



'Mothers' a return to form for filmmaker Milcho Manchevski



Courtesy of CIFF "Mothers"

By John Petkovic, The Plain Dealer

Review

Mothers

What: (2010/Macedonia/France/Bulgaria) 123 minutes. In Macedonian, with subtitles.

When: 11:20 a.m. Wednesday, 4:20 p.m. Friday and 11:15 a.m. Saturday in the Cleveland International Film Festival.

On the surface, "Mothers" is three separate films barely glued together. To fans of Milcho Manchevski, it's a return to form -- one he used in his 1994 Academy Award-nominated film "Before the Rain."

The first vignette revolves around two little girls who falsely accuse a man of flashing them in the bustling streets of the Skopje.

The second takes us to rural Macedonia, following a camera crew shooting a documentary on life in a small town that has been evacuated save for two elderly people. The man and woman are seemingly related, but something in the past has left them estranged.

There's sexual tension in this vignette, also -- involving a woman and two men in the crew.

The finale is outright violent. It's a documentary on a reporter who chronicled the crimes of a sex killer -- with such detail that he is suspected of the crimes himself.

The connection?

On a literal level, it's tenuous. But Manchevski goes beyond the literal -- to explore a deeper realm where sexuality, motherhood and the art of storytelling reside in conflict.