THE
WAITING
ROOM
a film by Igor Drljača
Festival del film Locarno
Official selection

2015 - 92 min - Canada - English, Bosnian - Colour - DCP - 5.1

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

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SYNOPSIS

Jasmin, once a successful actor in former Yugoslavia, now lives in Toronto with his second wife and young son. While juggling a construction job and a busy audition schedule, he dreams of re-launching an old televised stage show that made him famous in his homeland. When he is cast in a role that triggers recollections of the civil war, he is forced to reconcile his current reality with memories of his past success.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The idea behind *The Waiting Room* is rooted in the experiences of performers from former Yugoslavia in Toronto. It combines fiction with biographical elements, and is partially inspired by the lead actor, Jasmin Geljo's life in Toronto. Jasmin was a successful actor in pre-war Sarajevo, and was part of a wildly popular televised stage show *Audicija (The Audition)*, many of whose members are still successful actors today. Jasmin, like many others, left his homeland during the war in the 1990's, aware that his stay would likely be permanent, but always hoping to return. Željko Kecojević, who plays Zoran in the film, was also a member of *Audicija,* and like Jasmin, moved to Toronto during the war.

I was very drawn to the idea of exploring the intersection between reality and fiction in this film. Above all, it was important to me to ensure that *The Waiting Room* would be a character study of an immigrant performer rather than a film about immigration. Unable to recapture the better professional years before the war, Jasmin resists becoming fully invested in his life in Canada, despite having started a new family. His first wife and daughter are in many ways more present than his current family, despite time and distance having taken a toll on their relationships.

Through the use of long takes and a formal playfulness that moves between a heightened sense of displacement and Jasmin's often humorous day to day experiences, I wanted to explore the specific difficulties that performers have in new countries. As they grow old, they second-guess their decision to come to a place that has limited creative opportunities, and blame their adopted countries for their own shortcomings.

In approaching the film, one of my key considerations was to never show anything from the war, but rather to tie every scene into the present. When Jasmin is cast as a silent actor for an installation that shows an "idyllic" trip from costal Croatia into the heartland of pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, I wanted to blur the lines of fiction and re-creation, the tragic and the absurd.

This emotional tug of war is commonly experienced by those who didn't immigrate on their own terms. They often feel that the momentum of history is responsible for their predicament, and can end up surrendering their own sense of agency to fate.

—Igor Drljača

DIRECTOR BIO

Igor Drljača

Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Igor Drljača moved to Canada in 1993 due to the wars in former Yugoslavia. He completed his Master's in Film Production at York University's graduate program in 2011. He runs the production company TimeLapse Pictures with Albert Shin. His award winning shorts include *Woman in Purple* (2010), and *The Fuse: or How I Burned Simon Bolivar* (2011), which have screened at hundreds of festivals. His critically acclaimed feature film *Krivina* (2012) premiered at TIFF. In 2014, he co-produced Albert Shin's *In Her Place*. *The Waiting Room* is his sophomore feature.

ACTOR BIO

Jasmin Geljo

Born in 1959 in Sarajevo, Jasmin finished Sarajevo's Academy of Dramatic Arts, and appeared in many Yugoslav films, including *When Father was Away on Business* (1985). In the mid 1980's, Jasmin began to tour as part of the wildly popular stage show *Audicija*, which was seen by millions in the former Yugoslavia. Following the war, he moved to Canada, where he continues to perform. He has appeared in films and on TV, including *Assault on Precinct 13* (2005), *Land of the Dead* (2005), *The Sentinel* (2006), *Zone of Separation* (2009) and *Krivina* (2012).

CAST

Jasmin	JASMIN GELJO
Daniel	FILIP GELJO
Daughter	MAŠA LIZDEK
Patricia	MA-ANNE DIONISIO
Azra	CYNTHIA ASHPERGER
Zoran	ŽELJKO KECOJEVIĆ
Miro	GORAN SLAVKOVIĆ
Derek	CHRISTOPHER JACOT
Svetlana	INKA MALOVIĆ
Melisa	TATJANA ČORNIJ
Vanja	DANIELA VLASKALIĆ
Father	EMIR GELJO
Sister	DRAGANA VARAGIĆ

CREW

Written & Directed By - IGOR DRLJAČA
Story By - IGOR DRLJAČA, JASMIN GELJO

Produced By - IGOR DRLJAČA, ALBERT SHIN
MUNIRE ARMSTRONG, JORDAN BARKER,
BORGA DORTER

Director of Photography - ROLAND ECHAVARRIA
Production Designer - RACHEL McPARLAND
Editor - AJLA ODOBAŠIĆ
Music - MITCHELL AKIYAMA
Costume Designer - TIFFANY BRISENO
Sound Mixer and Boom - ALEX TURNER
Supervising Sound Mixer - MATTHEW CHAN
Supervising Sound Editor - ROB HUTCHINS

Produced by

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