

# An American in Paris: Stana Katic shines in For Lovers Only

A **fascinating dynamic** lies at the heart of the Polish Brothers For Lovers Only, which stars festival jury member Stana Katic.

Two love affairs dominate Mark and Michael Polish's latest film. On screen, a chance encounter between old flames Sophia (Katic) and Yves (Mark Polish, who also wrote the script) brings back memories of the past and they rekindle their romance. Not to be outdone by his brother's on-screen persona, director Michael Polish has crafted a cinematic paean to his lead actress, a love letter to Katic's beauty and joie de vivre. These two elements, a sibling rivalry of sorts, define the film.

#### A simple story

The premise of For Lovers Only is hardly new – two former lovers reuniting on the streets of Paris. Both characters in the story feel as though a lifetime has passed since they were together.

Yves is at a dead end in his career and, aside of his daughter, is desperate to escape his life. Sophia chose to be with the first man who was everything Yves was not and



Star presence Festival jury member and star of For Lovers Only, Stana Katic

Foto: Jan Karásek, MF DNES

has regretted her decision ever since. They accept their meeting as an opportunity to see if they can start their lives anew. It is reminiscent of Richard Linklater's Before Sunset (2005), which saw Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy's characters reunite (the first time since 1995's Before Sunrise) in Paris and spend a day wandering through the city's streets. They reveal the emotional scars of the ten years since they last met, before leaving audiences to decide their future

#### FACTS

#### The Films of Mark and Michael Polish (writer and director)

- Twin Falls Idaho (1999)
- Jackpot (2001)
- Northfork (2003)
- The Astronaut Farmer (2006)
- The Smell of Success (2009)
- Stay Cool (2009)
- For Lovers Only (2010)
- Big Sur (2012)

(or perhaps awaiting a third instalment of their story).

But if Linklater wanted to explore his characters' emotional lives, the Polish brothers' film is occupied with the contrast between the veneer of a love affair and the thoughts and feelings simmering beneath. For Lovers Only also wears its French New Wave influences brazenly. In her introduction to the film's premiere on the opening night of the festival, Katic cited the 1966 classic A Man and

a Woman. And in the press conference she gave, she mentioned that as research she and the Polish brothers watched many films by François Truffaut. The result, on a visual level, is a film with playful vignettes that recall classic scenes from the earlier French films (at one point I expected to see the lovers run through the Louvre as the main characters did in Truffaut's Jules et Jim) but also has the contemporary sheen of a Gucci ad.

#### A different style

This style of filmmaking is a marked contrast to the Polish Brothers' earlier work. Those films featured an austere formalism comprised of graceful camera movements and exquisitely composed shots. This approach has been replaced by a more free-form style, whose dynamic is defined by odd angles and fast cutting.

The eccentric storylines of the earlier films are also gone (although Yves' obsession with photographing dead birds would not look out of place in the brothers' impressive debut, Twin Falls Idaho, or Northfork, one of Katic's favourite films). What lies in its place is the intimate relationship between director and muse, continuing a trend whose antecedents hark back to the early days of cinema.

Ultimately, it is the cinematic dance between Michael Polish and his leading lady that lights up the screen. Katic's vibrant presence, the on-screen spark that distinguishes a star from an actor, brings the film to life and keeps us spellbound throughout.

Ian Haydn Smith

#### Today's programme

Four stories on the perils of growing up

Golden Apple Cinema

15.00

#### Dumbo (1941)

USA, 64 minutes  
Directed by Ben Sharpsteen  
One of Disney's most beloved creations, the elephant with the floppy ears returns to entertain us. Although it lacks the complexity of Fantasia or Pinocchio (which both lost money the previous year), the film's central character became an instant hit with audiences. Its popularity has continued for 70 years and it is now seen as a classic.

15.50

#### Miracle in Milan (Miracolo a Milano, 1951)

Italy, 100 minutes  
Directed by Vittorio De Sica  
Though often regarded as a neorealist film, De Sica's account of a young boy living in a poor district of the northern Italian city is so much more. Anyone who doubts this has to see the magnificent final sequence. A magical and life-affirming film from a popular Italian director.

