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Grand: A Film Review

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Almost all the domestic film production in the ex-Yugoslav region inclines subtly to the ideological views of the country of origin and is set or reflected of war and the post-war period. One truly remarkable fact about the recent release of *Hiljadarka* is not just its genre as comedy but also its lack of any connection to the conflict and previous war in ex-Yugoslavia or any nationalistic tendencies. There is not so much as a hint of this subject in the lines or actors improvisations. It is as if the production has been isolated long enough to completely forget about the recent conflict that is dominant in almost every other contemporary Bosnian film and the production has deleted the past fifty years bringing us directly to the setting and conflict of individuality over conformity. The film reflects the past socialism in everyday life, human relations, and governmental structure at the micro level (the small town of coal mine Banovici) onto the macro structure of the issues of that era.

Set after the Second World War, this film has no connotations or connections to the war whatsoever. The screenplay of *Hiljadarka*, written by Zilhad Kljucacin, one of Bosnia's most renowned and prominent writers, is without doubt not only the foundation for the film, but also a piece of literature in itself. Masterly executed subplots and Shakespearean auxiliary characters give rise to the tragedy in the narrative about the main character. This tragicomic genre blending is brilliantly interpolated into comic reliefs and the overall atmosphere of a happy ending, the inevitable conclusion for the improbabilities that the main character is facing as he is trapped by the ridicules of destiny. The stream of events is as funny as seriously difficult, reflecting on the improbabilities and unpredictability of human nature facing the "mysterious high power of governing." The script hints at connections to contemporary society, but the acting (probably under the strong guidance for reflection on contemporary individuality) raises itself unquestionably to a level of oblivious connotation.

The cast of *Hiljadarka* includes prominent and well known actors as well as young talented actors from all over the region. The main character, Atif Kurtovic, the coal miner chosen to be on the face of the new bill, is performed by Branislav Trifunovic. This role is another proof of his brilliance and chemistry of belief in whatever he exudes from the silver screen to be completely true and on the spot in the story. The caricature portrayal of Tito by Nikola Kojo is probably one of the visual highlights of the film. The costume and performance of Kojo are an impeccable balance of the real

personality depiction of Tito along with the genre template and comic atmosphere of the film. The young and talented Aida Bukva is a facial masterpiece of eye contact with the camera. Her performance is convincing as much as her gazing relation onto others is mesmerizing.

Bosnian contemporary film, undeniably still rooted in ex-Yugoslavian cinema, along with Croatian and Serbian film, are forming one coherent cinematic experience as co-productions and as narration and cinema auteur stylistic features merge. Such reflection on the style of the ex-Yugoslavian film narration is evident in the comedy, *Hiljadarka (Grand)*, produced and filmed in Bosnia, and co-produced by the neighbouring countries with the cast spanning from Croatia and Bosnia to Montenegro and Serbia. A Yugoslav experience in the acting department although not so much in film budgeting, since the state financed cinema of ex-Yugoslavia will never be experienced again.

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