

KINO LORBER

Presents



THE VILLAGE DETECTIVE: A SONG CYCLE

A FILM BY BILL MORRISON

Produced by Bill Morrison

Co-produced by Madeleine Molyneaux and Maria Vinogradova

****Official Selection: International Film Festival Rotterdam****

****Soundtrack by Pulitzer and Grammy Award Winner David Lang****

U.S. | 2021 | 81 Minutes | Color | English & Russian

Publicity Contact: Susan Norget <susan@norget.com>

Distributor Contact: Jonathan Hertzberg <jhertzberg@kinolorber.com>
Kino Lorber, 333 W 39th St, Ste 503, New York, 10018, (212) 629-6880

LOGLINE

A Soviet film from 1969 is found in an Icelandic fisherman's net, and the filmography of its leading actor offers a portal into forgotten histories that endure on celluloid.

SYNOPSIS

During the summer of 2016, a fishing boat off the shores of Iceland made a most curious catch: four reels of 35mm film, seemingly of Soviet provenance. Unlike the film find explored in Bill Morrison's *Dawson City: Frozen Time*, it turned out this discovery wasn't a lost work of major importance, but an incomplete print of a popular comedy starring beloved Russian actor Mihail Žarov. Does that mean it has no value? Morrison thought not. To him, the heavily water-damaged print, and the way it surfaced, could be seen as a fitting reflection on the life of Žarov, who loved this role so much that he even co-directed a sequel to it. Morrison uses the story as a jumping off point for his latest meditation on cinema's past, offering a journey into Soviet history and film accompanied by a gorgeous score by Pulitzer and Grammy-winning composer David Lang.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In July of 2016 I got an email from the Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhannsson, who had heard that a commercial fisherman in Iceland had recently found four reels of a Soviet film in his net.

The reels were recovered 20 miles off the west coast of Iceland: at the bottom, and in the middle of, the Atlantic Ocean, not far from where the continental plates meet, meaning they were found just at the geological division between East and West.

The film, *DEREVENSKIY DETEKTIV* (1969), was not a lost, rare, or even, to my mind, a particularly good film. It is well-known to Russians of a certain age, and it is still shown on television in Russia with some regularity. I noted that it's star, Mikhail Zharov (1899 – 1981), had had an extraordinarily long and productive career in both film and in theater.

As I often make new films out of disused old films, I was interested in learning more. The next year I traveled to Iceland and to Moscow. In Iceland I interviewed the fisherman Gisli Gylfason and the archivist Erlendur Sveinsson who had recovered the film. And in Moscow I interviewed the curator Peter Bagrov, who led me on a deep dive into Zharov's filmography.

The storyline in *DEREVENSKIY DETEKTIV* involves a missing accordion. The club manager arrives at the district police officer Fyodor Ivanovich Aniskin's office to report a theft:

“Of course Cinema has the most mass reach compared to the other arts” he begins. “But Music is meant to educate men, not only aesthetically, but also, if it’s possible to say, politically as well. Song helps us build and work. The accordion was stolen”.

Tragically Jóhann died in February 2018 at the age of 48 and I began to think about the film I was making as being about mortality and immortality. It’s about what one leaves behind, and how that reflects the world in which you lived in. It’s about what makes up a life, and the vessels that carry it through this world and into the next one.

With that in mind, I approached my friend and frequent collaborator David Lang with this project, THE VILLAGE DETECTIVE: a song cycle. David was inspired by the fact that, after having sat on the bottom of the middle of the Atlantic Ocean for nearly 50 years, this film had new stories to tell. We arrived at the idea of a soundtrack for a single accordion—a single set of lungs diving into the ocean to retrieve this story and breathe life back into an archaic film. The extraordinary music David wrote perfectly captures this, and the beautiful, tragic and inexorable drift of time.

BILL MORRISON – BIOGRAPHY

Bill Morrison makes films that reframe long-forgotten moving images. His films have premiered at the New York, Rotterdam, Sundance, and Venice film festivals. In 2014 Morrison had a mid career retrospective at MoMA. His found footage opus DECASIA (2002) was the first film of the 21st century to be selected to the Library of Congress’ National Film Registry. THE GREAT FLOOD (2013), was recognized with the Smithsonian Ingenuity Award of 2014 for historical scholarship. DAWSON CITY: FROZEN TIME (2016) was included on over 100 critics’ lists of the best films of the year, and on numerous lists ranking the best films of the decade, including those of the Associated Press, Los Angeles Times, and Vanity Fair.

