

15 RP films off to int'l film festivals

by BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR. / *Inquirer.net*

FIFTEEN Filipino films are bound for international festivals in the last quarter of the year—with two countries mounting special retrospectives on the Philippines.

Apart from Pusan in South Korea, film festivals in Thessaloniki (Greece) and Vladivostok (Russia) have also chosen the Philippines as this year's "country of honor," says independent producer Arleen Cuevas.

The 7th Pacific-Meridian International Film Festival, to be held in



A scene from 'Adela'

Vladivostok from September 19 to 25, has come up with a program called *Focus on the Philippines*.

According to its website, among the films featured in the retrospective are Chris Martinez's *100*; Adolf Alix Jr.'s *Adela*; Francis Pasion's *Jay*; Brillante Mendoza's *Kinatay*; Alix and Raya Martin's *Manila*; and the short films of Khavn de la Cruz.

In Vladivostok, Raya Martin's *Independencia* is also competing with entries from Australia, Russia, Canada, Mexico, Japan, United States, among others.

This month, *Independencia* also has screenings in the Toronto, Croatia and New York fests, reports Cuevas. "For local audiences, it will be running at the Cine Adarna in UP from September 14 to 19."

In October, *Independencia* will be featured in fests in Sitges (Spain), Vancouver (Canada), Antalya (Turkey), Chile, Granada, Mumbai (India), Vienna (Austria) and Thessaloniki, she says.

The country will also be given a tribute by the 50th Thessaloniki Film Festival, says Nonoy Lauzon of the UP Film Institute.

Main competition

Apart from the retrospective, Ralston Jover's *Baseco: Bakal Boys* is also in the main competition of the Greek fest set from November 13 to 22.

Baseco: Bakal Boys producer Albert Almedralejo says his film was also invited to the Wide Angle section of Pusan and the main competition of Vancouver. It will also have screenings in Stockholm (Sweden) and the Asian Third Eye fest in Mumbai.

Apart from Toronto and Brussels (Belgium), Mike Sandejas' Cinemalaya entry *Dinig Sana Kita* has also been picked by the Hawaii International Film Festival which runs from October 15 to 25.

Nominated

Another Cinemalaya entry, Ana Agabin's *24K*, is nominated for the Golden Orchid narrative feature award in Hawaii as well.

Joel Lamangan's *Dukot* and Ronaldo Bertubin's *Last Viewing* are off to the World Film Festival in Montreal (Canada), ongoing until September 7.

Meanwhile, Adolfo Alix's *Aurora*, which was slapped with an "X" by the MTRCB, will compete in the Southeast Asian section of the Bangkok fest from September 24 to 30.

Two other Filipino films, Martin's *Independencia* and Sherad Anthony Sanchez's *Imburnal*, are also competing in the Southeast Asian category along with films from Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

Martin and Alix's *Manila* is featured in Bangkok's Panorama section



A scene from 'Kinatay' and in the Oldenburg fest in Germany this month, too.

Winner Earlier, Alix's *Kadin* won the Geber Award in the Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Alix's *Adela* is also part of the Bureau Art Project screening in Jerusalem Cinematheque in November.



A scene from 'Independencia'

After Cannes triumph, Mendoza eyes Venice

by BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR. / *Inquirer.net*

FILMMAKER Brillante Mendoza's latest digital movie *Lola* is the second "surprise" entry in the Main Competition of the ongoing 66th Venice International Film Festival.

Mendoza, who won the Best Director prize in this year's Cannes film festival for *Kinatay*, is competing with 24 other films from Germany, Italy, Sri Lanka, Egypt, China, France, Austria and the United States, among others, in the festival which runs until Sept. 12.

The other "surprise" film in the festival's Main Competition is German director Werner Herzog's *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done*.

Festival director Marco Müller introduced the concept of a "surprise," or last-minute contender, in 2004.

Surprise entries are much awaited by critics and audiences every year in the festival, said Mendoza.

