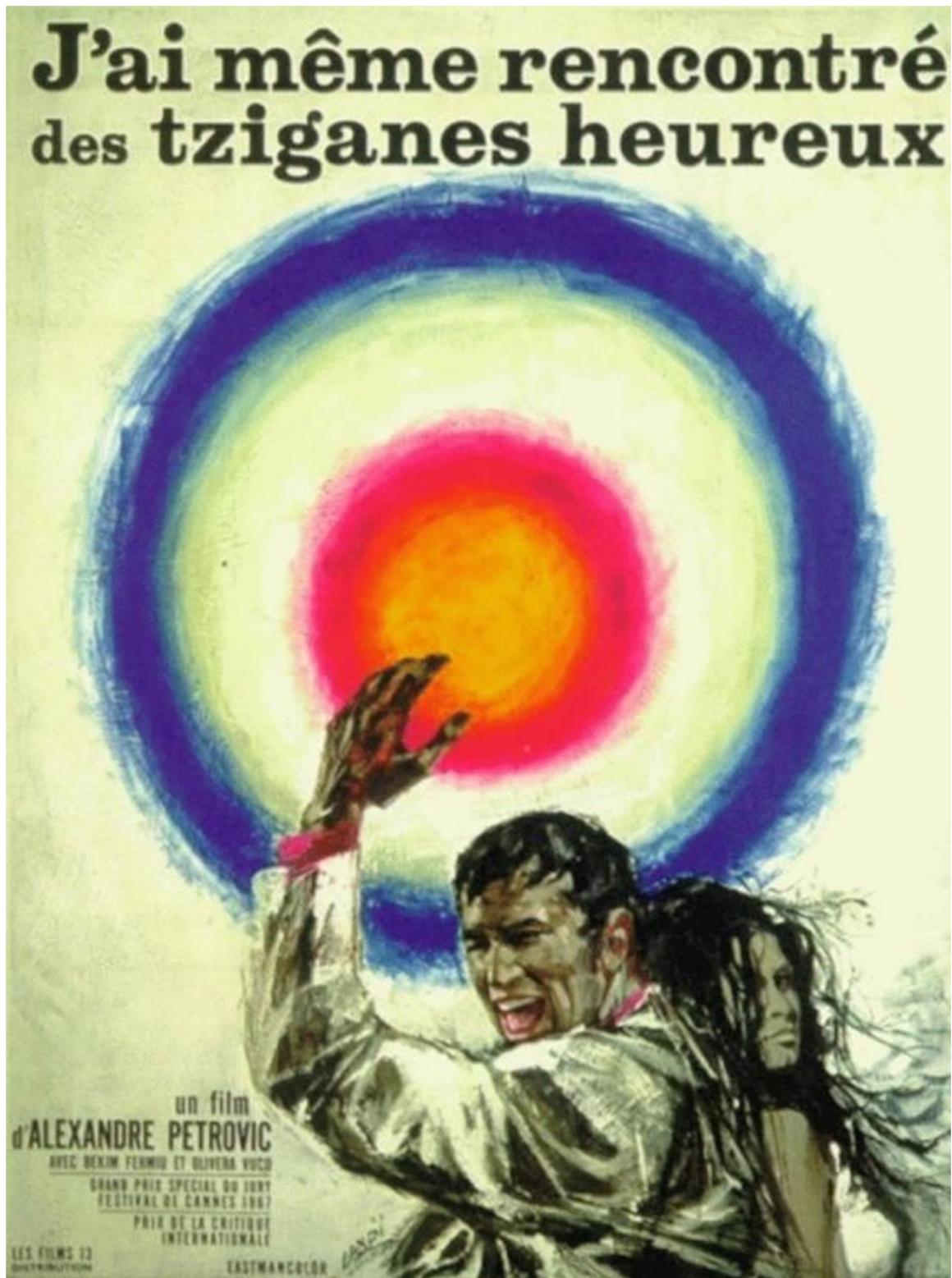


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Sélection CANNES CLASSICS 2017

J'ai même rencontré des tziganes heureux

« Le film ***J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux*** vous présentera la vie des tziganes telle qu'elle est.

Ce film n'est pas romantique – il est rude et beau, tel que la vie des tziganes.

Les chansons que vous entendrez dans ce film, vous les entendrez pour la première fois, car ce sont des chansons des tziganes de Vojvodina, peu connues.

Dans leur vie la réalité est liée à la fantaisie – ce sont des hommes libres...

J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux est le premier film dans lequel les tziganes parlent leur langue.

La plus grande partie des rôles est interprétée par de vrais tziganes - ils ne jouent pas dans ce film c'est leur film. Ils jouent, pour ainsi dire leur propre destinée. » Aleksandar Petrović

Résumé du scénario:

Ce film, suprêmement lyrique, raconte la destinée d'un homme de ce milieu, Bora le plumassier. Marié à une femme beaucoup plus âgée que lui, ce qui est fréquent chez les Tziganes, il est souvent absent de leur maison, une mesure pleine d'enfants, de vacarme perpétuel et de disputes. Sur la route de son travail, il rencontre une jolie jeune fille, Tissa. Sauvage et vagabonde, elle aussi évite sa maison et son beau-père Mirta, brutal et agressif. Bora et Mirta sont des rivaux tout autant au travail qu'auprès de Tissa. Pour ramasser les plumes, ils se sont partagés les villages et chacun d'eux fait très attention de ne pas entrer dans le domaine de l'autre. Tous deux ne peuvent se passer de Tissa. Mais Mirta marie Tissa à un jeune garçon de douze ans, espérant ainsi la garder pour lui. Tissa chasse le jeune garçon. Bora finit, après maintes difficultés, à l'arracher à l'emprise de son beau-père. Dans un monastère, le moine Paul marie Bora et Tissa. Elle vit quelques temps avec la famille de Bora, qui lui continue ses voyages. N'ayant pas trouvé ce qu'elle espérait, Tissa s'enfuit à Belgrade. Elle espère devenir chanteuse de café, mais elle a le choix entre chanter dans les rues et faire le trottoir. Lassée de tout, elle rentre chez Mirta. En l'apprenant Bora va chez lui et le tue. Il jette le corps dans l'eau. La mort d'un Tzigane ne signifie pas grand-chose. Les mois passent, le printemps est arrivé. Bora a tranquillement passé l'hiver chez lui. Mais les glaces ont fondu et le cadavre de Mirta est retrouvé. Une enquête est ouverte. Bora sort un jour de chez lui et disparaît dans les grands espaces de cette plaine cruelle et belle dans sa dureté.

«Comme enfant, je les ai observés et j'ai trouvé dans ces gens la foi et l'irrationnel... Sans ce moment irrationnel, il n'y a pas d'œuvre, il n'y a pas d'art». Alexandre Petrovic.

A propos de la chanson Djelem Djelem:

En 1964, pendant le tournage de son court-métrage ***Procès verbal***, Aleksandar Petrovic entend la chanson tzigane *Djelem Djelem* jouée par une famille de musiciens d'origine hongroise, les Lakatoch et s'en sert d'accompagnement musical de son film. Cette chanson connaît alors un énorme succès avec ***J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux*** et peu après la sortie du film les Roms la choisissent comme hymne. Jusqu'à la fin de sa vie, lorsque Petrovic entrera dans un des nombreux cafés ou restaurants de Yougoslavie où il y avait un orchestre tzigane, on le reconnaîtra et immédiatement l'orchestre jouera *Djelem Djelem*.

