



SEMAINE  
DE LA CRITIQUE  
CANNES 2014

# the tribe

A FILM BY MYROSLAV SLABOSHPYTSKIY

GONATA FILM

UKRAINIAN  
STATE FILM  
AGENCY

HUBERT BALS  
FUND

Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

OSPC

ART HOUSE  
TRAFFIC

f The Tribe/Племя

# the tribe

Original title: ПЛЕМ'Я (PLEMYA)

A film by Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy

Ukraine - 2014 - 130' - HD - Dolby 5.1 - 1:2.39 - No dialogues/Sign language only

FEATURE FILM COMPETITION  
53rd SEMAINE DE LA CRITIQUE  
Cannes Film Festival 2014

**A deaf mute teenager enters a specialized  
boarding school where, to survive,  
he becomes part of a wild organization  
– the tribe.**

**His love for one of the concubines will  
unwillingly lead him to break  
all the unwritten rules  
within the Tribe's hierarchy.**



## synopsis

Deaf mute Sergey enters a specialized boarding school for deaf-and-dumb. In this new place, he needs to find his way through the hierarchy of the school's network dealing with crimes and prostitution, the Tribe.

By taking part of several robberies, he gets propelled higher into the organization. Then he meets one of the Chief's concubines Anna, and unwillingly breaks all the unwritten rules of the tribe.



## writer & director: Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy

Born in 1974, in Kiev (Ukraine) Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy graduated from the filmmaking department of the Kiev State Institute of Theatre and Arts, named after I. K. Karpenko-Kariy, majoring in feature film directing. He has worked at film studios in Kiev (the Dovzhenko Film Studio) and in St. Petersburg (the Lenfilm Studios). His second film «DIAGNOSIS» has been nominated for Golden Bear. His next short film «DEAFNESS» is his second Berlinale outing and also got a Golden Bear nomination.

In the autumn of 2010, he received a grant for development of his first full-length feature film «THE TRIBE» from the Hubert Bals Fund of Rotterdam Film Festival.

In 2012, he won the Silver Leopard of the Locarno Film Festival's competition program «Pardi di domani» for «NUCLEAR WASTE». In 2013, «NUCLEAR WASTE» was nominated for EFA Award.

Member of EFA, since 2013.

**filmography:**

1995	<b>The Guard</b> (diploma; short)
2006	<b>The Incident</b> (short)
2009	<b>Diagnosis</b> (short)
2010	<b>Deafness</b> (short)
2012	<b>Nuclear waste</b> (short) – <i>Silver Leopard – Locarno 2012</i>



## director's note

It's been my old dream to do homage to the silent movie. To make a film that can be understood without a single voiced word. It's not that I was thinking about some kind of a European "existential" movie in which the heroes would keep silence throughout half the film. And besides, actors were not silent in the silent movie. They communicated very actively through a wealth of byplay and body language. They could communicate emotions and feelings without a line to say. And it is not by incident that most of silent movie stars had come from the pantomime. This is exactly why I've always wanted to shoot a film about the life of deaf-and-dumb people. With no speech and with no subtitles. And with the participation of real deaf-and-dumb people.

While I was working on the short DEAFNESS, which I considered to be a kind of a pilot for a future full feature, I made many contacts with the Ukrainian deaf-and-dumb community and the heads of the Ukrainian Societies of deaf-and-dumb people. I also came to know the leaders of the informal "shadow" community, who revealed to me their isolated world from inside, the ways and the rituals of this community, one of the most closed ones.

This film is completely based on my school memories and on what's been told me by my consultants from the world of deaf-and-dumb people. With all its seeming simplicity and seeming violence, this is a film about very young people. And very young people are capable of strong pure feelings: love, hatred, fury, anger, despair. One does not need words to express these emotions.

I see this film as a humanistic story of love and initiation – a story of entering the adult life in the cruel world.

## actors' biographies

### **GRIGORY FESENKO (Sergei)**

Grigory Fesenko was born on September 9, 1994 in Kiev. His mother is a cleaner, his father is unemployed. There are three children in their family.

Grigory graduates from school for children with hearing impairments this year.

