

A young girl with light-colored hair is the central focus, wearing a dark, textured hooded garment that covers her head and neck. She has a neutral, somewhat somber expression and is looking directly at the camera. The background is dark and out of focus, showing a doorway or window with a silhouette of another person in the distance. The overall mood is mysterious and somber.

I'm Afraid The Bird Will Die

A film by Stefan Djordjevic

Production : EDDY & SERVIA FILM

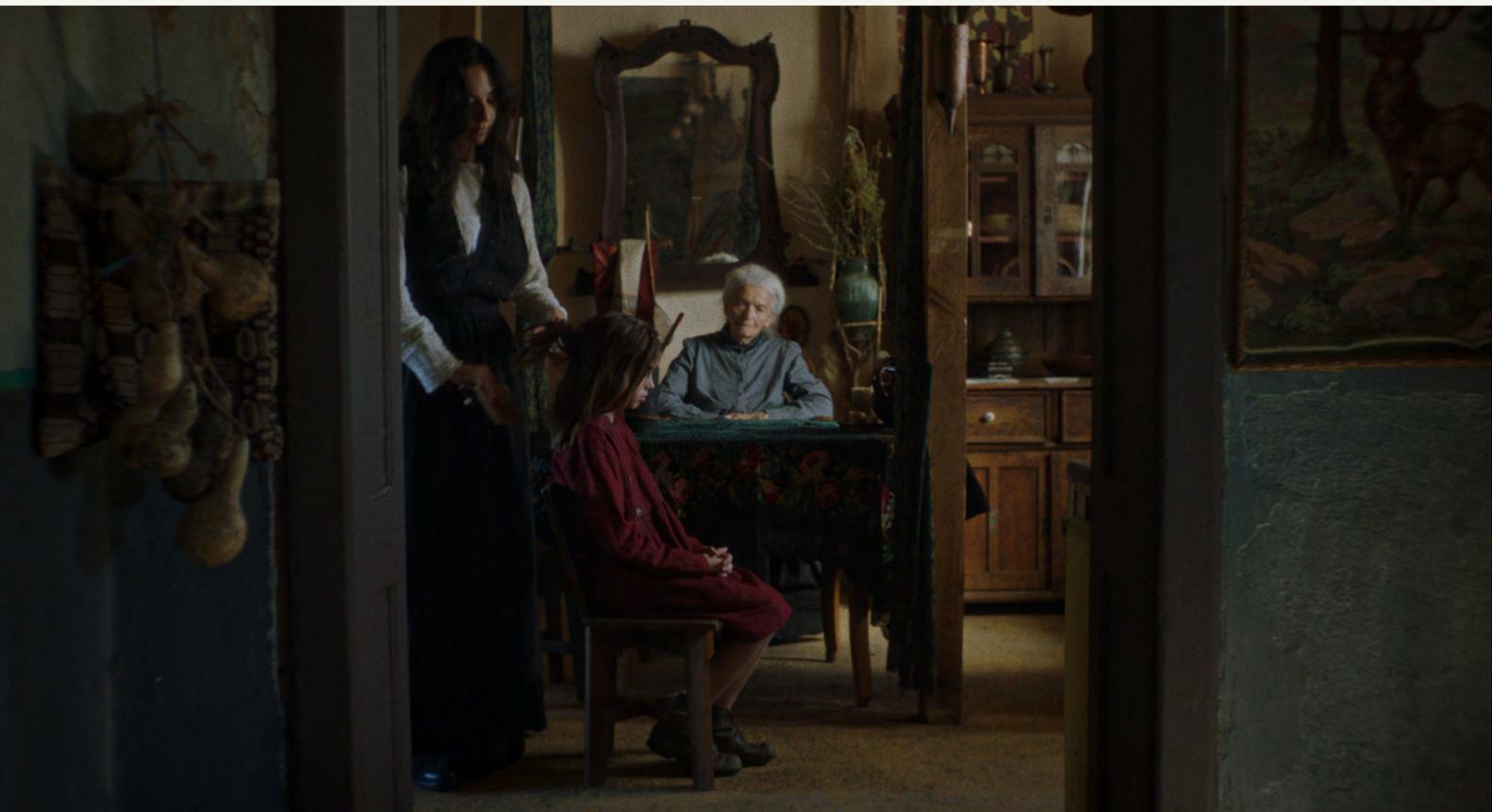
Music : J.R. AUGUST

Label : CROATIA RECORDS

Synopsis



An isolated female commune prepares a young girl for the ritual ceremony of maturation. She is promised to marry a boy from a male commune after the ritual. Confused by the expectations needed to be fulfilled, the girl escapes with the boy she likes.



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Director's statement

For most of my life, I have had a strong sense of belonging to a group, which was particularly pronounced in my teenage years. I was a member of a skate crew where everyone could express their unique individuality and receive nothing but support in return.

I kept exploring this theme in my student projects, especially my documentaries which to a large degree dealt with the relationship between individuals and their respective groups: juvenile delinquents in a correctional facility, miners, Romani religious groups...

My sense of belonging has suffered a lot in the last two years because I lost both my parents. A gripping sense of loneliness has made it increasingly difficult for me to adjust, and it has strongly affected my need for belonging. The motivation and inspiration for this music video come from that feeling.

The communes depicted in the film are a personal creation, however, they are inspired by ethnic groups such as Romani Gypsies, the Amish, and Mennonites.



I am personally very familiar with the Romani Gypsy community because I grew up in a mixed neighbourhood where they also lived.