Olivera Vučo, qui tenait le rôle de la chanteuse du café, est une actrice et chanteuse professionnelle qui avait impressionné Bruno Cocatrix qui l'invita à chanter à l'Olympia. Elle y tiendra l'affiche 72 jours et fit la une des journaux.

Improvisation du célèbre tzigane Chandor Lakatoch «*Djelem, Djelem*»:

J'ai erré le long des chemins
Des chemins, de longs chemins.
Ils ont battu mon père, oh ma mère,
Ils m'ont jeté dans l'eau froide.
Oh ma mère qu'as-tu fait de moi?
Tu as laissé tes enfants orphelins,
Deux sont morts un erre sans fin.
Oh mère, qu'as-tu donc fait?
Tu m'as laissé seul sur les routes,
Pauvre de moi ma mère.
J'ai erré le long des chemins.
J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux.

Prix, distinctions, festivals:

XXe Festival du film à Cannes, 1967: Grand prix spécial du Jury
XXe Festival du film à Cannes, 1967: Nomination Prix de la mise en scène
XXe Festival du film à Cannes, 1967: FIPRESCI - Prix international de la critique du meilleur film du festival
XIVe Festival de Pula (Yougoslavie), 1967: GRAND PRIX (Velika zlatna arena) du meilleur film
XIVe Festival de Pula (Yougoslavie), 1967: GRAND PRIX de la mise en scène
Nomination aux Oscars pour l'Oscar du meilleur film étranger pour l'année 1967 (édition n°40)
Nomination aux Golden Globes, catégorie meilleur film de langue étrangère, 1968.
Nomination par la «Hollywood Foreign Press Association» pour Meilleur film étranger, 1968.
Xe Festival des meilleurs films à Acapulco, novembre 1967 – Prix Cabeza de Palenque (La tête Inca en Or)
Prix de la critique du meilleur film étranger, Tchécoslovaquie
Festival international à Montreal, Août 1967.
Festival du film à San Diego 1967
Festival des festivals à San Francisco
IVe Festival du film à New York, septembre 1967
Prix AURA pour le film étranger pour 1968 – société des cinéastes, producteurs et critiques - Finlande
Festival de l'été à Martini, Suisse, juillet 1969
Festival du film – « Les droits de l'homme » Chicago, 29.03-26.04.1980
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Le Cinéma yougoslave, 1986.
Ve Festival des films de la culture de la Méditerranée à Bastia - Corse, 21-28.10.1989.
Festival des films documentaires à Rennes, (Programme spécial) 17-22.11.1992
Festival international du livre et du film Etonnants Voyageurs à Saint Malo, mai 1993
XIIe Festival international du film et de la musique à Genève, octobre 1996
IVe Festival de La Roulotte, Chambéry 2006
Festival Bretagne et Cinéma, Douarnenez - 2006
Festival l'Europe autour de l'Europe Normandie Evreux, mars 2007
Festival international du film Cinema City, Novi Sad, 2009. – Hommage à l'auteur national Aleksandar Sacha Petrovic
36e Festival de cinéma de Douarnenez, Gouel ar Filmoù, Roms, Tziganess et Voyageurs 23/31 août 2013

En 1979, suite à l'enquête menée par l'Institut du Film par les critiques et les artistes yougoslaves, le film *J'ai même rencontré les Tziganes heureux* d'Aleksandar Petrovic a été désigné MEILLEUR FILM DE L'HISTOIRE DU CINÉMA YOUGOSLAVE (son film *Tri* a été classé à la deuxième place).

Extraits de presse:

"Le chef-d'œuvre d'Aleksandar Petrovic est le plus bel hommage à la liberté de la personnalité. "LE COMBAT - Henri Chapier

« *J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux* d'Aleksandar Petrovic - une beauté à la Rimbaud, convulsive et inimaginable; une beauté d'éclair, de tonnerre, de soleil brûlant, de vie frénétique, de vérité, de chansons, de danses, de personnages passionnants, de rires qui éclatent, de voix, une folie douce et une folie furieuse, beauté fabuleuse de ce film, beauté du film de notre art, de notre passion." LES NOUVELLES LITTÉRAIRES - Pierre Ajame

"... Un grand et beau film, poétique, mélancolique, chaleureux, tendre, fort. Je m'excuse pour cette série d'épithètes, mais je pourrais en ajouter encore une vingtaine d'autres. Exact par le ton et les détails, et aussi magnifiquement vrai. Petrovic a compris l'âme des Tziganes." LE NOUVEAU CANDIDE - Michel Aubriant

"C'est une riche histoire tissée sur la vie, qui laisse au public la liberté de tirer des conclusions. Il n'y a ni "messages", ni exagération de folklore et de problèmes éthiques. La lutte dans le tas de plumes, les chansons tziganes, un amour brutal, le mariage célébré par un prêtre orthodoxe, la vie quotidienne, le travail et les distractions, les soucis et la liberté où on oublie tout sont combinés dans ce film naturel qui ne falsifie pas les coutumes, ne place pas la réforme et ne juge pas la société. Son nouveau film renforce sa réputation d'excellent metteur en scène régnant complètement sur ses thèmes." VARIETY - Gene Moskowitz.

"Le film yougoslave d'Aleksandar Petrovic, *J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux* est un film incroyable aux personnages possédant une force originale et un pouvoir d'expression qu'on rencontre rarement dans un film." LIBERCKER NACHRICHTEN - Günther Menten

"C'est un spectacle somptueux, baroque, imprévisible, déchirant, ironique. Mais ce n'est pas qu'un spectacle parce que Petrovic est un moraliste qui sait non seulement faire taire son inquiétude mais il s'en nourrit pour essayer de comprendre, de nous faire prix international faire aimer. Si postulat il y a, il s'agit de celui de la liberté physique et spirituelle comme un immense verre cassé; d'un rêve à haute." CINEMA - Gilbert Guez

"... L'éclatement violent des couleurs, la photographie des vieilles femmes ridées, fumeuses de pipes, l'explosion de la danse et du chant quand le soir tombe sur le paysage noyé et que les estaminets se remplissent, les piaillantes querelles de ménages privés ou publics, la truculence d'un vieux moine qui vend le duvet de ses matelas, la ronde folle et obstinée des troupeaux d'oies parmi la symphonie multicolore des mesures, voilà bien la poésie des apparences. Le parti-pris de Petrovic, s'il y a vraiment parti-pris, c'est dans sa manière de saisir "au vol" certains visages, certaines attitudes, qu'on le trouve. Tenter de surprendre un homme au plus fort de son exaltation, de sa cruauté, une femme au plus fort de son effroi, de sa détresse, tenter d'épouser le rythme d'une dispute, le crescendo d'une rixe, voilà le but recherché. Petrovic n'a pas triché: le public, à aucun moment ne se sent voyeur. La réussite plastique n'a pas tué la vie: c'est donc gagné. "

JEUNE CINEMA - Jean-Loup Passek.

Avez-vous déjà écouté devant les cinémas ce qu'on disait de vos films?

