



THE WAY I SPENT THE END OF THE WORLD

(Cum Me-Am Petrecut Sfarsitul Lumii)

Directed by Catalin Mitulescu



Romania & France/2006/106 min.

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SYNOPSIS

Bucharest 1989 - Last year of Ceausescu's dictatorship. Eva, 17, lives with her parents and her 7 year-old brother Lalalilu.

One day at school, Eva and her boyfriend Alex, accidentally break a bust of Ceausescu. They are forced to confess their crime before a disciplinary committee. Alex is protected by his father, a Party officer, but Eva is expelled from school and transferred to a reformatory establishment. There, she meets Andrei, a boy from a family of dissidents, and decides to escape Romania with him by crossing the Danube.

Lalalilu is more and more convinced that Ceausescu is the main reason for Eva's decision to leave. So, with his friends from school, he devises a plan to kill the dictator.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I think back to the Ceausescu era, a game comes to my mind that my family loved to play. While watching the only two hours of TV programming we had and which consisted mainly of Ceausescu's daily activities and some patriotic songs, we would sit around our dining table and imagine what it would be like if Ceausescu was captured and our family was responsible for guarding him. The first thing that needed to be decided was the place where he was to be kept. It was usually the bathroom. Then we thought about what to feed him. Sometimes my father took on the part of Ceausescu. He would

put on an old coat and a lamb fur hat and we would lock him inside the bathroom. My brother and I forced him to swear a lot of absurd things and teased him with a small piece of bread. My father was great at mimicking the way Ceausescu talked and walked. Sometimes we got so involved in the game that we didn't know how to stop. Even when my father begged to be let out, we wouldn't let him, telling him that he was only pretending to be our father, so we would release him. It usually ended with our mom stepping in resolutely and sending us to bed.

*It's been 15 years now that Ceausescu is gone. Now we have democracy and the liberty to travel all over the world, but we still carry the memory and heritage of that period inside of us. By seeing the events unfold through the eyes of 17 year old Eva and her 7 year old brother Lalalilu, **THE WAY I SPENT THE END OF THE WORLD** reflects that combination of sadness and happiness, reality and imagination that I associate with that time. It is a tragic-comedy with shades of the absurd and sublime. It expresses the emotion of that era in Romania and gives a clue of what we are carrying with us, me and my generation, into this new world we entered. The film is also an homage - not only to those who had the courage to stand up to the dictatorship, but also to those who, like our parents, have stayed silent and have endured for fear that something might happen to their loved ones.*

The film was inspired by my own memories, and feeds off of my own nostalgia and my belief in this world. It was not my intention to make a documentary or to reproduce the time with utmost historic accuracy. Although the key style of the film is realism, it contains my own image and sentiment of that specific era. We recreated that world through elements of set and costume design. I am convinced that even a simple milk bottle can contain it, because it has a special place in our hearts. Or the string shopping bag that my mother never parted from, the plastic cover on the kitchen table, the broken glass in the streetcar, the improvised heater in the driver's booth, all these are small but essential elements that take those who have lived it back to that specific world.

Although the story takes place in 1989, I decided with my production designer, Daniel Raduta and my costume designer, Monica Raduta, to create the feel of a place stuck in time. Both the set and the costumes contain elements of the 70's. We confronted our researches with our own memories and filmed documents from the time. We discovered that things had more colors than we actually remembered.. My goal was to paint a background with an intense historical and emotional charge, but one that suits the story and its characters. In this cold world as it was, the characters are the ones carrying the vital breath, the energy and joy of living. I did not want the film to be a simple fresco of a passed time. The characters are here to push the story forward with their desires, dreams, and energy.

CREDITS

Crew:

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| Director | CATALIN MITULESCU |
| Writer(s) | ANDREEA VALEAN & CATALIN MITULESCU |
| Producers (Romania) | CATALIN MITULESCU, DANIEL MITULESCU, IN-AH LEE |
| Producers (France) | PHILIPPE MARTIN, DAVID THION |
| Executive Producers | MARTIN SCORSESE, WIM WENDERS |
| Cinematography | MARIUS PANDURU |
| Editors | CRISTINA IONESCU |
| Sound Producer | YVES-MARIE OMNES |
| Sound Editor | STÉPHANE THIÉBAUT |
| Original Music | ALEXANDER BALANESCU |
| Art Director | DANIEL RADUTA |

Cast:

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|--------------------|------------------------|
| Eva | DOROTHEEA PETRE |
| Lalalilu | TIMOTEI DUMA |
| Tarzan | MARIUS STAN |
| Silvica | MARIAN STOICA |
| Vomica (Alexandru) | IONUT BECHERU |

Andrei
Père d'Eva
Mère d'Eva
Ceausica (père de Vomica)
Nea Titi
Nea Florica

CRISTIAN VARARU
MIRCEA DIACONU
CARMEN UNGUREANU
GRIGORE GONTA
NICOLAE PRAIDA
JEAN CONSTANTIN