BILL MORRISON – FILMOGRAPHY

let me come in (2021, 11 min)
The Ring (2021, 8 min)
Buried News (2021, 13 min)
The Village Detective: a song cycle (2021, 81 min)
Curly’s Thanksgiving (2020, 12 min)
Sunken Films (2020, 11 min)
Curly Takes A Bath By The Sea (2020, 5 min)
Electricity (2018, 30 min)
The Unchanging Sea (2018, 30 min)
The Letter (2018, 13 min)
Weaving (2018, 6 min)
Dawson City: Postscript (2017, 10 min)
Dawson City: Frozen Time (2016, 120 min)

Niver vs Walls (2016, 17 min)
Little Orphant Annie (2016, 7 min)
The Dockworker's Dream (2016, 17 min)
Gene Takes A Drink (2015, 6 min)
Back to the Soil (2014, 18 min)
Beyond Zero: 1914-1918 (2014, 41 min)
All Vows (2013, 10 min)
The Great Flood (2013, 78 min)
Re: Awakenings (2013, 18 min)
Just Ancient Loops (2012, 26 min)
A Trip To The Beach (2012, 12 min)
Tributes - Pulse (2011, 65 min)
The Miners' Hymns (2011, 52 min)
Spark of Being (2010, 68 min)
Release (2010, 13 min)
Every Stop On The F Train (2008, 5 min)
Who By Water (2007, 18 min)
The Highwater Trilogy (2006, 31 min)
How To Pray (2006, 11 min)
Outerborough (2005, 8 min)
Light Is Calling (2004, 8 min)
The Mesmerist (2003, 16 min)
Decasia (2002, 67 min)
Ghost Trip (2000, 23 min)
City Walk (1999, 6 min)
The Film of Her (1996, 12 min)
The Death Train (1993, 17 min)
Footprints (1992, 6 min)

DAVID LANG (COMPOSER) – BIOGRAPHY

In the words of The New Yorker, "With his winning of the Pulitzer Prize for *the little match girl passion* (one of the most original and moving scores of recent years), Lang, once a post-minimalist *enfant terrible*, has solidified his standing as an American master."

David Lang is known primarily for his vocal music, and for writing narrative music for dance, film, and theatrical productions, as well as for his own operas, such as *prisoner of the state*, which premiered in 2019 at the New York Philharmonic, and *the loser*, which opened the 2016 Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He earned Golden Globe, Critics' Choice and Academy Award nominations for his music for Paolo Sorrentino's film *Youth*. Their collaboration began when Sorrentino used Lang's music in his Academy Award-winning *La Grande Bellezza*. Most recently, Lang scored Paul Dano's directorial debut, *Wildlife*, as well as Patty Jenkins's limited series *I Am the Night*. *The Village Detective: a Song Cycle* is Lang's first score for a feature film by Bill

Morrison, although they have been collaborators on smaller projects for over 20 years.

Lang is a Professor of Music Composition at the Yale School of Music and is Artist in Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music festival Bang on a Can.

[Click here](#) for a comprehensive list of films and footage excerpted in *The Village Detective: a song cycle*.

CREDITS

Maria Vinogradova presents a Hypnotic Pictures production

A film by Bill Morrison

Director/Producer

Bill Morrison

Music composed by

David Lang

Support provided by

the Wexner Center for the Arts Film/Video Residency Award, The Ohio State University.

Directed, produced and edited by

Bill Morrison

Produced by

Maria Vinogradova

Produced by

Madeleine Molyneaux in association with Picture Palace Pictures

Editorial Consultants

Sam Green & Maria Vinogradova

Original music composed by

David Lang

Music performed by

Frode Andersen, accordion

Shara Nova, vocals

Music mixed by

Nick Lloyd

Sound design by

Bill Morrison, John Somers

[Click here](#) for a comprehensive list of films and footage excerpted in *The Village Detective: a song cycle*.

ABOUT KINO LORBER

With a library of over 4,000 titles, Kino Lorber Inc. has been a leader in independent art house distribution for 35 years, releasing 30 films per year theatrically under its Kino Lorber, Kino Repertory and Alive Mind Cinema banners, garnering seven Academy Award® nominations in nine years. In addition, the company brings over 350 titles yearly to the home entertainment and educational markets through physical and digital media releases. With an expanding family of distributed labels, Kino Lorber handles releases in ancillary media for Zeitgeist Films, Cohen Media Group, Greenwich Entertainment, Artsploitation, Palisades Tartan, Menemsha Films, Raro Video, and others, placing physical titles through all wholesale, retail, and direct to consumer channels, as well as direct digital distribution through over 40 OTT services including all major TVOD and SVOD platforms. In 2019, the company launched its new art house digital channel Kino Now which features over 1000 titles from the acclaimed Kino Lorber library. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kino Marquee initiative was launched in 2020 pioneering "virtual theatrical" releases of art house films with revenue shares that allows audiences to support almost 400 local independent theaters.