

## Tugo Štiglic, recipient of the 2018 Metod Badjura Lifetime Achievement Award

### Jury commentary

Director and screenwriter Tugo Štiglic ranks among the most widely known figures of the Slovenian youth film. As a child, he had a leading role in *Valley of Peace* (1956), one of the most crucial Slovenian films and one of the most successful ones beyond the country's borders. The film was directed by Tugo's father, France Štiglic, with whom Tugo, an Art History graduate, later worked as an assistant director. He also assisted on many live-action feature films by other directors (*Funeral Feast* by Matjaž Klopčič, *Idealist* by Igor Pretnar, *Love* by Rajko Ranfl, and others), including all Slovenian 1970s and 1980s teen classics: *Hang on, Doggy*; *Apprenticeship of the Inventor Polž*; and *Strawberry Time*. At the same time, he started to work as a director, focusing on documentary shorts. In 1985, he was awarded a Golden Medal at the Belgrade festival for *This Makes One Angry*, a documentary portrait of Just Godnič, an activist with the TIGR anti-Fascist organisation.

His feature debut, *A Summer in a Sea-Shell* (1986), introduced into Slovenian teen cinema popular music and dance, after Jane Kavčič and Rajko Ranfl had already lured audiences with humour, action, and romance. Štiglic was the first to set a theatrical youth film to the seaside, capturing the once prominent film location of Piran, along with Portorož and the salt pans, on camera for the next generation. Skilful direction of young non-professional actors, deft combinations of real teenage issues and youthful idealism against a backdrop of visually attractive scenes and the prettiest sunset in the history of Slovenian cinema; the mix of soft pastels and the sound of a synthesiser – *A Summer in a Sea-Shell* was the ultimate youth film for the generation of teens in the 1980s, and continues to be one of the top and most positive things people associate with adolescence in the decade before Slovenia's independence. In Slovenia, the film had a theatre attendance of more than 100,000. It was also released in other countries (and dubbed in German), and won three international awards: Grand Prix at the Giffoni Film Festival in Giffoni Valle Piana, Italy; Grand Prix in Saint-Malo, France; and Grand Prix in Szeged, Hungary. A videotape with *A Summer in a Sea-Shell* was an indispensable item in every Slovenian household, and for the next 25 years, the film would be considered the best that the Slovenian film industry can offer to young audiences.

Two years later, *A Summer in a Sea-Shell* had a sequel: set in Ljubljana, it could be labelled the first Slovenian feature-length dance film. The main characters, Tomaž and Milena, came to be so popular that many already envisioned Part 3 – and if circumstances had been different, Štiglic and his crew would have delivered it.

In the years following Slovenia's declaration of independence in 1991, Štiglic made two live-action TV films: *Nasmeh pod pajčolanom* (1993), based on a short story by Milan Pugelj, and *Tantadruj* (1994), based on a short story by Ciril Kosmač. With his next theatrical film, *Patriot* (1998), with Igor Karlovšek as the screenwriter, Štiglic showed his Hollywood-style ambition, making one of the few Slovenian action films and one modelled on the style and visual language of popular American 80s and 90s thrillers. In this sense, *Patriot*, which has since become a cult classic, remains a unique phenomenon in the history of Slovenian cinema.

Later on, Štiglic made three more youth films: TV film *Double Holidays* (2001), based on the eponymous book by Brane Dolinar, *Pozabljeni zaklad* (2002), based on a novel by Ivan Sivec, and TV film *Black Brothers* (2010), based on a tale by France Bevk. In the latter, he revisited the subject of pre-WWII anti-Fascist resistance.

In the decades of working as a director for the Slovenian National Television, he made an array of documentary, reportage, promotional, and ethnographic films and radio dramas.

At the Cannes screening of a restored version of *Valley of Peace*, his first appearance on camera as a 10-year old boy, Tugo Štiglic said: "When it was made, I failed as a child to realise the timeless message of this film – that nothing defines people more than their humanity." The same could be said of films in general. And this is exactly what Tugo Štiglic has managed in all his works, especially those made for young audiences, to illuminate and, in a non-aggressive and non-preachy way, highlight and raise – humanity.

Miha Knific

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Miha Knific". The signature is written in a cursive style with fluid, connected letters.