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INTERVIEW

Radoslav Pavković and Christina Hadjicharalambous on *Loveless Zoritsa*

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R*adoslav Pavković and Christina Hadjicharalambous speak about their latest film, "Loveless Zoritsa", which is part of the Greek Films Section of this year's Thessaloniki International Film Festival. The Film tells the fantastical story of a young outcast ...*

Do you think that your film is a genuine Balkan or Serbian film, if that exists?

CH: Yes, it is a Balkan fairy tale, and of course something like that exists. Actually, maybe today in modern times (because the film is happening nowadays) we tried to give a feeling of old Balkan stories. We tried to convey a bit of magic as well, literally and actually, because the film speaks about magic and sorcery and so on.

PR: I think that we have used a Balkan background. Balkan Gothic as a background, and American story-telling. We could not avoid being influenced by pop culture for our film. Yes, we do talk about myths and legends, but we also connect it to heavy metal and myths that are connected to heavy metal imaginary. The main character looks like a widow, but on the other hand ,when she takes down the veil, she looks like a dark girl, an emo girl.

Is the story a metaphor or an allegory for real life?

CH: The story is about a girl who is unhappily in love in the sense that she is cursed. Whoever falls in love with her has misfortune, something really bad happens to him. So it is like the ancient tragedy of fate where whatever will happen to you will happen. But on the other hand, it is a modern film. Nowadays people are really fighting for a better future and a better fate, we have a girl who is fighting to break her curse and manage to find the love of

her life.

How did you come up with the story? Is it based on real myths, or is it an imaginary story?

PR: It is an invented myth, it's a story from our scriptwriter who was impressed by the fact that one of his girlfriends always told him that she is unhappy with love. He thought that was a very good basis for a comedy. Of course, he thought that girls exaggerate. This was the basis, but what we used is this feeling of going to Eastern Serbia, which is a land of many wonders. It is a land of magic, a land of vampires which became an international world, so we wanted to use these myths as a type of background. I think that audiences generally liked it because they felt that they learned something about Serbia. Though we made it all in a modern way, they had the impression that we also gave them something substantial, or even something originating in our subconsciousness.

In the aesthetics of the films, there were some exaggerated graphics like fires in the film credits or glittering water. How would you define these kind of effects, and were they intentional?

CH: Yes, we put in some effects that were necessary to complement the film because we wanted to do something that does not look like reality. That's why we exaggerated – even the story itself is exaggerated, especially the flashbacks.

PR: Yes, this is part of any fairy tale. When they are kissing in slow motion in the water, it is cheesy anyway, and then we made it even more cheesy with these effects. But actually this is all for the sake of style. The style is supposed to bring us into some other world, some other land. It may be today's reality, but it looks as if it took place in the past.

How did you cast your actors?

CH: It was a very difficult procedure to find the main character for Zoritsa. We needed someone with a lot of energy, a kind of wild person who is a bit hard to find today. A wild child. We saw many actresses who were also young but already famous. They would not be capable of communicating this mystery that we wanted. So the casting lasted a long time. And we were really happy when we got the recommendation from another actress who said "Oh, I know the person for this role, come to the theater and see her performance". That's how we found her.

PR: For the main role, we chose an actress who was practically unknown. But

that was a conscious decision. For the male main role, we chose a guy who had done some films before, but in the end it all worked out very well. As for the rest of the actors… there were many famous Serbian actors in the film – Mirjana Karanovits for instance, who is known from Kusturitsa's *Underground* and *When Father Was Away on Business*. There are other ther famous actors who really wanted to play – even in small roles – because they saw something different in this film. It was a great experience

CH: What we had in mind were French Comedies from the 60's, the old-school comedies, so we had this wish to exaggerate a bit when it comes to acting. We wanted to have a comic role for a minor village character, but not for the main role – the girl-, because she would carry the drama.