

Weekend roundup: Movies not to miss **A sexy ghost story from Macedonia**

BY ANDREW O'HEHIR



Left, Mitropoulos Films, right, Regent Releasing

Images from "Shadows," left, and "Serbis."

"Shadows" A hallucinatory blend of Hollywood thriller, ghost story and Eastern European magic realism, "Shadows" announces the comeback of Milcho Manchevski, a filmmaker from the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia who garnered international attention with his memorable 1994 debut, a Balkan-war drama called "Before the Rain." (It's now available on DVD from the Criterion Collection.) Since then Manchevski's been kicking around the globe, directing an "Arrested Development" video, an episode of "The Wire" and one peculiar and original feature ("Dust" in 2001) that almost nobody saw.

"Shadows" follows a handsome young doctor named Lazar (Borce Nacev) in the Macedonian capital of Skopje as his life comes unstuck a year after a near-fatal car accident. (Yeah, his name is a big-ass clue.) Lazar is haunted by wolves, muttering old crones and a series of hot bimbos in tight skirts, but most of all by a pixieish seductress (Vesna Stanojevska) who has her own reasons for prying Lazar away from his vacuous wife. If you're paying attention you'll grasp pretty

early on that Lazar's fearsome mom (Sabina Ajrula-Tozija), an important scientist and government bigwig, has a lot to do with what's going on. "Shadows" is unabashedly trashy at times, but it has prodigious heart, and Manchevski captures the strangeness of contemporary Eastern Europe, where a sanitized, ultramodern surface can't quite conceal the ancient, muttering currents running beneath. (Now playing at [Cinema Village](#) in New York, with other cities to follow.)