Guys like Grigory are called "children of the streets". He is attracted by everything associated with street culture. He is a graffiti artist, parkourist, roofer. His favorite things to do - ride on trains, sitting between the cars, walk around the city with friends, drinking in bars. Sometimes he writes poems - when inspiration comes. He is now in search of himself and his future plans remain unknown. He spent some time playing in one of the Kiev sports society of deaf football teams, went to training camps, participated in the matches. But, apparently, he never thought about the sport seriously and easily abandoned football when he was cast. During the shooting, he was isolated from his street friends for three months and lived in a rented apartment supervised by actors assistant. Drinking alcohol and participation in the protests was strictly prohibited for him. As it turned out later, the ban was violated repeatedly.

### **YANA NOVIKOVA (Anna)**

Yana Novikova was born on November 8, 1993 in a village, near the small belarusian town of Gomel in the hearing parents family. She became deaf at the age of two weeks due to illness. Her younger sister also became deaf in early childhood.

She has studied in a boarding school for children with hearing impairments. She loves to dance, draw, and practices pantomime. After graduation, she went to Gomel, where she enrolled in the College of Engineering. After studying for a year, she realized that it was not her way. Yana loves cinema and dreamed of acting since her childhood. After she had heard about a small quota for the deaf actors from Theater «Rainbow» (Ukrainian Society of the Deaf) in Kiev Theatre Academy, she dropped out of college and went to Kiev for audition. «Rainbow» did not accept her application, but she was noticed by director Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy - he came to audition in search of deaf actors for his film «THE TRIBE» and invited her to the casting. During the audition, Yana eclipsed all participants - she played as a real actress.

After the casting Yana lived in Kiev in rental apartments for three months. She took part in the pilot shooting of «THE TRIBE», despite the fact that she didn't know, whether she was approved for the leading role or not until the beginning of the shooting. During shooting Yana showed iron will: she abandoned everything that could be a distraction from her work, broke up with her boyfriend, starved to lose weight, did crazy workouts in gym and spent the rest of her time watching movies, advised her by the filmmaker.



## Q & A with Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy

### WHY?

I was thinking about making such a movie 20 years ago. By all means, this is an homage to silent film, where actors were communicating through pantomime. I know, such movies are produced almost every year, successfully or not. However all works I've seen are following the silent movie stylization. For me, the main goal was to make a more realistic, natural silent film, which would be easily understood without words. The thing is, nowadays there are lots of films, especially TV ones, which you can just listen. And audience is used to that. On the other hand - there are films, where all actors stay silent all the time. I've made a silent short film myself. But now, with «THE TRIBE», I've found another path, unique and suitable for my film. Sign language is like a dance, ballet, pantomime, kabuki theater, etc. At the same time, there's no grotesque in it - people are communicating that way for real. Besides, according to recent developments in medicine, sign language will be a dead language in perspective. In some time it will cease to exist at all. But I find sign language fascinating, and I really wanted to share this feeling with the audience.

### HOW?

I have never considered the idea of making this film with hearing actors. I think, it would have been an entirely different kind of film. Body language, sign language they use is natural for them. And it is very individual. Much more individual, than French, Russian or

German spoken by particular person. Because people, who speak, use only facial muscles to make pronunciation, while deaf people use the whole body to communicate. And it's what makes them unique and extremely interesting. As for actors, casting lasted about a year, mainly through social networks. For obvious reasons social networks are very popular among deaf people. We have looked about 300 applicants from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus for the leads.

And though there are 8 special theaters for deaf actors and audience in this countries, we did not shoot a single professional for the film. All of our artists are children of the streets, most of them - from the poor and disadvantaged families. The main principle of the casting was that we were not looking for a specific role performers. We searched for the charismatic personality, able to attract our attention. And only afterwards we thought about certain part this person could play. Every scene was rehearsed and filmed on video before final editing and shooting. Sometimes we had to reshoot. Our work lasted about six months. I think, our actors gained some unique experience for a lifetime. I certainly did.