Their customs have always fascinated me, especially the idea of an «arranged» marriage. Among the Romani Gypsies, it is customary for the parents of young children to enter into a kind of contract, completely planning their children's lives within the community where tradition and customs must be respected at all costs. For them, a cancelled marriage is a great shame.

The Amish and Mennonites were not so much the inspiration for the characters' customs as much as they were for both the visual world and the lifestyle, secluded from society.



The script has a linear narrative structure, following the progress of the girl's ritual. To evoke a strong feeling of empathy towards the girl, we see everything from her point of view, which makes us identify with her struggle and suppression.

I imagined this film to be very sensory, and I wanted to accentuate the importance of both the visual and the sonic atmosphere of each scene. The atmospheres underscore the girl's feelings, her fears and anxiety.

There is mud and darkness, and poetry that comes from the colours of an interrupted childhood. But childhood cannot end when someone says it's over. Childhood ends when imagination dies.

The two communes in the film are completely isolated from one another, each taking care of itself and practising their respective customs. There is no compassion between them, and they only come into physical contact through the younger generations. After the coming-of-age ritual, a girl becomes a woman and marries a young man who has, in turn, reached marriageable age.

The protagonist of the film is a 12-year-old girl, born into a world of rules and obligations. She is being prepared for the coming-of-age ritual, forced to prematurely give up her childhood and accept the planned future over which she has no control.





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Making-of



The film was shot in Eastern Serbia, in the karst area between Lazar's Canyon and the Dubasnica river, in the vicinity of Zlot. It was shot over three days with a small, dedicated and uniquely talented crew. Moreover, it was a crew of people who are used to working together, which was tremendously helpful in overcoming the challenges of shooting in such a rough terrain.



The costumes and the locations played a massive role in bringing this fictional past to life. Our costume designer, Biljana Grgur, meticulously created every costume by hand, while Dragana Bacovic, the production designer, was in charge of scouting and dressing the locations so that they would best reflect the cultures of the communes living there. In this mission we had the logistical support of the local museum in Bor.

Casting was done locally, as Stefan wanted the women of the commune to look strong, independent, and to have a strong passion for nature. It was very important to find naturally distinctive faces and actresses with the ability to make a strong impression even without acting. The women of the commune are usually framed as a group, and individually they don't have big roles, but they are certainly an imposing presence throughout the film.

It was always our intention to approach this project not as a conventional music video, but as a film, and we wanted to have a clear chronological progression of the story. With that goal in mind we hired Dragan von Petrovic, who is a film editor, and his contribution can clearly be felt. Moreover, JR August composed additional music to give depth of voice and character to the women's commune.

Filming with natural light greatly contributed to the harmony of the overall atmosphere and gave authenticity and natural quality to the image. In making of the film we have received a lot of support from the local community for which we will always be grateful.

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Stefan Djordjevic

Stefan Djordjevic was born in Bor, Eastern Serbia in 1987. He was introduced to a film through feature fiction film «Tilva Ros» by Nikola Lezaic, in which Stefan plays the main role. The film was nominated for the European Discovery Award by the European Film Academy in 2010.

He completed his BA and MA at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, Camera department. His graduation film was a short fiction film «**A handful of stones**», which was screened at many international film festivals and had international premiere at the ACID programme of Cannes Film Festival.



He wrote and directed a short fiction film “**The last image of father**”, awarded at many film festivals: Locarno Film Festival, Sarajevo Film Festival, Zagreb Film Festival...

His latest documentary short film “**Portrait of a dying giant**” was a part of Serbian pavillon at Venice Biennale of Architecture.

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J.R. August

Croatian songwriter J.R. August is the most prominent young talent in the Balkans.

As an accompanist to other Croatian artists, he has performed and recorded with artists such as Jimmy Rip (Television, Mick Jagger), Bernard Fowler (The Rolling Stones), Sharlotte Gibson (The Rolling Stones), Phil Jones (Tom Petty), Remi Kabaka, Kim Shaheen and others. He has performed at L.A.'s famous Viper Room, Whiskey A Go Go and the Rainbow Bar. The band Coldplay featured him on their website in 2012 as a young hopeful.

A storyteller as much as a singer, pianist and songwriter, J.R. August blends folk, gospel, pop, blues, boogiewoogie and a host of influences to create a world that revolves around nature, rivers, forests and unique characters that he vividly paints in his songs with the help of his band and choir.



After a series of successful EPs, he released his debut album *Dangerous Waters* in October 2019 through Croatia Records, the region's leading publisher.

The album was unanimously praised by critics, and also became the best-selling album in Croatia within a week of its release. In addition to being nominated for the IMPALA, the album and J.R. August have received several national awards, including the Rock&Off Album of the Year, awarded by leading Croatian music critics and journalists. J.R. August also won three Porin Awards (the Croatian national music award), for Artist of the Year, for Alternative Album of the Year and for Album of the Year.



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Credits

Daisy Jana Nikcevic
Tom Djordje Davidovic

Written and Directed by Stefan Djordjevic
Produced by Nicolas de Rosanbo, Milos Ljubomirovic
& Céline Vanlint
Music J.R. August
Editing Dragan von Petrovic
DOP Stefan Djordjevic
Costume designer Biljana Grgur
Production designer Dragana Bacovic

With the support of the CNC Music Video Fund



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Technical informations



Duration 6 minutes

Aspect ratio 1,85

Audio stéréo

Color / Black & White Color

Available on ProRes / H264

Country France / Serbia

@Eddy & Servia Films 2022



Contacts

eddy



SERVIA FILM