17.40

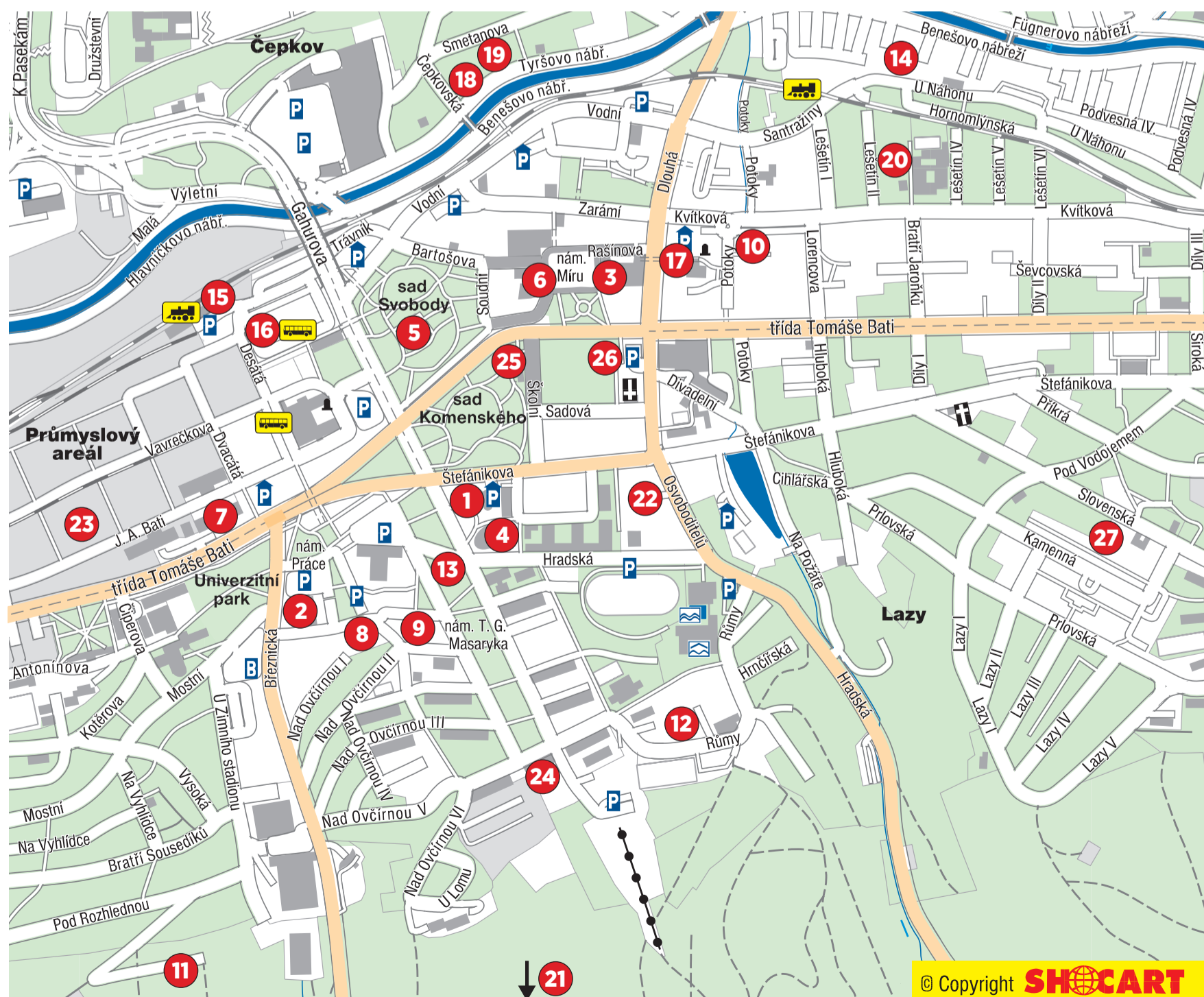
#### Lou (2010)

Australia, 82 minutes  
Directed by Belinda Chayko  
Eleven-year-old Lou's father has left home, leaving her mother with three girls to look after. At first, she blames her mother for her father's departure. Then her grandfather moves into the house. He initially causes an uproar with his behaviour, not least because he believes Lou to be his long-deceased wife. But soon the young girl and the old man become friends and she begins to understand the precarious nature of love and being loved. Like The Tree, Lou makes the most of its stunning Australian backdrop.

19.40

#### Life Above All (2010)

South Africa/ Germany, 105 minutes  
Directed by Oliver Schmitz  
Young Chanda lives in a township on the outskirts of Johannesburg, in South Africa. She carries with her a secret that no one will talk about. The villagers think her family is cursed and refuse to have anything to do with them. They are outcasts in their own home. But Chanda is undeterred as she fights for her family. This powerful and emotionally engaging drama is dominated by a remarkable debut performance by Khomotso Manyaka as Chanda.



#### Zlín Orientační plán města

- 1 Kongresové centrum – akreditace, informace
- 2 Velké kino – prodej vstupenek
- 3 Zlaté jablko – obchodní a zábavní centrum
- 4 Univerzitní centrum
- 5 Zámek Zlín
- 6 Radnice – Magistrát města Zlína – Galerie pod Radnicí
- 7 21. budova – Krajský úřad Zlínského kraje
- 8 Interhotel Moskva
- 9 Hotel Garni
- 10 Hotel Ondráš
- 11 Koliba U Černého medvěda
- 12 Parkhotel Zlín
- 13 Letní kino
- 14 Penzion Baltáci
- 15 Vlakové nádraží Zlín-střed
- 16 Hlavní autobusové nádraží
- 17 Vinotéka Wine Dietrichstein
- 18 Králova vila
- 19 Vinotéka Le Bouchon „U Pešatů“
- 20 Hotel Baltáci Atrium
- 21 Lesní hotel
- 22 Alternativa
- 23 32. budova továrního areálu
- 24 Dům umění
- 25 Krajská knihovna Fr. Bartoše
- 26 Loft 577
- 27 Penzion Villa Slovenská