« Oui, et je dois vous dire que à ce qui concerne *J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux* c'est pour moi la meilleure critique. » VJESNIK U SRIJEDU (journal croate)

A propos des Tziganes

La plaine la plus étendue de l'Europe, la vaste plaine de Pannonie, présente dans sa partie yougoslave un bizarre conglomérat de nationalités et de religions. Parmi les Serbes, les Roumains, les Hongrois et les Slovaques, vivent de nombreux Tziganes. On ne connaît pas au juste leur nombre car ils vivent, pour ainsi dire, hors des frontières des lois sociales et éthiques du milieu qui les entoure. Leur intégration dans la société est aussi bien leur problème personnel que celui de la société elle-même. On peut dire qu'ils sont de jour en jour plus conscients de leur situation, ce qui rend leur problème encore plus actuel.

Alexandre Petrovic a choisi de "peindre", avec une palette riche en couleurs (c'est son premier film en Technicolor), la vie des Tziganes de la Vojvodine. C'est le premier film qui aborde le problème de l'existence des Tziganes dans la société et dans la vie. C'est le premier film dans lequel les Tziganes parlent leur langue. La majorité des rôles est interprétée par de vrais Tziganes. C'est leur film.

"Moins attachés à leur intérêt personnel que d'autres, ou, si l'on préfère, moins "rationnels", car ils dédaignent de considérer les conséquences à long terme de leurs actes, les Tziganes me paraissent plus que d'autres sensibles à la beauté du monde et à ses souffrances, et plus que d'autres voués au malheur car plus vulnérables à l'appel du mal - s'il faut l'appeler ainsi - que chacun porte en soi."
Alexandre Petrovic Le Courrier de l'Unesco, entretien 1994.

"La vie de ces hommes est exceptionnellement intéressante et bizarre; elle incarne beaucoup d'inquiétudes que nous combattons tous; mais que nous dans la plupart des cas, nous vivons, d'une façon, je dirais, plus méditative, en les emprisonnant et en les étouffant par toutes sortes de censures possibles, psychologiques et sociales, - eux, ils les placent au niveau de la vie - ce que nous pensons et rêvons, ils le vivent et le réalisent." A.P.

«Le goût des Tziganes pour les couleurs est étroitement lié à leur amour du fantastique et de l'irréel, qui est chez eux très développé. C'est pourquoi, si vous sentez le fantastique dans ce film, ne pensez pas qu'il est inventé, irréel - non, il est question ici d'un film réaliste, dont les limites du réalisme ont bougé avec la vie, ce dont traite ce film.» A.P.

«Encore enfant, j'étais conscient de l'impossibilité d'expliquer l'infini aussi bien que l'éternité. Malgré cela, personne n'a pu m'interdire de sentir cet infini et cette éternité, et je ne permettrai pas qu'on m'enlève le droit de ressentir l'irrationnel. Depuis, j'ai développé en moi un besoin de l'irrationnel et ce sentiment a culminé dans *J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux*; si ce film est tel qu'il est, c'est parce que ces gens touchent l'irrationnel de leur tête.» (Sacha Petrovic «Indomptable Maître» biographie de Alexandre Petrovic par Boro Draskovic).

Aleksandar Petrović à propos de *J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux*

« L'expérience m'a appris à ne pas croire aux films qui ont ce qu'on appelle « des messages »: vraisemblablement c'est la raison pour laquelle mon dernier film *J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux* à présent qu'il est terminé, personnellement, ne me dit rien de tout à fait déterminé. Pour moi c'est seulement un peu de la vie, ensuite, comme dans la vie même, de cette bande filmée nous serons pris par toute un harpège d'associations, un accord spécial et imaginé sur la vie des Tziganes de la Vojvodine – les plumassiers. Qu'y a-t-il à la base de tout cela ?

Il est préférable que chacun de vous en décide en regardant le film. En ce qui me concerne, moi qui suis aujourd'hui son premier spectateur, ce serait le cauchemar du rêve et la réalité dans lequel vivent sans cesse, depuis les siècles, mes héros – les Tziganes; et c'est certainement la raison pour laquelle j'ai choisi ce thème. Ces hommes vivent en réalité une vie d'art, leur comportement tragique et inachevé envers la vie, est semblable au comportement – des arts et de la vie ! Car, en marge de la société, inachevés, toujours à la recherche de quelque chose, ils touchent à l'absolu! Et tout de suite à côté d'eux apparaît le mystère de la mort qui, pour les plumassiers est à l'origine de leur comportement spécial envers la religion; ils ne sont ni pour ni contre la religion. Pour les Tziganes la religion est comme le reste – une partie de la vie: majestueuse et terrifiante, douce et amère, séduisante et vindicative, libre et enivrante, telle que ce film veut la montrer. »

Aleksandar Petrovic devant la presse à la sortie du film. Savez-vous ce que pensent les Tziganes de ce film?

«Je voulais vous en parler! Le deuxième ou le troisième jour de la projection, aux cinémas «Slavija» à Belgrade, après la séance, j'ai remarqué un groupe de jeunes tziganes qui quittaient la salle. Etant donné qu'ils étaient des Tziganes et jeunes de surcroît, je tenais absolument à leur opinion. J'ai posé la question: Les gars, ça vaut la peine de voir ce film ? Ils ont répondu: il est bon, vraiment bon. Il mérite d'être primé.»
dans Vjesnik u srijedu (journal croate)

Anecdote:

Aleksandar Petrovic aimait répéter qu'il était malchanceux.

Lors de la distribution des Oscars, Aleksandar Petrovic était à table, entre autres personnalités de spectacle, avec Gregory Peck, Président de Academy Awards et sa femme. Au moment de la distribution de l'Oscar du meilleur film étranger pour l'année 1967 (en 1968) il entend: « et l'Oscar est remis à Aleksandar Petrovic pour « Trains étroitement surveillés » (Tchécoslovaquie) ». Il se lève en même temps que Jiri Menzel, le metteur en scène de ce film pour se rendre sur l'estrade. Il y avait une confusion car ce n'était pas *J'ai même rencontré des Tziganes heureux* qui était annoncé. Grand embarras et excuses du présentateur pour l'erreur. C'est bien Jiri Menzel qui a eu l'Oscar. La Tchécoslovaquie venait d'être occupée par les Russes. Gregory Peck a expliqué à Petrovic que la liste des gagnants était arrêtée depuis un bon moment, et que c'était lui qui aurait dû avoir l'Oscar mais que la politique étrangère était plus importante que le film. P. Volk: «Let nad mocvarom» p. 194

Il n'y pas de mensonge dans l'art. L'art ne connaît que la vérité. Nous ne sommes pas des juges, ni les prophètes ni des propagandistes. Aleksandar Petrovic

Si l'on n'aime pas les hommes, on ne peut pas réaliser de films. Aleksandar Petrovic

A la question d'un journaliste:

"Quelle est la clé d'une bonne cinématographie?"

Petrovic a répondu:

"Des talents... et de bonnes conditions pour leur développement."

