

Share via

THE  TIMES**Cannes review: The Tribe**

The Tribe is the first feature from Kiev-born Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy

Wendy Ide

Last updated at 12:01AM, May 23 2014

Featuring an entirely deaf-mute cast, this nightmarish school-set tale packs a thrilling, uncompromising punch

With all the red carpets and pink wine, gala dinners and photo ops, it's easy to forget why you go to Cannes. It takes a film like the Ukrainian drama *The Tribe* to jolt you back down to earth and to neatly encapsulate the festival's real raison d'être: to discover and celebrate the most exciting, daring and outstanding films made around the world.

This first feature from Kiev-born Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy is, by any standards, a remarkable achievement. Set in a residential school for deaf and dumb children and adolescents, it features an entirely deaf-mute cast and the dialogue is all in sign language, none of which is subtitled. Yet although non-signers will miss the exact words that are exchanged, there is no mistaking their meaning or the trajectory of the story. Slaboshpytskiy has said that he wanted the film to be a contemporary homage to silent cinema. Certainly, with their fiercely expressive performances, his young cast have no problem making themselves heard non-verbally.

This could all be dismissed as a gimmick, were it not for the fact that, from the very earliest shots, Slaboshpytskiy demonstrates an acute intelligence and confidence as a film-maker. He favours long takes, but rather than use them as an arthouse endurance test for the audience, he gradually and meticulously reveals more of the characters and the nightmarish world they inhabit. The choreography of these extended shots could rival anything that Alfonso Cuarón has put together.

The film follows the journey of a new boy who enters the school and must swiftly learn to negotiate the tricky hierarchies within its criminal network — the Tribe. It's an insular environment, but a savage one. The kids are just as likely to turn on each other — particularly if one of them breaks the codified system of rules — as they are to stick together. The new boy falls foul of several other kids at the top tier of the gang, but proves himself with his fists and his participation in a series of robberies. Then he meets one of the girls. She works as a truck-stop prostitute by night and is nominally attached to the top boy in the school's criminal infrastructure. The sex between the two is filmed with the same unflinching candour as the violence that is triggered by the relationship.

The film is not an easy watch. It's brutally unsentimental. A callous abortion scene, filmed in real time, is genuinely disturbing. The film's climax punches with a visceral shock that shakes even the most jaded and inured festival audience. But there's no doubt that this is the discovery of Cannes 2014.

0 comments

- livefyre 



1 person listening

+ Follow

Post comment

Newest | Oldest | Most Recommended

Livifyre

© Times Newspapers Limited 2014 | Version 5.10.0.6(124960)

Registered in England No. 894646 Registered office:

3 Thomas More Square, London, E9 8 1XY

My Account | RSS | Classified advertising | Display advertising | The Times Whisky Club | Encounters Dating | Sunday Times Wine Club | Privacy & Cookie Policy | Syndication | Site Map | FAQ | Terms & Conditions | Contact us | iPhone | Android smartphone | Android tablet | Kindle | Kindle Fire | Place an announcement in The Times | Sunday Times Driving | The Times Bookshop | Times Tutorials | Times Currency Services | Times Print Gallery

v