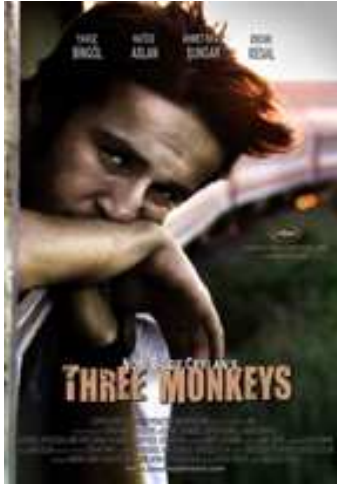


## TURKISH FILM SERIES at the UNION THEATER

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Nov 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2009



**Uc Maymun, Three Monkeys**

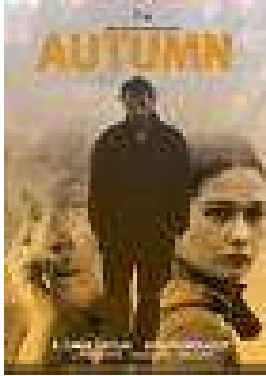
**FRIDAY 7PM**

(Nuri Bilge Ceyhan, Turkey, 2008, 109 minutes, 35 mm)

After his critically acclaimed mood pieces *Distant* and *Climates*, Turkey's leading filmmaker moves in a more plot-driven direction while retaining his mastery of ambiance and nuance. Winner of the Best Director prize at Cannes, *Three Monkeys* tells a twisty, noirish tale that opens with an ambitious politician fleeing a hit-and-run accident. Afraid of hurting his election chances, he pays off his chauffeur, Eyüp, to take the rap.

The film concerns the effects of this devil's bargain on Eyüp's shiftless son Ismail (who sees an expensive new car as his ticket to salvation), and on his restless wife, Hacer (who develops an ill-deserved passion for the oily politico). Ismail's discovery of his mother's infidelity and Eyüp's suspicions after he gets out of jail crank up the simmering tensions in a household already haunted by hidden ghosts.

In the spirit of Buñuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* and Haneke's *Caché*, *Three Monkeys* mounts a caustic critique of the bourgeois family, riddled with hypocrisy yet stubbornly resilient in its seemingly boundless capacity to sidestep guilt and accountability. As in his previous films, Ceylan is unsurpassed at evoking both emotional and haunting cityscapes. The wintry vistas of *Distant* are supplanted here by sweltering seaside summerscapes, rife with thundering trains and lowering clouds that portend a day of reckoning repeatedly -- but perhaps not endlessly -- deferred.  
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**Sonbahar, Autumn FRIDAY 9PM**

(Ozcan Alper, Turkey, 2008, 100 minutes, 35mm)

Winner of 9 awards at various international film festivals, *Autumn*, with the 1990s as a backdrop, at once documents and criticises a slice of recent history, exposing the irony, ruthlessness and reality of the period. Sentenced to jail in 1997 as a university student aged 22, Yusuf is released on health grounds 10 years later. He returns to his village in the eastern Black Sea region, where he's welcomed only by his sick and elderly mother. It turns out that his father died while he was in jail and his older sister got married and moved away to the city.

Economic factors mean that it's almost exclusively old people who live in the mountain village, and the only person Yusuf sees is his childhood friend Mikail. As autumn slowly gives way to winter, Yusuf goes with Mikail to a tavern where he meets Eka, a beautiful young Georgian hooker. Neither the timing nor circumstances are right for these two people from different worlds to be together. For all that, love becomes a final desperate attempt to grasp life and elude loneliness - for Yusuf at least. For Eka, Yusuf is something like a character from the pages of a Russian novel: a character who inhabits a faraway world and a faraway time.



**Mommo- Kiz kardesim, Mommo - The Boogeyman SATURDAY 5PM**

(Atalay Tasdiken, Turkey, 2009, 94 minutes, DVD)

Atalay Taşdiken's first feature-length fiction film that he wrote and directed, *Mommo* debuted at Berlin Film Festival in February. Inspired by real-life events, the film tells the story of nine-year-old Ali and his younger sister Ayşe, both staying at their grandfather's because their father's new wife does not want them. Can a boy of nine be a big brother, a father, a mother and a luminary all at once? For young Ayşe, the answer is yes. In fact, as far as she's concerned, her big brother Ahmet is afraid of nothing at all. But the truth is, Ahmet is a child too: he too has his fears and it's impossible for him to know everything.

This simple, poignant tale of a village, and the relationship between a brother and sister in that village, portrays one of the grittier realities of Anatolia.



**Mutluluk, The Bliss**

**SATURDAY 7:00PM**

(Abdullah Oguz, Turkey, 2007, 105 minutes, DVD)

Nominated for the Best Film in Istanbul International Film Festival, and won many awards in other International Film festivals, Bliss is adapted from Zülfü Livaneli's international best-selling novel. The director Abdullah Oguz filled this drama with intensity, vivid cultural clash, fine music and some absolutely stunning scenery (the film was shot on the Sea of Marmara). But ultimately it is the figure of Meryem, a young woman struggling to live in a culture that condones the practice of female honour killings, that gives the film its heart. Meryem's decision to live, and ultimately, to enjoy her life is the quiet revolution that ignites the entire story.

When a young woman named Meryem (Özgü Namal) is raped, her village custom requires that she be killed in order for the dishonour to be expunged from her family. A young man named Cemal (Murat Han), the son of the village leader, is given the task but at the last moment he has doubts. The pair go on the run, followed close behind by local thugs intent on killing the girl. Luckily enough, Cemal and Meryem meet up with a charismatic man named Irfan, an ex-university professor who is embarking on a sailing trip, and needs a crew. Seems Irfan is running away too--in his case from a dead marriage and an empty life. Together this unlikely trio set forth on a voyage that will change all of their lives.



**Pandora'nin Kutusu, Pandora's Box**

**SATURDAY 9PM**

(Yesim Ustaoglu, Turkey, 2008, 112 minutes, 35mm)

When three forty-something siblings in Istanbul receive a call one night that their aging mother has disappeared from her home at the Western Black Sea Coast of Turkey, the three set out to find her, momentarily setting aside their problems. As the siblings come together, the tensions between them quickly become apparent, like the Pandora's box spilling open. They come to realize that they are very ignorant about each other. And more so, they are forced to reflect on their own shortcomings. Pandora's Box won two awards at San Sebastian International Film Festival.



***Kara Kopekler Havlaraken, Black Dogs Barking***

***SUNDAY 5PM***

(Mehmet Bahadır Er & Maryna Gorbach, Turkey, 2009, 88minutes, 35mm)

The debut feature film directed and edited by Ukrainian shorts director Maryna Gorbach and Mehmet Bahadır Er, known for his award-winning short films *Goygoy*, *Noki Noki*, *Zilzal*, *The Earthquake*, *Hope* and *The Heights*, had its world premiere at the Rotterdam Film Festival in January 2009. With an uneasy, dynamic and realistic style, Mehmet Bahadır Er examines the neighbourhood he has lived in for fifteen years, and also the concepts of urban nomadism, security, unearned income, being a loser, and life struggle through two restless, unemployed young best buddies, Selim and Çaça, their class hopping hopes, and slipping by and breaking through the veteran wolves of the city.