

ALL CHANGE!

The Romanian Film Festival in London, 6th Edition
1-4 May 2009
Curzon Mayfair, 38 Curzon Street, London W1J 7TY



PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 1 MAY 2009

6.20pm / Opening Film

SILENT WEDDING

Dir. Horatiu Malaele / Romania, 2008

SATURDAY 2 MAY 2009

2pm

WAVES

Dir. Adrian Sitaru / Romania, 2007 (short)

followed by

HOOKED

Dir. Adrian Sitaru / Romania-France, 2008

4pm

THE OTHER IRENE

Dir. Andrei Gruzsniczki / Romania, 2008

6.15pm

CONSTANTIN AND ELENA

Dir. Andrei Dascalescu / Romania, 2008
(documentary)

8.45pm

EXCHANGE

Dir. Nicolae Margineanu / Romania, 2008

SUNDAY 3 MAY 2009

2pm / Shorts Programme

TIGER DANNY

Dir. Radu Potcoava / Romania, 2008

YELLOW SMILEY FACE

Dir. Constantin Popescu / Romania, 2008

ALEXANDRA

Dir. Radu Jude / Romania, 2007

WATER

Dir. Constantin Popescu / Romania, 2007

4pm

MOROMETII

Dir. Stere Gulea / Romania, 1988

7pm

ELEVATOR

Dir. George Dorobantu / Romania, 2008

MONDAY 4 MAY 2009

6.30pm

WEEKEND WITH MY MOTHER

Dir. Stere Gulea / Romania, 2009

Special guests from Romania will be attending selected screenings:

Actor and director **Horatiu Malaele**, screen legend **Victor Rebengiuc**, veteran director **Stere Gulea**, charismatic star **Andi Vasluianu**, and documentary film director **Andrei Dascalescu**.

Also present in the Festival will be writer and journalist **Liviu Antonesei**, journalist **Carmen Sandulescu** from Radio Romania International, and on behalf of the National Centre of Cinematography (CNC) in Bucharest, **Eugen Serbanescu**, General Director, and **Alina Salcudeanu**, Manager / Foreign Affairs expert.

All our guests will take part in a special working lunch at the Ratiu Foundation, 18 Fitzhardinge St, London W1H 6EQ, on **Saturday 2 May 2009**, at 12pm. Subjects to be discussed will include the present state of Romanian cinema and its recent successes, as well as the legacy of previous generations of film directors.

This event is free of charge. Limited number of seats. Register at mail@romanianculturalcentre.org.uk

NOTE: All films are shown in Romanian with English subtitles.

Tickets: £12.00/£9.00 Curzon members (read about Curzon membership on page 18).

Bookings: In person, online www.curzoncinemas.com or by phone 0871 703 3989.

Venue: Curzon Mayfair, 38 Curzon Street, London W1J 7TY. Closest Tube stations: Green Park and Hyde Park Corner.

WELCOME

Dragi prieteni, *

We are very happy to present a new edition of our Film Festival. From our first event back in 2003, we have brought to London the very best films, and we are proud to have presented the works of directors such as Lucian Pintilie, Cristi Puiu, Cristian Mungiu, Corneliu Porumboiu, and the late Cristian Nemescu – to name but a few of the best known names.

Through its high level of achievement, Romanian cinema is probably our best export, raising the level of awareness on the subject of our country, its people and its culture. We are glad that, through our work, we can bring this cinematographic and cultural phenomenon to the attention of the London audience.

We have done this for the past six years, and we plan to continue to do so in the foreseeable future. As with every edition, we have a host of special guests in the Festival this time around, giving you the opportunity to meet and talk at first hand with some of the greatest names in Romanian film. Enjoy the Festival!

Nicolae Ratiu
Chairman, Ratiu Foundation

* - Dear Friends (in Romanian)



Silent Wedding

INTRODUCTIONS

The sense of change, of time speeding by and history racing ahead is hard to ignore as we move into the 6th year of the Romanian Film Festival in London.

Not only is **All Change!** a reflection on the rapidly expanding talent that emerges from the recently hailed Romanian New Wave and beyond, with strong debut features and new work by established directors such as George Dorobantu (**Elevator**) and Nicolae Margineanu (**Exchange**) – the sense of change is equally visible in the films' stories, often marked by themes of emigration, new economic challenges and emerging accounts from the communist past, many of them served with a good dose of humour.

This year, we will welcome a director who has been active for many decades, going through vast political changes and yet remaining a true master of the trade, Stere Gulea, whose acclaimed classic **Morometii** will make a rare visit to London's big screen – where you can also catch his latest, the highly stylized contemporary drama **Weekend with My Mother**.

