

Manchevski's 'Mothers' Rules Belgrade Fest

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Susanne Bier's "In a Better World" and Ralph Fiennes' "Coriolanus" were also honored at this year's festival, which saw over 110,000 attendees.

BELGRADE -- Macedonian director **Milcho Manchevski's** daring triptych feature *Mothers* won the Europe out of Europe competition of the 39th Belgrade Fest, held Feb. 25 to March 6 in the Serbian capital.

The jury – Serbian director **Goran Paskaljevic** (president) and film critics Barbara Lorey de Lacharriere, Dubravka Lakic and Deborah Young (also director of the Taormina Film Festival) – lauded the film for its “subtle exploration of truth and fiction in three distinctly

heterogeneous episodes, and how boldly it shifts the borders between fiction and documentary, to depict the powerful sensations of an ever-present matriarchy in Macedonian society.”

Mothers also won the Nebojsa Dukelic Award, given by local media journalists.

The FIPRESCI Prize went to Oscar winner **Susanne Bier's** *In a Better World*, “a subtle story about the difficulties of growing up that offers hope that violence need not dominate today's world.” Serbian critics Sasa Radojevic, Sandra Perovic and Vladan Petkovic also gave a special mention to **Ralph Fiennes' Coriolanus**, which was filmed in Belgrade and opened this year's Fest on the heels of its Berlinale premiere.

Artistic director **Borislav Andjelic** and selector **Ivan Karl** are quietly thrilled with the results of their first time at the Fest reins. More than 110,000 spectators filled the event's four venues, a turnout that harkens back to the Fest's heyday, and a promising sign in a country still struggling to rebuild its infrastructures after two decades of severe political, social and economic crises.

“I can honestly say I’m very satisfied with this year’s edition,” Andjelic said. “In the growing family of ‘Yugosphere’ [a new term coined for the former Yugoslavian territories] festivals, Fest still enjoys a leading position. Attendance figures show a new optimism here, which means a lot given our limited economic conditions.”

The festival closed with the world premiere of local director **Dejan Zecevic**’s *The Enemy*. The Serbian-Bosnian-Croatian-Hungarian psycho-thriller on the universal evils of war was presented by its large ensemble cast and numerous producers and drew enthusiastic responses from an audience of nearly 3,500.

Andjelic says that for its 40th edition in 2012, Fest will pay homage to quasi-native son **Peter Bogdanovich**, who was conceived in Yugoslavia but born in the U.S. on the eve of WWII, with a retrospective and masterclass.