I Even Met Happy Gypsies

Production : Avala film, Beograd 1967

Screenplay : Aleksandar Petrović

Director : Aleksandar Petrović

Production Designer : Aleksandar Petrović, Veljko Despotović

Director of Photography : Tomislav Pinter

Art Director : Nikola Rajić

Producer : Vladislav Lašić

Choice of music : Aleksandar Petrović

Music : "Rino" (Olivera Vučo) "Niška Banja" (Olivera Vučo) "Nu, Nu" (Olivera Vučo) "Đelem, Đelem" (Olivera Vučo)

Cast : Bekim Fehmiu, Olivera Vučo, Velimir Bata Živojinović, Gordana Jovanović, Mija Aleksić, Rahela Ferari, Severin Bijelić, Etelka Filipovski, Milorad Jovanović, Milivoje Đorđević

Press Book Avala Film 1967.

"The film I Even Met Happy Gypsies will show you the life of Gypsies as it is.

This film is not romantic – it is raw and beautiful, as is the life of Gypsies.

The songs you will hear in this film, you will hear for the first time, because they are the songs of Gypsies from Vojvodina, rarely known.

In their life, reality is linked to fantasy – these are free people...

I Even Met Happy Gypsies is the first film in which Gypsies speak their own language.

The majority of these roles are played by real Gypsies – they do not play in this film, it is their film.

They play out, so to speak, their own destiny. »

Aleksandar Petrović

Experience has taught me not to believe in films with so-called "messages"; that is probably why my latest film "I Even Met Happy Gypsies" stays for me a simple piece of life. After we are done watching it, as it always happens in life, we are overpowered by a heap of associations, a special and imaginative poliphonous constellation of the life of Vojvodina Gypsies – the feather gatherers. What is essential to all that? I think it best that everyone decides for themselves what their own message is, once they have faced the film. Personally, as the film's first spectator, it would be a nightmare of dream and reality for my heroes – the Gypsies that have lived there for centuries. And that is certainly why I chose them as a subject for this film. These people live a life of art; their tragic and desperately incomplete attitude towards life is the same as the relationship between art and life! By being on the brink of society, incomplete, constantly searching for something, they are close to the absolute! And right next to them is the mystery of death which creates for these feather gatherers a specific relationship towards religion; they are neither religious nor antireligious. To these unreachable pagans, religion is similar to the rest – a part of life: grand and horrible, tender and bitter, charming and revengeful, free and luring, exactly the way this film wants to show it. Aleksandar Petrovic

Plot Summary:

This film, extremely lyrical, tells the tale of the Gypsy named Bora ([Bekim Fehmiu](#)), the feather-gatherer. Married to a woman much older than he, as is common with Gypsies, he is often away from their household full of children, ceaseless noise, and constant fighting. On his way to work, he meets a pretty young woman, Tissa. Savage and wandering, she also avoids her home and her step-father Mirta who is brutal and aggressive. Bora and Mirta are rivals at work as much as they are with Tissa. To gather feathers, they split the villages and are both careful not to run into each other. Neither can stay away from Tissa. Savage and wandering, she also avoids her home and her step-father Mirta who is brutal and aggressive. Bora and Mirta are rivals at work as much as they are with Tissa. To gather feathers, they split the villages and are both careful not to run into each other. Neither can stay away from Tissa. Mirta arranges to marry Tissa off to a twelve year old boy, hoping that she will therefore stay his. Tissa rejects the young boy and throws him out of the house. After many complications difficulties, Bora is finally able to free Tissa from her step-father's grip. A monk named Paul marries Bora and Tissa in a small monastery. Tissa starts living with Bora's family as he continues his travels. This life is not enough for Tissa and is not what she expected; she runs away to Belgrade. She hopes to become a singer in a café but she is left with only two choices: either she sings in the streets or she starts selling her body. Fed up with everything, Tissa goes back to Mirta's house. When Bora finds out, he rushes to Mirta's home and kills him, throwing his body in the river. The death of a Gypsy doesn't mean much and no one will question or investigate anything. Months pass and spring arrives. Bora has spent a calm winter in the comfort of his home. However, once the ice melts, Mirta's body is found and an investigation begins. Bora leaves his house and disappears in the expansive plains, whose cruelty makes them that much more beautiful. "As a child, I observed these people and found in them faith and irrationality." Alexandre Petrovic. "Without this moment of irrationality, there is no work, there is no art."

About the song *Djelem Djelem*:

Already in 1964, during the filming of his short-film *Record*, Aleksandar Petrovic heard the song *Djelem Djelem* played by a Hungarian family of musicians, Lakatoch, and used it in the soundtrack for his film. *Djelem Djelem* found huge success with *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* and in very little time, the Roms adopted it as their anthem. Until the end of his life, when Petrovic would enter one of the many cafés or restaurants in Yugoslavia where gypsy orchestras would play, he would be recognized and the orchestra would immediately play *Djelem Djelem*. Olivera Vuco, who had the role of the café singer who would sing the song, is an actress and professional singer who impressed Bruno Cocatrix, who invited her to sing at the Olympia in Paris. She held that spot for 72 days and wowed the press!

Improvisation of the famous Gypsy musician Chandor Lakatoch *Djelem, Djelem*:

I have roamed down many paths
Many paths, long paths.
They beat my father, oh my mother.
They threw me in cold water.
Oh mother, what have you done with me?
You left your children as orphans,
Two have died, one roams with no end.
Oh mother, what have you done?
You left me alone on the roads,
Pity me mother.
I have roamed down many paths.
I even met happy gypsies.

Awards, honors, festivals:

- XX Cannes Film Festival, 1967: Grand Prix of the Jury
- XX Cannes Film Festival, 1967: FIPRESCI: International critics' prix for best film of the festival
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- Nominations at Cannes Film Festival, 1967Palme d'Or
- Nominations at Cannes Film Festival, 1967Palme d'Or
- Nominations at Cannes Film Festival, 1967 Best Director
- XIVth Pula Film Festival (Yugoslavia), 1967: GRAND PRIX (Golden Arena) for Best Film
- GRAND PRIX (Golden Arena) for Best Director
- Academy Awards Nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, 1967 (40th edition)
- Golden Globe Nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, 1968
- Hollywood Foreign Press Association Nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, 1968
- X Acapulco Festival of Best Movies, 1967: PALENKA Award, Golden Inca Head
- Critics Choice for Best Foreign Language Film in Tchechoslovakia
- Montreal International Film Festival, August 1967
- San Diego Film Festival, 1967
- San Francisco Film Festival, 1967
- IV New York Film Festival, September 1967
- **AURA prize to best foreign film in 1968** – society of directors, producers and critics - Finland
- Summer Festival at Martini, Switzerland, July 1969
- "Human Rights" Film festival – Chicago, 03/29-04/26 1980
- Georges Pompidou Center, Paris, Yugoslav Cinema, 1986
- Fifth Film Festival of Mediterranean culture in Bastia, Corsica, 10/21-10/28 1989
- Documentary Film Festival in Rennes (Special Program) 11/17-11/22 1992
- International Festival of book and film in Saint Malo, May 1993
- XII International Film and Music Festival in Geneve, October 1996
- Iv Festival of La Roulotte, Chambéry 2006
- Brittany and Finema Festival, Douarnenez, 2006
- [Europe around Europe festival, Normandy Evreux, March 2007](#)
- International Film Festival Cinema City, Novi Sad, 2009 – Hommage to the national author Aleksandar Sach Petrovic
- 36th Film Festival of Douarnenez, Gouel ar Filmoù, Roms, Gipsies and Travellers 23-31 of August 2013

In 1979, in a survey conducted by the Yugoslav Film Institute, *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* was named the Best Film in the history of Yugoslav Cinema, with his film *Three* in second place.