### **WHERE?**

Most of the shooting of «THE TRIBE» took place in Kiev, in the district where I spent my childhood. Formerly, it was named after Stalin, and even now this place is called "Stalinka". Most of the buildings here were built by German POWs after WWII. It is the outskirts of Kiev. This proletarian district, built mainly of red brick, resembles some of the buildings in New York. Shooting of the film began before the start of protest in Ukraine and completed after the Russian invasion in the Crimea. Our work was quite tense. Some cast members, including actors, in their spare time participated in protests and street clashes. In some days we had to cancel shooting because of road blockades, the cars with equipment just could not get to the set. The irony is that producer and I live just 4 kilometers away from the Maidan. Our shooting area was 15 kilometers away. Therefore shooting and rehearsals were in some sense the evacuation from the combat zone.

### **ABOUT PRODUCTION TEAM**

It was not a serious cinema production, we worked together rather as a small family pizzeria by atmosphere.

Producer and director of photography, Valentyn Vasyanovych, besides mentioned virtues, is a director of beautiful documentaries, which he directs and films as a cameraman.

He received the prize for best documentary in Clermont-Ferrand in 2005. I saw his new documentary and I loved his style of shooting, I think it is fantastic. And since he had a studio and a bunch of any equipment, all went well. We enjoyed our work so much and I am very happy with how it happened to be. And I hope we will make another movie together.





### **producer/dop/editor: Valentin Vasyanovych**

Valentin Vasyanovych was born on July 21, 1971 in Zhitomir. He graduated from The National University of theatre, cinema and television of Karpenko-Kary as cinematographer (1995) and documentary filmmaker (2000), and The Wajda School in Poland, 2007. He is author of several documentaries. In 2004, he gained fame as a documentary filmmaker - his documentary «AGAINST THE SUN» received the Jury Prize of the International Film Festival in Clermont-Ferrand, the Grand Prix at the Nancy Film Festival, mention of the jury at the International Film Festival in Toronto and several other awards. His last full-length documentary «CREPUSCULE» was awarded Special Mention on Docudays Film Festival in Kiev. In 2012 he made his debut in feature films with «BUSINESS AS USUAL» (Odessa International Film Festival, Special Jury Mention, FICC award). His second feature film – «KREDENS» – came out the next year and was also awarded a prize in Odessa FIPRESCI.

He is one of the most interesting Ukrainian documentary filmmakers.

The director of «THE TRIBE» was fascinated by his style of shooting after watching his movie «CREPUSCULE», and invited him as the cinematographer.



## **garmata film production**

As an independent production company Garmata Film (founded in 2006) produces and co-produces arthouse features and documentary films.

Our aim is the production of unique artistic value films.

Most recent films produced by the company:

«THE TRIBE» by Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy, 2014

«CREPUSCULE» by Valentyn Vasyanovich - documentary- 2013

«KREDENS» by Valentyn Vasyanovich - feature film - 2013

«BUSINESS AS USUAL» by Valentyn Vasyanovich - 2012

«MUM DIED ON SATURDAY IN THE KITCHEN» by Maxim Vasyanovich -  
documentary - 2009

Prize LAVR For The Best Debut, Annual National Award LAVR, Russia;  
Grand-prix of the International Festival of Independent Film «Deboshirfilm -  
Pure Dreams», Russia; The Best Ukrainian Film, Molodist international film  
festival, Ukraine; The prize “Novaya Gazeta - New Cinema“, Artdokfest 2010.

## cast

Grigoriy Fesenko  
Yana Novikova  
Rosa Babiy  
Alexander Dsiadevich  
Yaroslav Biletskiy  
Ivan Tishko  
Alexander Osadchiy  
Alexander Sidelnikov  
Sasha Rusakov  
Denis Gruba  
Dania Bykobiy  
Lenia Pisanenko  
Alexander Panivan  
Kirill Koshik  
Marina Panivan  
Tatiana Radchenko  
Ludmila Rudenko

## crew

Writer and Director: Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy  
Director of Photography: Valentyn Vasyanovych  
Production Design: Vlad Odudenko  
Film Editor: Valentyn Vasyanovych  
Sound Design: Sergiy Stepanskiy  
Costume Design: Alena Gres  
Creative Producer: Elena Slaboshpytskaya  
Producer: Valentyn Vasyanovych,  
Iya Myslytska

Produced by  
Garmata film production

with the support of  
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Rinat Akhmetov Foundation «Development of Ukraine» (UA)



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