We're very pleased to be opening the festival with the great tragicomedy **Silent Wedding**, by the well known actor-turned director Horatiu Malaele who is in perfect company with a cast that includes renowned actors such as Victor Rebengiuc and Luminita Gheorghiu.

Verena von Stackelberg
Festival Curator

Twenty years ago, few but those of very strong faith would have envisaged wide acclaim for Romanian cinema, not to mention film festivals dedicated to it in western capitals.

However, after a bloody revolution, the collapse of the film industry in the early 1990s, and endless years of transition, Romanian film came back to the forefront of international culture, convincing critics to hail an Eastern European New Wave.

In 2008 we screened a good number of directors living abroad, showing that a “national school” approach is not mandatory in the context of a Romanian film festival.

For **All Change!** we decided to have a non-Romanian curator, from the desire to grant to our programme a new and more than objective view, and to make a portrait of Romanian cinema as it is seen by its newly found, international fan-base.

All the films we present to you now have their unique Romanian flavour, but through their treatment of universal human problems and values, national and cultural barriers have become porous. We want you to see not only Romanian film, but truly great directors and great cinema.

Ramona Mitrica
Director, Ratiu Foundation / Romanian Cultural Centre

ALL CHANGE!



FRIDAY 1 MAY 2009

6.20pm / Opening Film

Followed by Q&A with director Horatiu Malaele and actor Victor Rebengiuc

SILENT WEDDING (Nunta muta)

Dir. Horatiu Malaele / Romania 2008 / 87 mins

Cast: Meda Andreea Victor, Victor Rebengiuc, Alexandru Potocean, Luminita Gheorghiu, Valentin Teodosiu, Grigore Aschie, Alexandru Bindea, Ioana Anastasia Anton

A rural wedding celebration is disturbed by Stalin's death, but the villagers are not easily defeated. A story about resistance during harsh communist times – told in fairytale style, with a strong narrative that includes plenty of tears and laughter, all served in good measure.

Directed by theatre and film veteran Horatiu Malaele with a heavyweight cast, and with veteran actor and activist Victor Rebengiuc, an opponent of the communist regime, who acted in films that were censored or banned. He took an active part in the revolution, as part of the group that stormed the Romanian Television building to broadcast the downfall of Ceausescu.

Seeing him act in this film has a particular resonance, and Malaele proves that his knowledge of acting and theatre have given him the right background to accomplish a well rounded, deeply moving and funny debut.

See also www.nuntamuta.ro (Romanian only)

Silent Wedding is screened in the Festival courtesy of BAC Films.



Silent Wedding

SATURDAY 2 MAY 2009

2pm

plus Introduction

HOKED (Pescuit sportiv)

Dir. Adrian Sitaru / Romania-France 2008 / 80 mins
Cast: Maria Dinulescu, Ioana Flora, Adrian Titieni

Having set out for a trip in the countryside to spend a weekend together, secret lovers Mihai and Miha hit prostitute Ana in a roadside accident. Miraculously Ana awakes unscathed, and decides to accompany Mihai and Miha to their picnic.

What was supposed to be an idyllic vacation turns into a probing test for morality and loyalty – with Ana switching between angelic creature and wicked witch in a matter of seconds. There are references to Sartre's 'Huit Clos', exploring the dynamics between a triangle of people. The combination of probing drama and mysterious thriller makes for a delicious, if somewhat bitter tasting experience.

preceded by

WAVES (Valuri)

Dir. Adrian Sitaru / Romania 2007 / 16 mins
Cast: Sergiu Costache, Karen Wallet, Adrian Titieni
Before Adrian Sitaru directed **Hoked**, he established himself with this 'day on the beach' story which takes a dark turn under the bright sunshine. Creating a ghostly atmosphere among stereotypical Romanians of all classes, French tourists and sun lotion, Sitaru shows a talent for scary moments where you least expect them, exposing human nature at its worst.



SATURDAY 2 MAY 2009

4pm

Followed by Q&A with actor Andi Vasluianu

THE OTHER IRENE (Cealalta Irina)

Dir. Andrei Gruzsniczki / Romania 2008 / 90 mins
Cast: Andi Vasluianu, Doru Ana, Gabriel Spahiu, Dragos Bucur, Simona Popescu, Dan Astilean, Mihai Dinvale

The Other Irene shares themes with some of the finest European thrillers, such as the nerve-wrecking **The Vanishing** (Netherlands, 1988), and it's hard to believe the film is in fact based on a true story.

Reluctantly, security guard Aurel (Vasluianu) lets his wife Irene go on a working trip to Cairo. Having had a breath of fresh air, she returns transformed and soon sets out again, but this time she will not come back. Now Aurel's true ordeal begins: the search for his wife amidst dubious bureaucrats, criminal embassies and hateful in-laws.