Press excerpts:

“Aleksandar Petrovic’s chef-d’oeuvre is the most beautiful homage to the freedom of personality.”

LE COMBAT –Henri Chapier

“I Even Met Happy Gypsies by Aleksandar Petrovic – a Rimbaud-like beauty, convulsive and unimaginable; an electrifying beauty, made of thunder and a burning sun, of a chaotic life, of truth, of songs, of dance, of captivating characters, of roaring laughs, of a delicate insanity, of a furious one; fabulous beauty of this film, beauty of our art, of our passion.”

LES NOUVELLES LITTERAIRES – Pierre Ajame

“... A grand and beautiful film, poetic, melancholic, warm, tender, strong. I apologize for this list of epithets, but I would be able to add twenty more. Precise with its tone and details, and magnificently true. Petrovic has understood the spirit of Gypsies.”

LE NOUVEAU CANDIDE – Michel Aubriant

“It’s a rich history inspired by life that gives the audience the liberty to draw their own conclusions.” There are no “messages”, exaggerations of folklore or ethical problems. The fight in the pile of feathers, the gypsy songs, a brutal love, the wedding officiated by an orthodox priest, daily life, work and its distractions, anxieties and freedom where we forget everything, are all combined in this natural film that does not fabricate customs, does not dictate reforms and doesn’t judge society. Petrovic’s new film reinforces his excellent reputation as a director who reigns entirely on his themes.

“this entry should be around come prize time at the presently unrolling Cannes Film Festival” VARIETY – Gene Moskowitz “The Yugoslav film by Aleksandar Petrovic, I Even Met Happy Gypsies, is an incredible film with characters who possess an original force and power of expression, that we rarely meet in a film.”

LIBERCKER NACHRICHEN – Gunther Menten

“It’s a sumptuous film, baroque, unpredictable, heart-rending, ironic. But it isn’t just a spectacle because Petrovic is a moralist who knows not only how to quiet his anxieties but also how to understand them and to make us love. If there is a POSTULAT, it is one of physical and spiritual liberty, like a huge broken glass; like a dream.”

CINEMA –Gilbert Guez

“... The violent bursts of color, the shots of old wrinkled women smoking cigars, the explosion of dance and song when the night falls on the drowning landscape, the full taverns, the public and private screaming quarrels, the vividness of an old monk who sells the sheets of his mattress, the crazy and stubborn flock of geese amongst the multicolor symphony of cottages, here is the poetry of appearances. Petrovic’s biases, if there really is really a bias, is in his way of capturing certain faces “in flight”, certain attitudes that we find. Trying to surprise a man at the peak of his efforts, of his cruelty, a woman at the peak of her dismay, of her distress, attempting to combine the rhythm of a dispute, the crescendo of a fight, this is the goal that is searched for. Petrovic hasn’t cheated: a no point does the audience feel like a voyeur. The material success hasn’t killed the life of this film: he has therefore won.”

JEUNE CINEMA –Jean-Loup Passek

Have you ever listened to what people were saying in front of movie theaters after having seen your film?

“Yes, and I have to tell you that when it comes to I even met happy gypsies, that is the best kind of critique.” VJESNIK U SRIJEDU (Croatian newspaper)

[CER - CENTRE EUROPE REVIEW Dignity in Diversity Jaes Patrige](#)

About Gypsies:

In the Yugoslavian part of vastest plain in Europe, the PANNONIE plain, there is a bizarre conglomeration of nationalities and religions. Amongst the Serbs, the Romanians, the Hungarians and the Slovaks live many Gypsies. We don't exactly know how many there are because they live outside of the borders of the social and ethical laws of the environment that surrounds them. Their integration in society is their personal problem as well as the problem of society itself. We can say that they are more and more aware of their situation, which makes their problem even more relevant.

Alexander Petrovic has chosen to "paint" the lives of Gypsies in Vojvodina with a rich palette of colors (it is his first film in Technicolor). It is the first film in which the problem of the existence of Gypsies in society and in life is discussed. It is the first film in which Gypsies speak their language. The majority of the actors are real Gypsies. It is their film.

"Less attached to their personal interest compared to others, or less "rational", because they scorn considering the long term consequences of their actions, Gypsies seem to me more sensitive to the beauty of the world and its suffering, and they are more dedicated to misery because they are more vulnerable to the temptation of the "bad" –if we must call it so- that each of us hold in ourselves." [Alexandre Petrovic - Le Courrier de l'Unesco, entretien 1994](#). "The life of these people is exceptionally interesting and bizarre; it incarnates a lot of the worries that we all combat; but that, in most cases, I would say, we live out in a more meditative way, locking them up and choking them with all sorts of psychological and social censures. Them, they put these worries at the same level as life – what we think and dream, they live and they realize." A.P.

"Gypsies love of colors is closely related to their very developed love of the fantastic and the surreal. That is why, if you feel the fantastical in this film, you should not think that it is invented and unreal – no, this is a realist film, whose limits of realism have moved along with life, which is the main subject of this film." A.P.

"While still a child, I was conscious of the impossibility to explain infinity and eternity. Nonetheless, no one forbade me to feel this infinity and eternity, and I will not allow anyone to take away my right to feel irrationality. Ever since, I have developed in me a need for irrationality and this feeling has culminated in I even met happy gypsies; if this film is the way it is, it is because these people touch irrationality from their heads." (SACHA PETROVIC INDOMPTABLE MAITRE biography of Alexandre Petrovic by Boro Draskovic).

In the film "*I Even Met Happy Gypsies*", about ten primary and secondary roles are portrayed by actual Gypsies, presenting their own way of life. That goes for the young Gordana Jovanovic, a sixteen-year-old illiterate girl who plays the part of Tisa. The other parts are played by Milorad Jovanovic, Etelka Filipovsk, Nina Sajin, Velizar Petrovic and Milivoje Djordjevic.

The number of Gypsies in Yugoslavia has never been established exactly but it is estimated that there are 300 000. They live in all parts of the country but mostly in the north-east. They are connected with Rumanian, Hungarian and Russian Gypsies, varying greatly in social, religious and linguistic elements. They practice the most various and strange activities, and in Vojvodina, the Yugoslav territory where the action of the film takes place, many of them buy and re-sell feathers. Their social and economic situations offer a very controversial picture. Without a determined social status, they live day by day.

This is the first film that treats the problems of their existence in society and in life. The largest part of the film is in Gypsy language.

The Gypsy culture has no written traces. Their origin is lost in the darkness of history. Without an alphabet of their own, without history, they are a riddle that no one has ever tried to solve seriously. This film has no aspirations to do so. It only tries to show that the riddle of the Gypsy fate has very much in common with the fate of man and poetry.

Almost nothing in this film is invented; its action was based on authentic data.

