

PRESS RELEASE

Paris-based international sales agent, The Coproduction Office, has closed a raft of sales for Romanian director Corneliu Porumboiu's feature debut, *12:08 EAST OF BUCHAREST* (A Fost sau n-a fost?), which was awarded the Camera d'Or at the Cannes International Film Festival, as well as the Europa Cinemas Label. At Cannes the comedy, scripted, directed and produced by Porumboiu was licensed to Istituto Luce for Italy, Filmmuseum for the Netherlands, Stadtkino for Austria, and Providence Films for Brazil.

According to ceo Philippe Bober, of The Coproduction Office, further deals for the Directors' Fortnight entry will shortly be closed for the US, the UK, Canada, France, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Hungary, Norway, Finland, Iran and Greece. "The two awards, adding to excellent reviews, have certainly fuelled the interest among buyers," Bober explained. Last year he represented the Un Certain Regard winner in Cannes, Romanian director Cristi Puiu's *THE DEATH OF MISTER LAZARESCU* (Moartea domnului Lazarescu).

12:08 EAST OF BUCHAREST, which Porumboiu made after being a resident of the Cinéfondation in Cannes, is set in a small provincial town 16 years after 22 December, 1989, when Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, fled the presidential palace in Bucharest by helicopter. The local television station has invited two guests, a retiree and sometime Santa Claus, and an alcoholic history teacher, to share their moments of revolutionary glory, as they allegedly stormed the city hall calling "down with Ceausescu." Phone-in viewers, however, dispute their claims.

"A buoyant little comedy, in the best tradition of East European humor, the film is savvy but concrete, gentle but sharp as a knife. Porumboiu's first feature adds another voice to the growing ranks of interesting new Romanian helmers," concluded Deborah Young in her *Variety* review. "A delicate satire of the post-communistic delusions that underlines the cruelty of history without being cruel to the characters," added Thomas Sotinel in *Le Monde*.

"A fresh, engaging comedy with universal themes which really engage with the audience. It deals with important issues very effectively in a humourous way. We are delighted to have discovered another highly talented young director from Rumania," said the jury of the Europa Cinemas network, giving it the prize which includes support for an extended theatrical exposure and additional promotion for the film.

12:08 EAST OF BUCHAREST will further be the opening competition film of the Transilvania International Film Festival TIFF (2-11 June 2006) and recieved invitations from such festivals as Telluroid, Karlovy Vary, Sevilla or Jerusalem.

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