

REEL SUSPECTS

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PRINTER FRIENDLY

NORWAY



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival

A film by Yiannis Veslemes
73 min, GREECE, 2014
Colour, 2:35, HD & DCP

SHORT SYNOPSIS

“if i stop dancing my heart will stop beating”. Zano is undead. He’s a Greek vampire who lives to dance and sucks blood to survive. His heart might be frozen but he burns hot like lava, blazing up night after night, like there’s no tomorrow. never mind eternity.

REEL SUSPECTS

LONG SYNOPSIS

Photophobic Zano, arrives in the big city for the very first time. The year is 1984 and Athens beckons. A vampire and a fine dancer, Zano quickly gets devoured by the dark underbelly of the capital city. All he really wants is a “warm” girl. strung out and down and out, he ends up at disco Zardoz, a hive of scum and villainy, where he meets Alice, a prostitute, and Peter, a norwegian drug dealer. Lured into their shady shenanigans, the three of them will traverse mountains and descend into the core of the earth, all the way to the Kingdom of mathousalas. norway puts on shiny new shoes, dances the night away with colorful scoundrels and only bites when absolutely necessary. “norway descends upon the mediterranean”.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Yiannis Veslemes is a director and music composer. He was born in Athens in 1979 where he has studied cinema. He has directed short films, tv commercials and music videos.

He releases music under the moniker Felizol.

Filmography : Tugo Tugo (b/w 16mm 14 min 1998) lightwell (color 35mm 14 min 2000) Goal (color 35mm 25 min 2003) Osiki (color 35mm 14 min 2009)

Nominated at the Karlovy Vary IFF for East of West Award for “Norviya” (2014).

Won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Thessazloniki FF, Greek Section for “Norviya” (2014).

CAST

Vangelis Mourikis, Alexia Kaltsiki, Daniel Bolda

CAST BIOGRAPHY

Vangelis MOURIKIS

Won at the Thessaloniki Film Festival the awards for Best Actor for “The Wake” (2005) and “The King” (2002).

Won at the Thessaloniki Film Festival the awards for Best Supporting Actor for “Rakushka” (2004) and for “Truants” (1996).

Nominated at the Hellenic Film Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actor for “Tungsten” (2011).

Alexia KALTSIKI

Won the EFP Shooting Star (2005) at the Berlin IFF

Nominated at the Hellenic Film Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actress for “I ypografi” (2011).

REEL SUSPECTS

CREW

Director: Yiannis Veslemes
Scriptwriter: Yiannis Veslemes
Producers : Yorgos Tsourgiannis, Christos V. Konstantakopoulos
Co-producers: Eleni Bertes, Yiannis Veslemes
Cinematographers: Christos Karamanis
Production Designer: Yiannis Veslemes
Sound: Dimitris Kanellopoulos, Persefoni Miliou, Valia Tserou
Mixage: Kostas Varypombiotis
Music (composer): Felizol
Editor: Yiannis Chalkiadakis
Visual FX : Fokionas Xenos, Ionas Katrakazos, Deepgreensea

THE HOLLIWOOD REPORTER REVIEW

“Premiered at the Karlovy Vary film festival last week, this carnival of comic-book excess suffers from design flaws which cannot be entirely excused by its willfully amateurish, retro-kitsch aesthetic. But any film that features disco-dancing vampires, fugitive Nazi war criminals and femme fatales who burst into flames during sex is clearly not gunning for highbrow critical respect. Norway should find keen interest at festivals, especially those with cultish midnight-movie sidebars, though it will struggle to win over more conservative theatrical audiences who prefer films to make sense.

The year is 1984. Hedonistic vampire Zano (Vangelis Mourikis), a hollow-cheeked Al Pacino lookalike in a blond Rod Stewart wig, arrives in Athens by night train in search of an elusive old friend. He goes hunting for fresh blood and warm bodies in the Zardoz club, a neon-lit disco dive populated by freaks, junkies, drug dealers and prostitutes. Here he encounters the odd couple of vampish diva Alice (Alexia Kaltsiki) and her mute Nordic companion Peter (Daniel Bolda).

After some initial tensions, including a messy neck-biting incident, this ill-matched trio sets off on a mysterious mission across a nocturnal urban wasteland crawling with fellow outcasts and bloodsuckers. Alice seduces Zano, but she has an ulterior motive, luring him into a subterranean labyrinth where a mythological beast from history awaits them - not some fabled monster from ancient Greek folklore, but a more recent and notorious figure. Under pain of torture, Zano fights against pressure to bite the dying man’s neck, thus allowing him to live forever as a vampire.

Making extensive use of very obvious models and back-projection, Veslemes smartly turns budgetary limitations into charmingly childlike DIY production design. Some of his allusions to Greek music and movie stars of the period will only make sense to domestic viewers, but he also includes more

REEL SUSPECTS

universal visual homages to the early 1980s, from the angular New Wave graphics of his opening credits to blood fountains that spurt in the artificial rainbow colors of vintage Duran Duran videos.

At its best, *Norway* recalls the delicious decadence and punky black comedy of Tony Scott's *The Hunger*, Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* and Jim Sharman's *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, all spiced with a light sprinkling of Dario Argento and David Lynch. But it suffers from a rambling plot and too many digressions into surreal whimsy that undermine the main narrative. The saturnine, somber Mourikis is also poorly cast as a live-wire disco playboy who cannot stop dancing "or else my heart will stop beating". This genre mash-up is unlikely to find more than a cult following, but Veslemes has staked his claim as an ambitious auteur with bold ideas and stylistic verve."

FANTASTIC FEST – RODNEY PERKINS REVIEW

NORWAY is the result of the creative marriage between first-time Greek director Yiannis Vesleme and *DOGTOOTH* producer Yorgos Tsourgiannis. As one might gather, *NORWAY* is no ordinary vampire film. In fact, it turns vampire mythology inside out to create something genuinely weird. Zano is a burned out disco dancer prone to drug and alcohol binges. He maintains a code of ethics; he only kills people when he has to. In the case of *NORWAY*, the manner in which the story is told is as important as the story itself. Director Yiannis Vesleme's background in short films and music videos is reflected in the film's distinct visual style. Athens is depicted as a psychedelic alien dream world full of vivid colors, dark spaces and blown out landscapes. *NORWAY* is a spectacular trip unlike anything you've seen before.