Aleksandar Petrovic about *I even met happy gypsies*:

“The experience has taught me not to believe films that have what we call “messages”: that is why my last film *I even met happy gypsies*, after it is finished, personally does not tell me anything definite. For me, it is only a little bit of life, then, as in life itself, from this footage, we will be seized with all sorts of associations, a special and imagined understanding of the lives of the Gypsies from Vojvodina – the feather gatherers. What is at the basis of all of this?

It is better for each of us to decide that as we watch the film. As far as I am concerned, as the film’s first spectator, it would be the nightmare of the dream and the reality in which my heroes, Gypsies, have constantly lived in for centuries; and that is certainly why I have chosen this theme. These men live in a life of art, their tragic and indefinite/unfinished attitude towards life is similar to the attitude of – the arts and life itself! Because, at the margins of society, always on the search for something, they touch the absolute! And right away, right next to them appears the mystery of death that, for these feather gatherers, is at the origin of their special attitude towards religion; they are neither for nor against religion. For Gypsies, religion is like the rest – a part of life: majestic and terrifying, sweet and sour, seductive and vindictive, free and intoxicating, as this film wants to show it.”

Aleksandar Petrovic in front of the press at the film’s premiere.

Do you know what Gypsies think of your film?

VJESNIK U SRIJEDU (Croatian newspaper)

“I wanted to talk to you about this! The second or third day of projecting, at the “Slavija” cinemas in Belgrade, after the movie, I noticed a group of young gypsies that were leaving the projection room. Since they were Gypsies and young, I absolutely wanted their opinion. I asked them:

Guys, is it worth seeing this film? They answered: It’s good, really good. It deserves awards.” A.P

Anecdotes:

Aleksandar Petrovic liked to say that he was unlucky.

During the Oscars ceremony, Aleksandar Petrovic was at the table with other film personalities, notably Gregory Peck, President of the Academy Awards, and his wife. As the Oscar for Best Foreign Film for the year 1967 (in 1968) was being announced, he heard: “and the Oscar goes to Aleksandar Petrovic for *Closely Watched Trains* (Tchecoslovakia).” He stood up at the same time as Jiri Menzel, the director of this film to go to the podium. There was a confusion because *I even met happy Gypsies* wasn’t announced. The presenter expressed his humiliation and his excuses for his mistake. It was in fact Jiri Menzel who received the Oscar. Tchecoslovakia had just been occupied by the Russians. Gregory Peck explained to Petrovic that the list of winners had been decided for a while, and that he should have won the Oscar but the foreign policy was more important than film. P. Volk: “Let nad mocvarom” p. 194

Petrovic's words:

“There are no lies in art. Art knows only the truth. We are not judges, nor prophets nor propagandists. If we do not love man, we cannot make films.”

Aleksandar Petrovic in response to a journalist question:

What is the key to good cinematography?

Petrovic: Talent... and good conditions for its development.

Biography

Aleksandar Petrović (Sacha Petrović)

Born in Paris in 1929, Sacha always considered himself cosmopolitan, not due to his Serbian origins, but from his ancestors' close relationship and roots in France. Reading and writing were his passions from a young age. He imagines characters, their tragedies, and the scenery of his make-believe screenplays. His older brother dies in **1947**, twelve years after his younger brother. These deaths become anchored in Sacha's memory forever. Death appears in all his films, even the shortest ones. Despite his family's tragedy, he successfully passes the baccalaureate his final year of high school. He leaves to the Prague Film Academy, but in **1948** is forced to interrupt his studies and return to Belgrade (due to Soviet-Yugoslav tensions). Three months later his father dies. Feeling he was now responsible for his family, he begins his career as an assistant director, then director and screenwriter. He continued his studies at the Belgrade Philosophy Faculty and obtained a degree in Art History. He also wrote newspaper critiques for the arts and cinema. In **1955**, his father's ex-colleagues from the Parisian Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées procured him a scholarship for six months. He then met Luis Buñuel.

1955: produced with Vicko Raspor the documentary *Uz druga je drug (Côte à côte)*. He received his first directing award at the Pula Festival in 1956.

In **1957** he writes and produces his first short film, *Flight above the marshes* (French: *Entre le ciel et le marais*, Serbian: *Let nad močvarom*). The film represents Yugoslavia at the Cannes Festival, a first, and is well received by critics. Petrović released another short film in **1957**, *Petar Dobrović* with Vicko Raspor, about the life and works of the Serbian painter.

In **1958**, Petrović produces *The last exit (Posladnji izlaz)* with Vicko Raspor. This becomes his only movie that he does not appreciate. Beginning in **1958**, Aleksandar Petrović will work on the synopsis, script, scenario, dialogue, musical choice, and the scenery. From then, he was a complete author for all his movies. He releases *The roads (Putevi)*, a film about the life and works of Serbian painter Sava Sumanović. It receives the Grand prix of the Pula Festival and the Grand Prix of the ville de Tours.

War Against the war (Rat ratu), another short film, is produced in **1960** and describes the workers' struggle in Serbia before World War Two. In **1961**, Petrović produces *When love has gone* (French: *Elle et Lui*) (Serbian: *Dvoje*). This film marks the beginning of Yugoslav modern film. Aleksandar Petrović intimately and poetically presents the tormenting relationship of a couple. It is the first socialist cinematographic work that, in Petrović's own manner, matches the developments in movies of the new global cinematographic school of thought (the "nouvelle vague"). French and Italian write rave reviews in 1962 when the film is projected as an official selection of the Cannes Festival. July 25 1961: his only son Dragomir (Dragan) is born. Shortly after his birth, Dragan suffers from encephalitis, which will handicap him the rest of his life. Petrović dedicates his life to his son, ensuring his childhood is normal. With his wife Branka, Petrović brings Dragan across the world to find the best treatments. His dedication to his son affected his career decisions multiple times.

In **1962**, Aleksandar Petrović is named Professor at the Belgrade Academy of Cinema, Theater, and Television. He sits as the head of direction.

1963: *The Days (Dani)* is a meditative film on solitude, suddenly broken by the brief encounter of a young wife and a student. After *When love has gone* and *The Days*, the first films to undermine Yugoslav socialist cinematography, Petrović is called the “spokesperson of new cinema in Yugoslavia” by the western press. Yugoslav newspapers see his works as capitalist decadence and an intrusion by conniving western behavior. Petrović did not believe he could easily film another full-feature film, and therefore returned to documentaries and shorts.

1964: *The Data* (French: *Proces verbal*, Serbian: *Zapisnik*), is a film inspired by multiple current events.

1965: *Fairs (Sabori)*: Aleksandar Petrović films different characters, the church, frescos, a wedding, a baby breast-feeding. This short film inspires Petrović and acts as an exercise for his films that followed. In 1965, Petrović uses Yugoslav author Antonije Isaković’s works as an inspiration for his third film, ***Three (Tri)***. Instead of glorifying anti-Nazi patriotism, which is the Yugoslav state’s favorite theme, Petrović depicts the horror and absurdity of war. Petrović said: “*The film is one man’s view on war and his views on death caused by war.*” His film received critical acclaim worldwide: “*A chef-d’oeuvre*” – La Stampa, “*One of the most stimulating surprises from the New York Festival*” – World Journal Tribune, “*This beautiful film elevates Petrović as one of the best modern-day directors. Calling “Three” a chef-d’oeuvre and Petrović a master of cinema would not be an exaggeration*” – Geneva Tribune. ***Three*** becomes a global hit. Aleksandar Petrović is invited to all the major festivals and receives numerous prizes. ***Three is nominated for Best Foreign Film at the 1966 Oscars.*** **1967: *I Even met happy Gypsies (Skupljaci perja)*** is the first movie that presents the existence of Gypsies in society and in everyday life. It is also the first full-feature film where Gypsies speak their own language, Roma. The majority of roles are interpreted by real Gypsies; this is their movie. “*As a child, I observed them and saw in these people faith and irrationality,*” said Petrović.