The Other Irene uncovers a political and bureaucratic landscape that is truly eerie to watch. The clean cinematography, especially apparent in the mall where Aurel works, beautifully emphasizes the main character's solitude and actor Andi Vasluianu delicately performs the brooding desperation that's at work inside this antihero.



The Other Irene

SATURDAY 2 MAY 2009

6.15pm

Followed by Q&A with director Andrei Dascalescu

CONSTANTIN AND ELENA (Constantin si Elena)

Dir. Andrei Dascalescu / Romania 2008 / 103 mins
Director Andrei Dascalescu almost single-handedly created this beautifully shot, observational documentary set in a rural village, following Constantin and Elena who've been married for 55 years.

In the evening of their lives, they reflect on their rich past, sing traditional songs together and talk matter-of-factly about what will happen when they die. Day in and day out they work at their farm, hardly ever take a break and when they do, Elena weaves colourful carpets and recites her poetry, skills she learned in her childhood years at the convent.

Constantin adores watching her, if he isn't off to church, or bringing flowers to their son's grave. It's a reflection on life as it was, dying traditions and a heartfelt story of two very loving, artistic and wise people – an entrancing, award winning film that's not to be missed.

Awards:

IDFA 2008 First Appearance Award (WIN)
Gopo Award for Best Documentary (Nomination)

See also www.constantinandelena.com





SATURDAY 2 MAY 2009

8.45pm

Followed by Q&A with actor Andi Vasluianu

EXCHANGE (Schimb valutar)

Dir. Nicolae Margineanu / Romania 2008 / 98 min
Cast: Cosmin Selesi, Aliona Munteanu, Andi Vasluianu, Rodica Ionescu, Valentin Uritescu

Having lost his job at the factory along with many others, Emil's adrenalin is boiling. He sells the few belongings he and his family have left and goes to Bucharest in order to prepare their emigration to Australia, where the sky is blue and work is plentiful.

But together with his job he has also lost his luck, and he finds himself on the streets of Bucharest with nowhere to go. Bank notes travel from thief to thug, and soon Emil's morale is as low as his adrenalin was high.

The tragedy caused by this circle of events begs for comparison with Robert Bresson's **L'Argent**, which in turn was inspired by Tolstoy's short story **The Forged Coupon**. **Exchange** is a tale of civilian misfortune in the light of major political transitions.

Director Nicolae Margineanu could be called a veteran director, having made films since 1978, and his latest stands out as one of his best achievements yet.

See also www.filmul-schimbvalutar.ro (Romanian only)

ALL CHANGE!



SUNDAY 3 MAY 2009

2pm / Shorts Programme

plus Introduction, in the presence of actor Andi Vasluianu

TIGER DANNY (Danuț pleacă pe vapor)

Dir. Radu Potcoava / Romania 2008 / 27 mins

Cast: Dorian Boguta, Victoria Cocias

Tiger Danny is on his way out, to spend a working year in the US. Everyone has a special shopping list, from night fishing gear to iPods and Armani suits. But getting out of Bucharest isn't that easy.



YELLOW SMILEY FACE (Fața galbena care râde)

Dir. Constantin Popescu / Romania 2008 / 14 mins

Cast: Luminita Gheorghiu, Teodor Corban

Two computer illiterate parents in their early 50s have to learn how to use instant messaging in order to communicate with their son, who studies abroad.



ALL CHANGE!



Alexandra

ALEXANDRA

Dir. Radu Jude / Romania 2007 / 25 mins

Cast: Alexandra Pascu, Oana Ioachim, Serban Pavlu
Director Radu Jude (**Tube with a Hat, In the Morning**) returns to the Romanian Film Festival in London with his latest short (before he moved on to make his debut feature, **The Happiest Girl in the World**). He confirms his directorial skills with this story about a single father who tries to maintain a relationship with his daughter, despite the hateful ex-wife and her new man.



Water

WATER (Apa)

Dir. Constantin Popescu / Romania 2007 / 33 mins

Cast: Andi Vasluianu, Dragos Bucur

During World War II, some soldiers are stuck in a trench in the scorching heat with a pond of ice cool water separating them from their opponents.

SUNDAY 3 MAY 2009

4pm

Followed by Q&A with actor Victor Rebengiuc and director Stere Gulea

MOROMETII - UK PREMIERE

Dir. Stere Gulea / Romania 1988 / 142 mins

Cast: Victor Rebengiuc, Luminita Gheorghiu, Gina Patrichi, Dorel Visan, Mitica Popescu, Constantin Chiriac

Morometii (meaning the Moromete family) is an adaptation of the first volume of a modern classic of Romanian literature, bearing the same name, published in two volumes (1955 and 1967) by Marin Preda, who is rightly considered as one of the best post-WW2 Romanian novelists.

