

MUMBAI FILM FESTIVAL

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THE 13TH MUMBAI FILM Festival (Oct, 2011) celebrated cinema as an art form, with glamour and special interests like world cinema, French cinema, Indian frames, Real Reels and a Hugh Hudson (UK) Tribute. BelaTarr's "A Torinoilo—The Turin Horse" (Hungary-France-Switzerland-Germany-USA, b/w, 146 ins) begins with a reference to Friedrich Nietzsche in Turin of 03 January, 1889, where his horse cab driver beats the stubborn horse with a whip. The screenplay unfolds, focusing on the life of the handsome cab driver, Orzolfen (Janos Derzsi), his daughter (Erika Bok), and a horse. On 'The First Day', there are mist, strong winds and dust on the farm. The carriage is in a shelter, and the horse is in a stable. The daughter helps her father with fresh warm clothes, and he falls to sleep. Dinner is frugal, with boiled potatoes. Gales roar around the house. Roaring winds continue on 'The Second Day, Amidst the relentless winds, the girl fills buckets with water from the well, and pulls the cart from the barn. After fetching the horse from the stable, Orzoltern whips the horse, but the horse refuses to move. The saddle is removed, and the horse is taken back to the stable. The old man chops wood inside the hut, and the girl remains busy in washing and cooking. A visitor from the village drops by. Waking up and putting on warm clothes, the girl fetches water from the well, on "The Third Day". The horse refuses to chew hay. Father and daughter partake boiled potatoes. An open carriage, drawn by two white horses, carrying gypsies arrive. When the gypsies ask for water, the girl tries to drive out the visitors. The gypsies invite the girl to America. The old man threatens with an axe. The gypsies leave cursing and claiming "The water is ours, the earth is ours." The girl reads the "The Bible" about holy places.

When the well runs dry on 'The Fourth Day', the well is covered with a wooden block. Orzoten drinks wine. The horse refuses to eat. The girl cleans the stable floor. Leaves and mud are scooped with iron forks. The horse refuses to drink water from the girl's hands. The stable door is bolted. Sunlight enters the room on 'The Fifth Day'. Orzolten drinks wine. When the stable door is opened, sunlight flows on the face of the dark horse. From the glass panel interiors of the cottage, the flying leaves are visible, in the backdrop of sunlight. Night and darkness follow. On 'The Sixth Day' there is one potato each for the father and daughter. The girl does not eat. There is fade out to complete darkness. "The Turin Horse" is an allegory on the human conditions, and set entirely on a weather beaten plane. Devoid of dialogue, and scored to Mihaly Vigs' music of an incessant dirge and the musical howl of the apocalyptic winds, Bela Tarr's film portrays a dark, claustrophobic world. The minimalism of the farm house and wind tormented plane become momentous. Fred Kelemen's implacable black and white photography captures the peasant farmer, daughter and horse combating gusty winds, drought and famine.

MORETTI

Nanni Moretti's "**Habemus Papam—We have a Pope**" (Italy-France, colour, 104 mins) ponders over the disconnection between God's chosen and the fallen world. A priest has died, and Rome's St Peter's Square is full of priests in red cloaks, praying before a coffin in procession. It is the third conclave, and priests from Africa, Asia and South America, besides the European and North American priests, have filled up the Sistine Chapel, for electing the next Pope. TV cameramen and journalists raise questions. There is a power cut, and Cardinal Brummer (Renato Scarpa) falls. While personal agitations discourage selection as the Pope, many of the cardinals scribble on paper; "Not me Lord, please". Smoke from the sacred chimney turns from black to white, and a bell rings. Cardinal Melville (Michel Piccoli) is elected as Supreme Pontiff. The canonical elections are followed by the singing of religious hymns. The cardinals bow before Melville. The milling crowds at St Peter's Square shout and cheer, and the faithful wait for the introductory speech from the new Pope. As his nerves fail, Melville shrieks and shouts, declines to give his first speech, and runs out. Nuns clasp hands and pray. A press conference is conducted by the papal secretary Rayski (Jerzy Stuhr), who explains that the new Pontificate has retreated in humility. St Peter's Square is full of surging crowds at night. The new Pope is in bed, examined by a doctor. Other Cardinals are in favour of psycho analysis. Cardinal Melville feels the problems concern the sub-conscious, unfulfilled desires, sex excluded. The psychiatrist (Nanni Moretti) tries to understand the distant memories and emotions. All those whom Melville knew have disappeared. The psychiatrist's separated wife is also a psychoanalyst, sworn to secrecy. The visiting doctor is forced to stay in a room, within the church residence. Next morning Melville takes a walk. Austrian guards parade, as dignitaries arrive in Rome, to meet the new Pope. Melville is lost on Rome's streets. People do not recognize the unseen new Pope.

Probing anguish and depression, the psychiatrist discovers the prevalence of tranquilizers and drugs amongst the cardinals. An Austrian guard is placed in the Pope's residence, and his shadow movements convey the Pope's presence. The psychiatrist persuades the cardinals and the religious sisters to play volleyball. Some cardinals are at cards. Meanwhile, Melville is on a train. He stumbles on a recitation from Chekov's "Seagull" at a theatre recital. Chekov's dialogue returns to Melville, as years ago he had watched his sister acting Chekov. Melville searches for theatre amongst actors. He concludes that he cannot do anything more in life. At one time, he was a failed actor. Each individual remained a frost of the thoughts of God. The Catholic world awaits the decision of the holy conclave. The new Pope is absent for three days. At a theatre there are references to Dario Fo. Melville presents himself as the new Pope, and the crowds cheer. He discourses that the church needs a guide to bring great changes. Love, understanding and the Lord's forgiveness were essential. Melville confesses that he is not the guide, declines responsibility, and walks away. "Habemus Papam" full of comic bits, never misses on satire and social observation. Alessandro Pessici's elegant camera movements confront the issues and the new Pope's ravaged Roman holiday, with stridency. Michel Piccoli is superb as the tormented new pope. □□□