“*Alexander Petrović’s masterpiece is the most beautiful homage to personal liberty*” – Le Combat- Henri Chapier. “*A great and beautiful film, poetic, melancholic, heartwarming, tender, and strong. Pardon me for the string of epithets, but I could add another twenty or so...*” – Le Nouveau Candide – Michel Aubriant.

I even met happy Gypsies wins numerous awards, including the **Grand Prix special du Jury at the Cannes Festival in 1967, the FIPRESCI award in Cannes**, which is to an international film by the International Federation of Cinematographic Press. **The film is nominated for best foreign film at the Oscars and the Golden Globes in 1967.**

After ***I even met happy Gypsies***, Aleksandar Petrović becomes a world-class director in the eyes of American and European filmmakers. The French production company “Artistes Associés” wants to produce a movie with him. Petrović proposes ***It rains in my village*** (French: ***Il pleut dans mon village***, Serbian: ***Biće skoro propast sveta nek propadne nije šteta***), a film about a father who takes the blame instead of his son for an assassination, and Dostoyevsky’s “The Possessed.” Petrović discovers that the subject and its elements are mirrors of the political events of his time. ***It rains in my village*** is actually at odds with ***I even met happy Gypsies***. The film depicts the problem of liberty in a world devoid of it, encased by traditions, its manners and social and psychological restrictions. The film is presented as an official selection at Cannes, prized at the Pula festival, but immediately taken out of theaters in Yugoslavia, primarily for political reasons. The *Nouvel Observateur*’s Michel Maurdor called it “**An authentic chef-d’oeuvre.**” Before filming his last movie, ***Migrations***, Aleksandar Petrović considers ***It rains in my village*** his best film. The film represents Yugoslavia at the Cannes Festival in 1969. It receives the Bronze Medal for best film and best director at the Festival of Pula in 1968. In **1969**, Aleksandar Petrović receives the Medal of Honor “Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres” from the French government. He is the first Yugoslav artist to receive this award.

At the end of the 1960s, other Yugoslav directors preferred to cover subjects such as the daily routine of current life or communist propaganda, which the Yugoslav authorities opposed. Amidst this new “black wave” of Yugoslav producers in the 1960s, Petrović could not find Yugoslav producer to support his project. Petrović is persuaded of the link between film and literature, and he decides to turn to Russian literature for his next work. The Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov’s ***The Master and Margarita***, one of the key literary works of the 20th century, attracts him, and Petrović produces the movie with Italians and Yugoslavs.

“All power is a form of violence exercised over people...” Mikhail Bulgakov The devil is in Moscow...

“Some can believe in the Devil’s existence, others want to proclaim that the Master, Bulgakov and I dreamed of him. I do not know what the Master and Bulgakov would have to say about this topic, since they are dead, but I am more inclined to believe in the Devil’s existence than not.” – Aleksandar Petrović

The Master and Margarita is extremely well received in Europe and the United States, and receives multiple prizes, including: at the Venice Festival in **1972 the Silver Lion**, or best adaptation of a literary work from the Chicago Film Festival, as well as best male leading actor for Alain Cuny; nominated for Best Film at the Vienna festival; the “Elle” Grand Prize for Cinema 1973-74 (a survey done by the magazine to determine the best films of the year); the Grand Prix for best director and best male leading actor at the Pula Festival.

“Lyricism and magic. The film has the tranquil gravity of a masterpiece... A film one needs to watch and re-watch.” – Claude Mauriac – L’Express. “The Master and Margarita – a master of a film. The Yugoslav director Aleksandar Petrović was not able to film in Moscow, where it was illegal. He instead filmed in Italy and lived in France. He has for a while now lived in disgrace in his own country, where he is nonetheless recognized as its greatest cinematographer. It has become increasingly dangerous to take artistic liberties against uncontrollable demands from authorities.” France Soir – Robert Chazal.

“His success is more than just talent: he has the passion that is indispensable to make good films great.” – Le Journal du Dimanche – Pierre Billard.

The Master and Margarita is shown in Belgrade and quickly qualified as anti-communist. Two days after it is first released, the Yugoslav co-producers ban the film. It is the beginning of a long period of cultural repression. Petrović is accused of crimes against the State and its People. The futile cause is the “Plastični Isus” (Plastic Jesus) film made by his student Lazar Stojanović. Petrović authorized his student to present his film to his final jury, under the condition that he remove all anti-Tito passages. Unfortunately, Stojanović disobeyed and kept those passages. Nevertheless, he receives the highest grade by the jury of the Academy. The film is watched by the Yugoslav authorities and the Academy, and his images and dialogues are deemed to be extremely politically provocative. Stojanović is sentenced to a year in prison and Petrović is expelled from the Academy of Cinema. Authorities confiscate his passport and he becomes a public enemy of the Yugoslav state. He will remain in a state of disgrace in Yugoslavia for the following eighteen years. It isn’t until the 90s that Petrović claims this expulsion to be a political and personal machination; a tribunal will officially reinstate him as a professor on ground of “inacceptable political disqualifications.” During these difficult years, Petrović must go on without directing. Dragan needs intensive specialized physical rehabilitation, and the Petrović family leaves to Budapest (the Yugoslav Police finally return his passport) Petrović, who is also French, then moves to France, where his sister and mother live, and works from there. He splits his time between Hungary and Paris, and is aided by the French cinematographic milieu and his

family. He writes scripts, including *Heart of a Dog from the Bulgakov novel, or Benia The King based on Isaac Babel's "The Odessa Tales" "The King"*. When Henrich Böll's "Group Portrait with Lady" appeared (Nobel Prize for Literature), Petrović made sure to obtain adaptation rights. After seeing *The Master and Margarita*, Böll accepted to collaborate with Petrović.

The Artistes Associés tell Petrović that if Romy Schneider agrees to star in the film, they would finance it. Petrović approached Schneider, and Romy accepted. In **1977**, German producers push the project, which becomes a reality. Along with Romy Schneider, Petrović directs a crew of international stars such as Michel Galabru, Brad Dourif, and other excellent Yugoslav and German Actors, such as Rudiger Vögler. *"I wanted to highlight the kindness and human warmth of a certain Germany, represented by Leni Gruyten, a woman who knows how to give and love when everyone else is taking. I believe that Böll wanted to show his compatriots, who acted selfishly for 10 years, that there was another way to live; Leni Gruyten is calm and smiling, despite the horrors surrounding her. Yesterday, at the press conference, a woman who was detained and tortured in a concentration camp told me that when seeing the film, she discovered something unknown to her, a new Germany, which gave her the feeling of being reborn. This testimony was a gift to me."* – Aleksandar Petrović Romy Schneider receives a best German actress award from the German government; *Group Portrait with Lady* represents Germany at the Cannes Festival in **1977**.