Ilie Moromete faces constant problems: his sister's nagging, taxes and the work in the fields, whilst his older sons, almost grown-up, are now showing signs of rebellion.

The book on which the film is based famously starts with the phrase "time showed endless patience to the people". Yet, in a period heralding irreversible changes, in between the two World Wars, the Moromete family is facing break-up.

Ilie Moromete, a real '*pater familias*', magisterially played by Victor Rebengiuc, feels this, and tries to cling to a way of life which – now we know – is doomed both by the impending war and by the communist regime the Soviets will install.

Time no longer has any patience and cracks have started to appear in the mesh of traditional peasant family.

Stere Gulea, taking over from Marin Preda, has managed to convey, through the character of Ilie Moromete, the archetype of the Romanian peasant.

ALL CHANGE!



SUNDAY 3 MAY 2009

7pm

plus Introduction

ELEVATOR

Dir. George Dorobantu /Romania 2008 / 85 mins
Cast: Cristi Petrescu, Iulia Verdes

Winner of the 2008 *Fresh Generation Prize* at Karlovy Vary Film Festival and *Best Debut in Romanian Film* at the Transylvania International Film Festival, **Elevator** stands out mainly due to its unusual setting, given away in the film's title, but also due to the two young actors who communicate the claustrophobia with their superb performances.

Imagine being young, and fancying your schoolmate a little: where would you go if you wanted to be alone for a while? Inside a lift in an abandoned factory, on the outskirts of your hometown, perhaps?

Elevator may sound like a horror movie, but surprises with its depth and drama, which goes along with the tense script, where the boy and girl in question have to address the unknown wonders of love and life, shaken up by a well founded fear of death lurking right underneath them.



MONDAY 3 MAY 2009

6.30pm

Followed by Q&A with director Stere Gulea and actor Andi Vasluianu

WEEKEND WITH MY MOTHER (Weekend cu mama)

Dir. Stere Gulea / Romania 2009 / 90 mins

Cast: Adela Popescu, Medeea Marinescu, Tudor Aaron Istodor, Gheorghe Dinica, Ion Sapdaru, Andi Vasluianu.

Stere Gulea's latest film is a stylish, contemporary drama about family, emigration and addiction, with all the ingredients that made **Trainspotting** so much of its time. Yet it has the signature of recent Romanian filmmaking at its heart, meaning the plot is made of substantial, current material and the light at the end of the tunnel might be a train.

Luiza (Marinescu) moved to Spain many years ago, leaving her young daughter Cristina in the care of her sister's family. She only returns about a decade later, when her sister has a stroke. Cristina has grown up to be an angry young girl and has run away with her heroin-dealing boyfriend - she has no interest in her mother's visit. Luiza has to blackmail her daughter in order to spend time with her, and just as the two find some long-lost connection, things unravel and Cristina's drug riddled past catches up with her.

Weekend with My Mother has a strong cast, that acts out the nuances between violent outbreaks and very soft moments with great care and balance, dealing with the emigration theme in a novel, yet believable way.

The film marks Stere Gulea's return to film directing, since he made **State of Things** in 1996. In the meantime he was busy with various projects, not the least managing Romanian state television from 1996 to 1998.

See also www.weekendcumama.ro (Romanian only)



THE RATIU FOUNDATION

The Ratiu Foundation was established in London in 1979 by Ion and Elisabeth Ratiu to promote and support projects which further education and research in the culture and history of Romania.

This year, the Foundation celebrates 30 years of the fight for independent thought and cultural excellence.

Ion Ratiu (6 June 1917 - 17 January 2000), distinguished Romanian diplomat, entrepreneur, publisher, writer and humanitarian, was an outspoken critic of the communist regime in Romania during the 1947-1989 period. He devoted his life to the fight for democracy in Romania and its integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

The Foundation offers 100 annual scholarships worth GBP 200,000, principally for projects, postgraduate courses, conference participations, travel grants, and other short term courses including academic research.

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THE ROMANIAN CULTURAL CENTRE (RCC) IN LONDON

The Romanian Cultural Centre (RCC) in London is an independent, non-governmental organisation promoting Romanian culture in the UK, celebrating this year its 15th anniversary.

The activity of the RCC includes organising, supporting and advertising an entire range of Romanian and Romania-related events.

More details on
www.romanianculturalcentre.org.uk

CURZON MEMBERSHIP

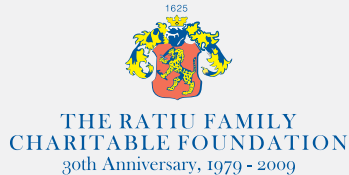
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Please call 0871 703 3988 to purchase membership.

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ALL CHANGE! Team 2009:

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Verena von Stackelberg - Programme Curator
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Friends of the Festival:

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