Mendoza is only the third Filipino to compete in the Venice festival's main section—after Manuel Conde for *Genghis Khan* in 1952 and Mike de Leon for *Sister Stella L. (Sangandaan)* in 1985.

Venice programmer Paolo Bertolin has confirmed that the last time the Philippines vied for the Golden Lion was "25 years ago."

Another Filipino film competing in Venice this year is Pepe Diokno's *Engkwentro* in the Orizzonti section. (Filipino filmmaker Lav Diaz topped last year's Orizzonti for *Melancholia*.)



Brillante Mendoza

AJPress Photo by Andrew Tadalán

Mendoza, who was interviewed before he left for Venice Wednesday, said he is joining the Italian festival for the first time.

He participated in Cannes thrice (*Foster Child* in the Directors' Fortnight; *Serbis* and *Kinatay* in the main section for the past three years) and won the Caligari Prize at the Forum section of the Berlin fest for *Tirador* (two years ago).

Top-billed by veteran actress Anita Linda and written by Linda Casimiro, *Lola* centers on a grandmother struggling to raise money for her recently departed grandchild.

This time, Mendoza steered clear of the themes of sex and violence that he tackled in *Serbis* and *Kinatay*.

Cine Europa 12 offers a feast of the best of European cinema

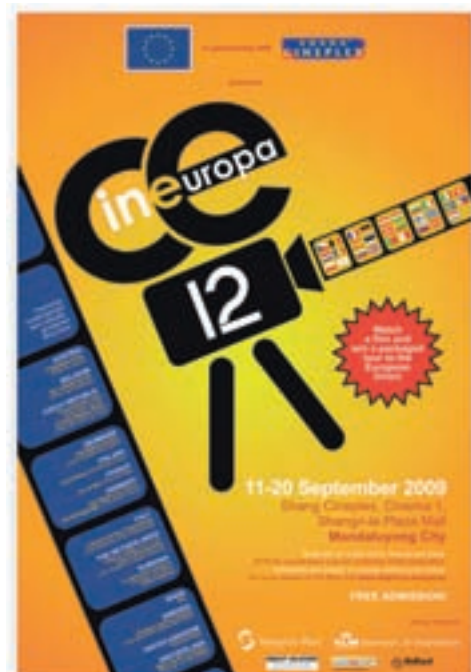
by ROCHELLE C. PANGILINAN / *AJPress Manila*

FILIPINO film aficionados should brace themselves. The film festival which introduced us to a group of students having the time of their lives in Barcelona in *The Spanish Apartment* and a feuding couple in search of their true love in the upper-class suburbs in Sweden in *Adam and Eva*, took us to the drug-infested streets of Edinburgh, Scotland in *Trainspotting* and the shoddy barges in Glasgow, Scotland in *Young Adam* and gave us a glimpse of the harsh realities of everyday life in Soviet-occupied Czechoslovakia in *Kolja* and senseless killings in Rwanda in *Shooting Dogs* is now on its 12th year.

Cine Europa officially opens on Sept. 11 at Shangri-la Plaza and will run until Sept. 20 with 18 European films—from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Deputy ambassador of the Embassy of Spain Alvaro Trejo that the films this year "portray the whole gamut of human feelings and showcase the rich diversity of the culture and heritage in Europe."

With Cine Europa, which is for free admission



The Cine Europa official poster

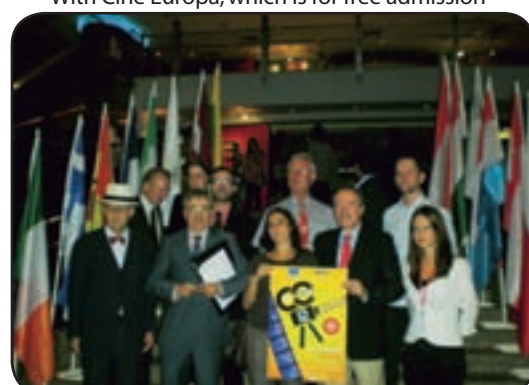
Wynant. From France comes the Julie Lopes Curval-directed *Toi Et Moi (You and Me)*, a story of two sisters striving to find true love.

