

HONEYMOONS

A film by Goran Paskaljevic



VENICE, 2009
FILM FESTIVAL
VENICE DAYS

TORONTO, 2009
FILM FESTIVAL
MASTERS

<http://www.goranpaskaljevic.0fees.net>

HONEYMOONS

Year of production : 2009

Lenght : 95 min.

Format : 35 mm

Screen ratio : 1:1.85 (flat)

Sound format : Dolby digital surround

Countries of origin : Serbia, Albania

SYNOPSIS

The story of "**HONEYMOONS**" is set in contemporary Albania and Serbia.

We follow the fortunes of two young couples who decide to leave their respective home countries in search of a better life in Western Europe.

When the Albanian couple, after all sorts of incidents, arrives in an Italian southern port, their problems start.

The same fate awaits the Serbian couple when they by train enter European Union at the Hungarian border.

Despite the fact that they have nothing to do with the incident that occurred in Kosovo in which two Italian UN soldiers lost their lives, they are arrested at the border and suspected due to unfortunate coincidences. This prevents them, at least temporarily, from fulfilling their dreams, as is often the case with young people in the Balkans who pay for the mistakes of previous generations.

"HONEYMOONS" is the first film co-produced by Albania and Serbia.

CAST

Nebojsa MILOVANOVIC (Marko)
Jelena TRKULJA (Vera)
Jozef SHIROKA (Nik)
Mirela NASKA (Maylinda)
Bujar LAKO (Rok)
Yllka MUJO (Vevo)
Lazar RISTOVSKI (Vera's uncle)
Petar BOZOVIC (Vera's father)
Danica RISTOVSKI (Vera's mother)
Fabrizio BUOMPASTORE (Italian policeman)
Domenico MONGELI (Italian inspector)
Aron BALAZS (Hungarian inspector)

CREW

Directed by: Goran Paskaljevic.
Written by: Goran Paskaljevic and Genc Permeti.
Produced by: Goran Paskaljevic, Ilir Butka, Nikola Djivanovic
Director of Photography: Milan Spasic
Production Design: Zeljko Antovic, Durim Neziri
Costume Designer: Lana Pavlovic, Durim Neziri
Make up Supervisor: Martina Subic Dodocic
Chief Editor: Petar Putnikovic
Editor: Kristina Pozenel
Sound Designer: Velibor Hajdukovic
Production Sound Mixer
re-Recording Mixer: Branko Neskovic
Sound Editor: Nebojsa Zoric
SteadyCam operator: Zoran Culic
1st Assistant Director: Zoran Andric

Director's Notes

During Enver Hodxa's cruel, forty-year dictatorship, no one from Serbia was allowed to visit neighboring Albania, over whose soil were scattered several hundred thousand defense bunkers. Today, after the conflicts in Kosovo, there is still only a very small number of Serbs who decide to visit Albania. Prejudice and bad politics have contributed to a latent intolerance between the two nations.

Three years ago, Genc Permeti, a young painter and writer, and his colleague Ilir Butka, also a writer and film producer, unexpectedly invited me to show three of my films in Tirana. Those were *The Powder Keg* (Cabaret Balkan), *Midwinter Night's Dream*, and *The Optimists*, my so-called « Serbian trilogy ». I must confess that I hesitated, but they were so insistent that I finally gave in and went to Tirana. During the entire time my films were shown, Tirana's only movie theater was filled to capacity; people were even standing in the aisles off to the side. Even today, I recall with much emotion the exceptionally long applause at the end of each showing and the audience's questions, which were not even for one moment malicious, but utterly open, intelligent, and fair. What most surprised me then was the fact that the Albanian audience was familiar with the majority of my early films through pirated copies, which was practically the only way to become acquainted with Serbian films.

During my first stay in Albania in December of 2006, I met many intellectuals who thought like I did, who were beyond any kind of fiery nationalism. I discovered that Albanians and Serbs, although they speak two completely different languages, have much in common, notably the deep desire to become an integral part of Europe. During long conversations over a glass of raki (Brandy), the idea was born that we try, through our combined efforts, to make a movie, which I would direct with a mixed crew. One week after my return from Albania, I wrote the first synopsis.

