

**BFFS National Conference**  
**27-28 September, Showroom Cinema, Sheffield**

**THE FILMS**

**Film Screenings**

The BFFS team has selected an exclusive collection of hard-to-access cinema gems that have had limited exposure in commercial and independent exhibition. In the true spirit of community engagement the selection includes films made by, for and about communities. All of the films screened at the BFFS National Conference are or will be available to community cinema exhibitors, many on the BFFS National Block Booking Scheme.

**KLASS (The Class)**

Dir. Ilmar Raag, Estonia, 2007, 97 mins, 18

**Synopsis**

An Estonian high-school student decides to stand up for a bullied classmate, resulting in unforeseen consequences.

**Review**

'Brutal bullying catalyzes a high school massacre in the harrowing teen drama *Klass*. A provocative, naturalistic picture that should put Estonian helmer Ilmar Raag on the radar of top industry brass. Like *Elephant* it's inspired by the Columbine tragedy, but unlike Gus Van Sant's film, it posits a rationale for the violence. More controversially, it puts audiences in the uncomfortable position of wanting the bullies severely punished.

Well-made film perfectly captures the fraught world of public high school, from nasty student cliques to well-meaning but oblivious teachers. Parental figures, too, are clueless. Debuting writer-director Raag workshopped the storyline with the 15 main members of his non-professional teen cast and credits them with helping achieve the right tone.

When released earlier this year, the film rose to second place at the Estonian box office. In Karlovy Vary, it nabbed the Europa Cinemas Label prize, which supports European distribution.'

**Source: *Variety***

**TOVARISCH, I AM NOT DEAD**

Dir. Stuart Urban, UK, 2007, 83 mins, 12A

**Synopsis**

Garri Urban, survivor of the Holocaust and Gulag and author of the autobiographical book of the same title, revisits the sites of his horrors and triumphs, 50 years later.

**Review**

'Here is a gripping documentary, intriguing for the questions it asks and for those that it coolly leaves unanswered: questions about loyalty, the Second World War, survivor guilt and whether we ever truly know our parents.

It is a personal docu-portrait by the British film-maker Stuart Urban of his extraordinary father, Garri Urban. Born in Poland in 1916, Urban Sr. fled the Nazi occupation in 1939 for what he trusted was the relative safety of Soviet territory, which he then tried to escape by swimming across the river Dniester to Romania, only to be shot and dragged back out of the water, presumed killed. "Tovarisch (comrade) I am not dead!" cried Urban, punching his captor.

Urban was sent to the gulag, escaped in 1940, began a passionate love affair with a beautiful Russian fashion journalist and was then recaptured in 1943 - both he and his lover served many brutal years in prison before being released, and in Urban's case coming to England.

Try as he might, Stuart Urban could not find a distributor for his documentary about his father, an extraordinary Holocaust and Gulag survivor. So he decided to distribute it himself.'

**Source: *The Guardian* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2008/may/01/periodandhistorical>**

**Special Event**

Subject to filming commitments, the screening will be introduced by the director.

## **RUBY BLUE**

Dir. Jan Dunn, UK, 2007, 108 mins, 15  
www.rubybluethemovie.com

### **Synopsis**

Following the death of his wife, struggling Jack (Hoskins), builds relationships that are threatened by the judgemental people around him.

### **Review**

'Bittersweet to the core, Ruby Blue is director Jan Dunn's follow-up to Gypo. Hoskins is pigeon trainer Jack, a depressed widower who finds solace in the company of 8 year-old neighbour Florrie. Hunted by the narrow-minded community who fail to see the innocence in their bond, Jack builds a relationship with the mysterious Stephanie (Balasko), which is in turn threatened by a secret he finds hard to accept. The strong, understated cast, including the promising Jody Latham as wayward teen Ian, makes this slow building story into a personal and occasionally heart-rending piece of film. Far from seeming creepy or inappropriate, Jack's friendships with Florrie and Ian give hope against a backdrop of mob mentality and degrading social values. The naturalistic script gave a sense of realism, but the odd use of incidental music is distracting at times. A hard hitting but hopeful British drama with a pared down performance from Bob Hoskins.'

**Source: Empire**

'A warmly human story about loneliness, love and life in the raw'

**Derek Malcolm Evening Standard**

### **Special Event**

The screening will be introduced by the director, Jan Dunn and there will be a Q&A afterwards.

## **BLINDSIGHT**

Dir. Lucy Walker, UK, 2007, 104 mins  
www.blindsightthemovie.com

### **Synopsis**

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Himalayas *Blindsight* follows the gripping adventure of six Tibetan teenagers who set out to climb the 23,000-foot Lhakpa Ri on the north side of Mount Everest. The dangerous journey soon becomes a seemingly impossible challenge - made all the more remarkable by the fact that the teenagers are blind. Believed by many Tibetans to be possessed by demons, the children are shunned by their parents, scorned by their villages and rejected by society. Rescued by Sabriye Tenberken, a blind educator and adventurer who established the first and only school for the blind in Tibet, the students invite the famous blind mountain climber Erik Weihenmayer to visit their school after learning about his conquest of Everest. Together with his team Erik arrives in Lhasa and inspires Sabriye and her students Kyila, Sonam Bhumtso, Tashi, Gyenshen, Dachung and Tenzin to let him lead them higher than they have ever been before. The resulting 3-week journey is beyond anything any of them could have predicted.

### **Review**

'This deceptively complex picture gradually grows sharp edges and snowballs into a compelling study in culture clash, with spectacular scenery to boot. Keeping a low profile throughout, Walker demonstrates sympathy for both Tenberken and Weihenmayer's points of view, while her skills as an interviewer coax out reactions and unguarded moments from the younger subjects especially. Scored by Nitin Sawhney.'

**Source: Variety**

### **Special Event**

Subject to filming commitments, the screening will be introduced by the director and/or producer.

**The remaining film slots will be confirmed by email ASAP**