While living in Paris, Petrović continued to communicate with Belgrade. However, every screenplay he sent was systematically refused by Yugoslav producers. In **1975-76**, Petrović writes the screenplay for *Banović Strahinja* (Soko), based on a medieval poem, which receives an award at the Pula Festival. The film was produced by Vatroslav Mimica. He produces two plays - *Heart of a Dog* in **1979** and *The Master and Margarita* in **1981**, both based on Bulgakov's novels. Aleksandar Petrović continues to fight for cinema. He is the founder and member of the European Academy of Cinema and Television. He presides or is a jury member for multiple international film festivals, is a member of SACED, and co-founds "FEST", an international film festival in Belgrade. *"Migrations exist. Death does not!"* – Miloš Tsernianski Finally, in **1987**, Aleksandar Petrović films *Migrations (Seobe)*. The movie is inspired by a famous novel by Yugoslav writer Miloš Tsernianski, which received the award for best foreign novel in France in **1986**. Petrović has been working on this project since **1957**, when he first contacted Tsernianski who was himself exiled in London. After long years of waiting, Petrović could now direct Isabelle Huppert, Richard Berry and Avtandil Maharadze (the Georgian actor from "Repentir") who are the main trio in the movie. Petrović is finally happy! This spectacular production is one with two ends: one full feature film is the first part of the work, and the second is an eight episode television series. *"I am one of those who believed Migrations was a capital piece. I always wanted to bring it to screen, first because it is a wonderful story where the heroes are nobodies from central Europe in the 18th century, and these nobodies are always interesting. Finally, I find many parallels between their epoch and our time, which are both times of migrations and mélanges, where ancient rules have become obsolete without being replaced, where stable values have been lost and people live in chaos and indiscipline, searching for something that has yet to be born. It is this need to change and this confusion during these massive mutation periods that I look to express while keeping the rhapsodic tone of the author."* Aleksandar Petrović – Figaro Magazine – G. Suffert *"Petrović has made a lyrical and baroque fresco of stupefying force. A sort of Romanesque and apocalyptic power sweeps the characters in the chaos of battles and atrocities, in the melancholy of massacred spirits and hopeless love. You needed this director's immense talent, the same director of I Even Met Happy Gypsies, Master and Margarita, and Group Portrait with Lady, to lead to this magnificent, audacious, and crazy work... This is a cosmic movie with plenty of brio and furor."* Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, co-screenwriter

The last day of filming in Yugoslavia finished at dawn on November 9th, **1987**. Aleksandar Petrović found his son Dragan, 26 years of age, dying. Dragan is buried at the Père Lachaise in Paris, in the family tomb next to his father and his grandmother, Anka. Aleksandar Petrović finds the strength to continue to work on the film and finishes filming in Czechoslovakia. He dedicates ***Migrations*** to Dragan. However, problems with French producers, and Aleksandar Petrović's death, have kept ***Migrations*** from ever being released in France, while the Serbian version is released in Belgrade in **1994** under Milosević. Milosević believes the movie can be propagandist, but once he sees it in theaters, he immediately realizes its meaning and bans it. *"We must give film its real dimension, use the angle of art to reach the soul as well as the eyes."* – Aleksandar Petrović. The Belgrade Auteur Film Festival was created in **1995** in honor of Aleksandar Petrović. **The Grand Prix of the festival is named "Aleksandar Saša Petrović"**. Aleksandar Petrović had faith in people. Curious, he loved life, his family, friends, gypsies, people, horses, dogs, space, tides, beauty he found in ugliness, painting, music, and good faith. He never tolerated lies, mediocrity, passivity, intolerance, injustice, suffering, war, and death. Aleksandar Petrović was an exceptional personality gifted with a forceful spirit and an artistic talent, indefatigable warrior for liberty and justice. His path was hard; he overcame massive obstacles due to his extraordinary energy and his faith in others, and he was able to constantly push forward. He was modest, honest, indulgent, charitable, merciful, and filled with noble feelings. Aleksandar Petrović worked with a number of famous international actors, including, but not limited to, Romy Schneider, Annie Girardot, Mimsy Farmer, Isabelle Huppert, Ugo Tognazzi, Alain Curry, Bernard Blier, Michel Galabru, Brad Dourif, Richard Berry, Avantandil Maharadze, Erland Josephson, and with Yugoslav greats such as Velimir Bata Zivojinović, Eva Ras, Bekim Fehmiju, Mija Aleksić, Pavle Vujisić, Ljuba Tadić, Dragomir Gidra Bojanić, Dragan Nikolić, Miki Manojlović, Olivera Vučo, Milena Dravić and many others. He was open, precise, and knew how to gain his collaborators' and actors' trust and respect.

Richard Berry spoke of Aleksandar Petrović: *"I love the way that Sacha Petrović understands everything, sees and is able to speak about the rosaries you have, your ring, socks, the pocket you primarily use... just as much as camera movements, lighting, food... I don't think I have ever met another director like him... he is brilliant."*

Igor Luther (director known for his work in the Schlöndorfer film "The Tin Drum") speaks of Aleksandar Petrović: *"Sacha Petrović has inspiration and I have hope that we will make a film of great importance, one that everyone will want to go see... I love his style that is not quite narrative, and the fact that Sacha has a subjective approach to the themes in ***Migrations*** he does not only portray the images and historical facts. The filming of ***Migrations*** is an enterprise of importance and such exceptional size that it necessitates specific efforts, concentration and energy; it will take a long time, with constant character, scenery and seasonal changes. I find it enchanting. I am quite pleased by it."*

Aleksandar Petrović was one of the first intellectuals to oppose Slobodan Milosević. He founded a liberal party at the beginning of the **1990s** and remained its vice-president until his death. He was against nationalism and war. He was a tireless and hopeful fighter against them. Any indifference for him was a sin. Three weeks before the premiere of ***Seobe (Migrations)*** in Yugoslavia, Aleksandar Petrović fell. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor, and died in Paris on **August 20th 1994** after four months in agony. He lies today with his son Dragan and his mother Anka at the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

"If you do not love Man, you cannot make movies." – Aleksandar Petrović

The Name Aleksandar Sacha Petrović appears in numerous international encyclopaedias and specialized texts. His work is still the subject of research and theses in film departments of many renowned universities. His films are still screened around the world. He has succeeded in validating

himself as a true 'auteur' of his work. Until the very end of his life, he has fought for truth. He left behind incredible amounts of texts not only examining film, but also expanding on visual arts, aesthetics, and literature. Throughout his work, he has proved to be a true theorist of film. A number of respected film historians have dedicated books or chapters of books to Aleksandar Sacha Petrović's work. Right before his death, Aleksandar Petrović revealed moving poems dedicated to his son that he had previously kept for himself. He decided to publish them, along with personal memoirs, in a collection called "*Tous mes amours-les périscopes aveugles*".

*"All of these films have to do with death. **When love has gone** evokes the death of love, **The Days**, the death of a meeting, of a feeling, **Three** talks about death during the war. If I think of it, **I Even met happy Gypsies, It rains in my village, Group Portrait with Lady** all have the same leitmotif, death." A.P. He did not have time to quote **Migrations**, where love and death reach an apotheosis.*