I imagined the film as a triptych. The Albanian story, with the cooperation of Genc Permeti, is about a young couple who wishes to leave Albania because circumstances don't allow them to fulfill their relationship. Next, the Serbian story is about a young couple who also want to go to western Europe in the hope that they will have more chances there than in Serbia. Finally, the third part intertwines the destinies of these two couples. Their stories unwind parallelly and they never meet, as would usually be the case in standard films. However, I am convinced that at the end of the film viewers will have the impression that these young people, are in the same imaginary space, while they wait on the threshold of Europe; the Albanians in a port in southern Italy, and the Serbs on the Hungarian border in the backroom of a small railway station. Nevertheless, after the first bitter disappointment on the border of that so green "better" world, dawns a new morning for both.

The creation of this joint production film, the first Albanian-Serbian coproduction, which we immediately entitled "Honeymoons," became possible one year later when we received financial support from the Serbian Ministry of Culture and the Albanian National Film Center, as well as the Apugilla Film Commission. The filming flowed without any major difficulties, even though we communicated with each other in a mixture of English, French, Italian.... After two months spent together, farewells between the Serbian and Albanian crew was touching, almost melodramatic; everyone had tears in their eyes. We all wanted to shoot together just one more film...and one more.... It is of note that the Serbian and the Albanian actors have never met, even though they have acted in the same movie. Their first meeting will be at the film festival in Venice.

Goran Paskaljevic

BIOGRAPHY

Goran Paskaljevic was born in Belgrade on 22 April 1947.

Between 1967 and 1971, he studied at the well-known Prague school of cinema (FAMU).

From 1971 to the present, he has made 30 shorts/documentaries and 15 feature films, many of which have been shown and acclaimed at the most prestigious international film festivals.

The rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia forced him to leave his country in 1992.

In 1998 he went back to make *The Powder Keg (Cabaret Balkan)* but his constant criticism of Milosevic's regime met with violent, menacing attacks in the official press. Therefore, he decided once more to leave his native land in search of a country where he could make his film, *How Harry Became a Tree*. He found Ireland.

He returned to Belgrade upon the collapse of the Milosevic regime. There he shot two films: *Midwinter Night's Dream* and *The Optimists*.

In 2001, the International Film Guide (Variety) marks him as one of the top five directors of the year (together with Lasse Hallström, Neil Jordan, Steven Soderbergh and Edward Yang).

In January 2008, the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) presented a full retrospective of his work.

His new film *Honeymoons* has been completed in June this year.

American National Film Board of Review Awards - **Voted one of the top five best foreign language films 1999 in the USA**

Toronto Film Festival: Masters

Santa Barbara (USA) Film Festival – **Grand Prize**

Haifa (Israel) Film Festival – **Grand Prize**

Antalya (Turkey) Film Festival – **Grand Prize**

- 1995 *Someone Else's America* (Tudja America) – (in English)
Cannes Film Festival (Directors' Fortnight) – **Audience Award**
Valladolid Film Festival - **Grand Prize** (Golden Spike)
- 1992 *Tango Argentino* (Tango Argentino)
Venice Film Festival – **Audience Award**
San Francisco Film Festival – **Audience Award**
- 1990 *Time of Miracles* (Vreme cuda)
Cannes Film Festival (Directors' Fortnight)
San Sebastian Film Festival - **International Critics Prize** (FIPRESCI)
- 1987 *Guardian Angel* (Andjeo cuvar)
Cannes Film Festival (Directors' Fortnight)
- 1984 *The Elusive Summer of '68* (Varljivo leto '68)
- 1982 *Twilight Time* (Suton) (in English)
(Produced for MGM/UA, starring Karl Malden)
Chicago Film Festival – **Grand Prize**
UNICEF **Grand Prize**
- 1980 *Special Treatment* (Poseban Tretman)
Cannes Film Festival (competition) - Best supporting actress (Milena Dravic)
Golden Globe Hollywood - **Nomination for Best Foreign Film**
- 1979 *...And the Days are Passing* (Zemaljski dani teku)
Venice Film Festival (competition)
- 1978 *The Dog who Loved Trains* (Pas koji je voleo vozove)
Berlin Film Festival (competition)
- 1976 *Beach Guard in Winter* (Cuvar plaze u zimskom periodu)
Berlin Film Festival (competition), **International Critics Prize**

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