latvian films to the foreign press and film industry representatives as well as „Riga Meetings" programme in order to emphasize the advantages of shooting in Latvia.

"Nevertheless, the focus of the Riga IFF lies not only in reinforcing the Latvian film industry, the viewer is equally important. This is why I am content of the abundant and versatile film programme we offer to our audience," confirms Sonora Broka, the director of the Riga IFF. "I am also delighted to have an opportunity to continue the children film festival tradition in Riga, within the Riga IFF, thereby ensuring a high quality and competitive alternative to the Hollywood productions." Riga IFF can also be proud of its impressive documentary programme "*Artdocfest/Riga*" which has been brought to Riga in collaboration with the independent Russian documentary festival "*Artdocfest*".

The audience was also offered the recent European film programme which embraced the EFA's nominees. As an essential additional to the screenings, within the festival's programme, all film enthusiasts had an opportunity to attend the open meetings with numerous filmmakers thereby obtaining a more precise impression about the film, its core idea and the producing process. For example, discussions held after "*Artdocfest/Riga*" programme's films tended to be especially passionate and the following screenings in many instances had to be postponed.

As it could be expected, the audience's favourites were films of the evening programme. An absolute front runner at the cinema "Splendid Palace" has been Roy Andersson's "A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence", the last part of his existential and comical trilogy. Meanwhile, the cinemagoers of the cinema "Kino Citadele" have preferred the Canadian young film genius Xavier Dolan's "Mommy". Nevertheless, at cinema "K.Suns" the audience has favoured Vitaly Mansky's documentary "The Pipeline".

A remarkable recognition gained Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy's „The Tribe“, a story about a struggle of a deaf and mute teenager facing the challenges of integration, the prize-winner of the EFA's European Discovery award. Not surprisingly, all screenings of "The Tribe" in Riga were nearly sold out and as witnesses report, the film's impact has been so overwhelming that a great deal of the audience was using the sign language when leaving the cinema.

The Riga IFF and the National Film festival were inaugurated on 2nd of December with a premiere of legendary director Herz Frank's "Beyond the Fear" in a presence of the film's co-director Maria Kravchenko. Within the documentary programme "*Artdocfest/Riga*" numerous filmmakers visited Riga: Vitaly Mansky with his film "The Pipeline", the Estonian director Meelis Muhu with his film "PMR", Madina Mustafina from Kazakhstan with her film "Come on, Scumbags!" and Roman Bondarchuk, editor of the Ukrainian film "Evromaiodan. Chornovy montazh". Meanwhile, the young spectators and the children jury held a meeting with the Danish director Esben Toft Jacobsen before the premiere of his "Beyond Beyond" at the cinema "Kino Citadele".

The awarding ceremony of the Riga International Film festival and the National Film Festival "Lielais Kristaps" was held on 11th of December at the "Daile Theater" granting awards in 24 nominations, including the award of "Lielais Kristaps" for a lifelong contribution to the Latvian cinematography which was granted by the Riga IFF's guest of honour, Norwegian diva Liv Ullmann. Film enthusiasts had a chance to meet the actress and director before the screening of "Miss Julie", a film directed by Ullmann and in an open discussion monitored by the film expert Viktors Freibergs as well as at the opening of the experienced Norwegian Film institute International Project manager Jan Erik Holst's book about the collaboration of the Baltic and the Nordic countries in the film industry "Stork Flying Over Pinewood".

For more information, please contact

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