

# WAITING FOR GODOT

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## HELSINKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2013 YURI BYKOV, HEIR TO THE CROWN OF NEW RUSSIAN CINEMA? PART ONE

This past spring was marked with the passing of Aleksei Balabanov, who was considered by many to be the king of new Russian Cinema, left a void. Who could possibly take his place? Judging by the quality of the two films by the new comer Yuri Bykov screening at this year's festival, they may well be proof enough to show that he could be heir to the crown.

TO LIVE (2010), 74 mins

Yuri Bykov made his directorial debut with *To Live* a few years ago. The story in itself is quite simple, a middle aged man (Mikhail / Vladislav Toldykov) out hunting with his dog in the Russian countryside encounters a younger man (Andrei / Denis Shevdov) being chased by three armed men. Mikhail is reluctantly forced to help the younger man to flee the men chasing him, first by car and then on foot across the countryside. The film has the all too familiar set up of mismatched men bonding on a journey. Concentrating on the dynamic between the mild mannered Mikhail and the younger Andrei, who turns out to be a gangster and an associate of the men chasing this odd couple.

Bykov delivers a descent movie for a first time writer / director. The film is economically filmed, mainly hand held cinematography but with assured editing. As is so common with Russian Cinema the characters are recognizable stereotypes, but the leads are strong and carry the film. Bykov makes his mark and shows promise of greater things to come.

*Verdict: For fans of New Russian Cinema*

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