Jan Sverak brings to the silver screen the tale of three lives caught in the middle of war via the Czech Republic's *Tmavomodry Svet (Dark Blue World)*. Life is not as easy as it is in fantasies, in Danish director Ole Bomedal's film *Kaerlighed Pa Film (Just Another Love Story)* wherein the truth catches up with everyone eventually. Families could enjoy Finland's *Joulutarina (Christmas Story)* by Juha Wuolijoki which tells the touching tale of how Santa came to be. Four young rascals wreak havoc in 1960s Berne, Switzerland in Michael Stenier's *Mein Name Ist Eugen (Rascals on the Road)*.

The UK's *Saul Dibb* presents a compelling portrayal of England's 'It Girl' in *The Duchess*, the only film in the festia closest to a Hollywood epic as it stars popular actress Keira Knightley of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* fame. Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza offer a Spanish suspense-thriller in *Rec*, which received a Hollywood treatment last year via *Quarantine*. *S Certy Nejsou Zerty (Give The Devil His Due)* by Hynek Bocan revolves around the amusing but strange friendship between a poor, brave young man and a nice devil. Royalty is depicted in a special way where an old prince unwittingly influences the lives of local people in Romania's *Orient Express* by Sergiu Nicolaescu. On the trail of a rare butterfly, the Zoo Rangers saves the rainforest from destruction in the Johan Nijenhuis-directed *Zoop In Zuid Amerika (Zoo Rangers In South America)* from The Netherlands.

Crime & Punishment author Fyodor Dostoevsky is the main character in Italy's *I Demoni Di San Pietroburgo (The Demons of St. Petersburg)* by Giuliano Montaldo where he goes in unrelentless search for the terrorist group responsible for the assassination of the Imperial Family.

With the variety of films this year, film buffs will once again be charmed anew.



Delegates and representatives from the European Commission and embassies pose for a group photo at the Cine Europa opening.

AJPress Photo by Rochelle C. Pangilinan

but is on a first come, first served basis, Filipinos got a taste of European cinema, which is often a far cry from the Hollywood fare often served by local cinemas. When it was first introduced to the public, many were adamant to the idea at first, believing that Filipinos would shy away from subtitled films. However, the overwhelming theater attendance in recent years proved that there is a large market for foreign films in the country.

The film festival was started in 1998 by the European Union member-countries in honor of the Centennial of Philippine Independence. It has since remained a special acknowledgement of the partnership of the European Community with the Philippines.

Opening the festival is Swedish film *Graben I Graven Bredvid (The Guy in the Grave Next Door)* by Kjell Sundvall, a contemporary romance between a farmer and a city girl.

Other films to be shown are Germany's *Dennis Gansel* tackles the complications of fascism via the energetic and the moving drama *Die Welle (The Wave)*. There is also a coming-of-age tale in Belgium's *De Laatste Zomer (The Last Summer)* by Joost

From 'Sigaw' to 'The Echo'

IN 2004, director Yam Laranas released the horror movie *Sigaw*, which went on to become a huge hit both here and abroad. A year later, Yam received a call from a *Daily Variety* reporter who told him that a producer named Roy Lee wanted to watch it, so he sent a copy to the US.

When Roy watched *Sigaw*, he loved it. "Certain scenes made me jump and I have seen so many other horror movies where that never happens," Roy said. It just so happened that he served as a mediator between Hollywood and Asia. He is the man behind the Hollywood remakes of many Asian horror films which include *The Ring I, II and III, The Grudge I, II and III, The Departed, The Lake House* and *Dark Water*.

"*Sigaw* stood out as a really well-crafted movie and when I found out Yam had made the film for well under a million dollars and had done such a great job. I wondered about what kind of picture he might make if he was given the resources to do a full Hollywood production," recalled Lee.

So it was that Yam's masterpiece started its journey from Manila to Manhattan and from *Sigaw* to *The Echo*. Some changes were made to *Sigaw* to make it more suited for American audiences. In the original, the main character just moved into a new apartment. When he questioned the screams he heard coming from it, his girlfriend tried to get him to move out, but

he refused out of pride.

