

CAPRICCI PRESENTS

THE WOUNDED ANGEL



66^e Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama

A FILM BY EMIR BAIGAZIN



PRYS DE LA LOIRE



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BERLINALE
RESIDENCY



THE WOUNDED ANGEL

a film by Emir Baigazin

in Berlinale 2016 Panorama Specials

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KAZAKHSTAN, FRANCE, GERMANY - DRAMA - 112'

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PRODUCTION

Kazakhfilm JSC

Capricci Production

Augenschein Filmproduktion

INTERNATIONAL SALES

Capricci Films

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Arte France

Doha Film Institute

Vision Sud Est

Hubert Bals Fund

IN COOPERATION WITH

The Post Republic



SYNOPSIS

Mid-90s in Kazakhstan, a time of a deep economical crisis...

Zharas carries bags of flour to feed his family. His father just got out of prison and can't find a job, so he's on his own to allow his family to survive.

Chick has a wonderful voice and prepares to take part in a singing contest. But someday, new friends appear in his life.

Toad is hanging out in the ruins and sewers of his village, looking for metal scraps he could resell. One day he encounters three deranged young boys, the Gluesniffers, who show him a hidden treasure in an abandoned plant.

Aslan is a brilliant student who gets ready to enter a medical college in the city, but finds out that his girlfriend got pregnant unexpectedly. Realizing the hopelessness of the conditions in the village, he decides to assist her to have an abortion.

Four moral tales, four destinies of teenagers who will burn their wings to find a place in the miserable and tough climate of the real world.



BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1984 in Alga Province in Kazakhstan, Emir Baigazin studied at the Kazakh National Academy of Arts in Almaty, with the specialty of film direction and cinema. In September 2007, he studied in the Asian Film Academy (AFA) at the Busan International Film Festival led by Thai director Pen-Ek Ratana-ruang and Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf. In February 2008, he participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus at the 58th Berlin International Film Festival. His debut feature *Harmony Lessons* celebrated its premiere in the Berlinale Competition 2013, where it won a Silver Bear for an Outstanding Artistic Contribution and the Morgenpost Readers' Award. Among over 20 other recognitions worldwide, Emir Baigazin was awarded at the Tribeca Film Festival, the Sao Paulo Film Festival and the Seattle Film Festival as well as nominated for best Directing Achievement at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in Brisbane, Australia. Emir Baigazin was a member of the Juri "Pardi di domani" at the Locarno Film Festival 2013 as well as a part of the International Competition Jury at the Sao Paulo Film Festival (Brazil) 2014. In June 2015, he was a member of the Jury of the Art Film Fest in Trencin, Slovakia. His next full-length feature, *The Wounded Angel*, was supported by the Berlinale Residency 2013 and has won the International Arte Prize during the Berlinale Co-Production Market 2014. In August 2014 the project was awarded with the Work-in-Progress Prize at the Sarajevo Film Festival.

INTERVIEW

Why do you focus on teenagers and their coming of age?

Generally speaking, the films, which would complete my first trilogy, are not about teenage in the first place, and there is nothing autobiographical about it. The teenagers are only a tool to express the universal human conflicts, the flaws and problems, which interest me, in the most sensitive and clear way. In other words, looking on things through the prism of a teenaged mind is like looking through a magnifying glass. At the same time, it seems to me sometimes that humanity itself happens to be in a teenage stage: it is confronted with the same problems, warmongering, instigations... In *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, there's a key sentence of one of the characters: "If you understand that nobody will ever come to get us and we'll have to live here forever, then we shouldn't live like kids". And finally, as to why I chose to work on adolescents, it's also because I think it's a good, measured start. I am starting with teenagers and will finish with family dramas with older people. This is just the beginning.



How were you influenced by Hugo Simberg's painting?

At some point in my life I had a very hard period of time and suffered from depression. I absorbed everything that got into my hands and was read by me. These were books on aesthetics, ethics, with the focus on image and spirit. It was like a new birth for me. The four stories of *The Wounded Angel* were formed in my mind during the editing of my first movie. And when I stumbled again on the work of Hugo Simberg while going through one of the books on painting, I realized that I wasn't alone. This painting was like the quintessence of the four stories.

How did you choose the teenagers for the film?

Casting for the characters took place in all Kazakhstan. If I remember correctly we did three rounds of cast. The main character from *Harmony Lessons*, Timur Aidarbekov, played a cameo role of a Glue-sniffer, who actually tells the monolog about the Wounded Angel, whom he and his friend meet in the other world after sniffing glue. Also Omar Adilov, who plays the main role in the last story, came from the *Harmony Lessons*.

Why does fate and fatality fall upon your characters?

Generally speaking, each of my four characters has to face a moral dilemma... However, the most important point in my stories is their realization that the choice they made was a mistake. Basically, the period in which *The Wounded Angel* takes places, the 1990s, was a time of terrible crisis when the switching off of electricity, overpopulated orphanages and criminal laws became a normality for ordinary people. This is precisely why I chose it as a set for *The Wounded Angel*.

**How did you decide to base the movie on four separate stories?**

I didn't want to connect the stories and characters with each other. This way seemed to me too easy to reveal the unity of the 4 stories. And this is just a technical aspect. So I chose the most difficult path. I chose separate stories which would together create a unity on a very subtle, emotional level: that the idea of the film wouldn't be contained in one story, but continue its movement in the next one. After all, the culmination of the film is the last story, which acts as sort of a verdict, as a solution for the previous ones. Its main idea is the "irreversibility of life". Life will always go on, no matter what. So for me it's even optimistic in some way.

PAST AWARDS

FOR *HARMONY LESSONS* (2013)

SILVER BEAR for an outstanding artistic contribution

at the Berlinale 2013

Prize of The Berliner Morgenpost Readers' Jury for best feature film

at the Berlinale 2013

Nomination and « High Commendation » in Directing Achievement

for an Asia Pacific Screen Award

Grand Prix and Special Critics Prize at the San Paolo Film Festival in Brazil

Special Jury Mention (Best New Narrative Director) at TriBeCa Film Festival

Grand Prize at Basel-Bildrausch

Grand Jury Prize at Seattle Film Festival

Grand Prize and Trencin Mayor Award at the Film Art Festival Trencin

Best Director at the IFF in Sakhalin « Kraisveta »

Grand Prix at the Swiss Festival « Films From Russia and Beyond »

Grand Prix at the IFF «2morrow» in Moscow

NETPAK Prize (Best Asian Film) at the Warshaw Film Festival

NETPAK Prize (Best Asian Film) at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival

Best Debut Feature at the Philadelphia FF

Special Jury Mention at the Gent Film Festival, Belgium

Grand Prix « Golden Unicorn » at the FF Amiens, France

Best Actor at the FF Amiens

Special Jury Award João Bénard da Costa at Lisbon Film Festival

Grand-Prix at Festival Premiers Plans in Angers

Special Jury Prize at the Tokyo FilmEX

Special Jury Prize (« Christal Semiurg ») at the Teheran IFF

First Feature Award at International Film Festival Washington, DC

Emerging Filmmaker Award at Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival

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PRODUCTION

KazakhFilm Studios JSC

Augenschein Filmproduktion

Capricci Production

PRODUCERS

Anna Vilgelmi

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CO-PRODUCERS

Thierry Lounas

Jonas Katzenstein

Maximiliano Leo

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Yves Cape

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Sergey Kopylov

SOUND

Markus Krohn

CAST

Nurlybek Saktaganov

Madiyar Aripbay

Madiyar Nazarov

Omar Adilov

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