

Emir Kusturica master of all trades



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PanARMENIAN.Net - Almazian Symphony ensemble directed by Armenian violinist Khachatur Almazian and Serbian cellist Tamara Savic recorded an OST to Emir Kusturica's "On The Milky Road" starring the Serbian helmer and Italy's sweetheart Monica Bellucci. Almazian Symphony released its first album in 2013 in France, in cooperation with Sony Music Entertainment and France TV National. In a conversation with PanARMENIAN.Net, Khachatur Almazian shared details of his cooperation with Kusturica.

"On The Milky Road" tells a story that stretches across war in former Yugoslavia , blossoming love of a woman (Bellucci) for a soldier (Kusturica) who chooses life as a recluse. The director plans to complete production in late 2014, to be featured at Cannes Film Festival.



Khachatur Almazian and Monica Bellucci

On working with Kusturica

My friendly and business relations with Kusturica date back a while ago. It was Almazian Symphony that opened the first Kustendorf Film and Music Festival. In 2010 we were already collaborating with Emir and his composer son Stribor. We recorded music to a movie "Cool Water" co-produced by Johnny Depp. Later, the movie production was postponed; however, the recording was to Kusturica's

liking, which determined his further choice of an ensemble.

As opposed to the majority of directors who work on music in the post-production stage, Emir focuses on music during production. I direct the orchestra and play violin solos.

Work on music starts from Stribor's sending the score, followed by rehearsal and interpretation in the studio. I love working on Stribor's music, it's simply wonderful. I cannot define the exact style but it is certainly beautiful and vibrant.



Almazian with composer Stribor Kusturica (center) and producer Philippe Avril (right)

With Stribor, we're really on the same wave. We never watch the time when working together: at times, we start early in the morning and go on far into the night. The finalized material is then shown to Emir.

About Kusturica

Kusturica takes his time to work on every detail - that's one of his specifics. In this day and age, many directors depend on producers who set time limits, determine the cast, etc. Emir told me once how he spent 1,5 months on a wedding scene in "Underground" though he initially planned to finish it in 5 days. I'm always in awe of his phenomenal energy, working capacity – it's hard to imagine how one person can be capable of making films, performing concerts, hosting festivals, writing books, building cities. I keep thinking of a Sergey Dovlatov quote: "Clearly, a genius should have friends. But who will ever believe that one's friend is a genius?"



Emir Kusturica and Khachatur Almazian

On Yerevan premiere of the film

I'd like to organize a Yerevan premiere for "On the Milky Road". In 2010, I invited Emir and his The No Smoking Orchestra to perform in Yerevan. The concert was a huge success; I later arranged Kusturica's meeting with young artists, with a full house of people gathering. Afterwards, Emir confessed to have been surprised by the intellect of Armenian youth. I'd like for a similar meeting to be held after the film's Cannes premiere, with the whole Kusturica family present. The Kusturica family is a unique phenomena in the world of cinema - Emir's wife, Maja, co-produced the "Milky Road," daughter Dunja co-wrote the script, son Stribor composed the score.



Screenshot, poster for "On the Milky Road"

And of course, I'd like to invite the leading lady, Monica Bellucci to the premiere. A star of the first magnitude, Monica astonishes with her dazzling beauty and sharp intelligence. I'm sure, Yerevan audience will be glad to meet her.

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