For North American audiences, pride alone isn't a reason to keep an apartment. "We solved that problem by giving Bobby, the main character, a criminal record and because of the terms of his parole, he has to stay in the apartment where his late mom used to live," explained Tyler Mitchell, one of *The Echo's* producers. *The Echo's* setting was also changed from Manila to Manhattan.

American actor Jesse Bradford takes over Richard Gutierrez's role. When approached to play Bobby Reynolds, he was given *Sigaw* to watch and that sealed the deal. "I thought Yam had a terrific visual sense and I had never taken on a role like this."

Meanwhile, Iza Calzado reprises her role as the victimized wife. "It's hard to find someone who can be both sympathetic and horrific in the same film. Iza lends herself well to both," says Mitchell.

For Laranas, the experience of remaking *Sigaw* was an epiphany. "I got to relive the days when I made the original, but correcting my mistakes and making it better this time, working with people who were there to help me tell the story better and on a bigger scale, and that was gratifying."

To be released by Viva International Pictures locally, *The Echo* will hit theaters on Sept. 23. (*Philstar.com*)



country because he can already buy the country.

Katrina Humalili, et al.

These characters, surrounded by equally famous kibitzers like Imelding, Meeryam, Jajejijojumar and Katrina Humalili, went onstage at the Teatrino in Greenhills via the show, *Kuring, Glurring, Syerrap and Diyuning: Election is Nearing, For Voter or for Worse*.

Santos, in drag, plays all the characters—Imelding and Humalili on video. Willie Nepomuceno plays Mar, who flubs through a tattered draft of spiels that's been "revised so many times" to accommodate his friend ... named Noy, of course. (Mar warns about more revisions before the show's replay on Sept. 18.)

Kuring froths at the mouth over the title *Palengker* and vows to make tocino out of the *Inquirer's* *Guyito*, who gave it to her, should the hapless carabao toon ever stray into Farmer's Market. ("Gagawin ko siyang tocino.")

She rants, "And so what if I'm palengker? My husband owns

the palengke!

Guy talk

Kuring is not happy about the Mar-Noy arrangement, either. "I should have made Mar sign a pre-nup saying he won't back out," Kuring bristles.

Then, turning mellow, she adds: "Pero usapang lalaki na 'yon (That's guy talk). Besides, whatever [position] Mar runs for, he will surely get many votes. In the last senatorial race *nga, sa dami ng boto kay Mr. Palengke, hindi na binilang; kinilo na lang nila* (he had so many votes they were no longer counted; they were just weighed by the kilo)."

What soul?

Will Glurring run again? She hedges: "Like Noy, *kailangan ko ng soul-searching*. Pero unlike Noy, *baka wala akong makita sa search, e.*" The Noy-Mar tandem does not bother her, though, dismissing it as a "tambalan ng mga Bondying."

She's supremely more annoyed at her son Mikey: "*Bibili na lang ng bahay, pangit pa ang pinili* (All he wanted was a house and he had to pick an ugly one)."

Comedian pokes fun at Arroyo, Erap, Korina

by EMMIE G. VELARDE / *Inquirer.net*

POLITICAL personalities and their foibles make excellent material for gags—the hilarious sort.

In a new revue that debuted last Sept. 5, comic Jon Santos pokes prickly fun at the headline-hogging bunch, especially rumored presidential hopefuls whom he gave aliases that, curiously, highlight their identities, instead of concealing them.

"Kuring," engaged to marry "Mar," is the most audacious of the lot—alternately bitter, sweet and sour, but consistently calculating. "Glurring" is the powerful incumbent with a familiar speech impediment, doomed to be flower girl—or maybe cake-top décor—at the wedding of the year.

"Syerrap" is the ex-President raring to run again, crumbling kneecaps and the threat of murder charges notwithstanding.

"Diyuning Sapakyaw" is a not-so-little voice in the wilderness rooting for her son Money who, she is certain, won't steal from the