



„What can you do
as an individual?“

Miner's Bread

a Roman Fábian Documentary

Miner's Bread

A feature documentary film about a long-gone fame of a small town
and a young people's chance to make their living there.

Slovakia, 60'12" / blu-ray, DVD / language: SK / subtitles: ENG

Script and director: Roman Fábian / **Cinematography:** Ivo Miko, Rastislav Trizma, Roman Fábian / **Editing:** Peter Harum

Music: David Kollár / **Sound recording:** Juraj Baláž, Peter Polák / **Sound post-production:** Lukáš Kasprzyk

RTVS dramaturgy: Mária Šnircová / **Executive production:** Mirka Dírerová / **RTVS production manager:** Soňa Komová

Production: RTVS and positive film, s. r. o.

Participants: Ján Fábian, Milan Birka, Zuzana Birková sr, Zuzka Birková, Štefan Boldi, Ján Doboš, Tomáš Gonos, Ján Kožár, Zuzana Kožárová, Ľuboš Lešták, Štefan Šimko





About

In 1909 in the mining area around Rožňava one of the most modern mining factories in Europe was built. Almost 65 percent of the local people worked in the total of 17 mines. After communism collapsed the iron ore extraction was stopped being left with only one mining complex open. The film *Miners' Bread* focuses on the inhabitants of Rakovnica, a village in Gemer, and through a series of portraits it provides a complex mental picture of the region converging in a belief that during communism people living there were happier and their lives were better. The story's major part represents a narration of Ján Fábian, a university professor with an honorary doctorate from Delhi, who also lived in Canada, Africa and Germany for many years, won a Humboldt Foundation scholarship, worked as a minister of economy's advisor in the 1990s and who despite his age is still giving lectures at the Technical University in Košice. His words marked by the detached view of a contemporary (both miner and a person), is in a sharp contrast with the views of the youngest protagonists whom the film focuses on. It is understanding of this contrast that is the main aim of the film which dealing with the stories of the local people and through their relationships to the region they were born in and its history poses a question: „What has happened here and what future do we have?“



The Director

I WAS BORN IN THIS VILLAGE AND GREW UP HERE An interview with the director Roman Fábian

Why was it Rakovnica that you decided to shoot your film in, and who was the first protagonist it all started with?

The reason for the film taking place in Rakovnica is very prosaic: I was born and grew up there. Although I haven't lived there for 17 years, two years ago I shot my graduation film there. It was an actors' film made to a school assignment. Shooting it I noticed that regardless of age almost everybody living there speaks highly of the life in communism. At that time I met Ján Fábian, who is a distant relative of mine. Being a 78-year-old university professor that has visited half the countries in the world and speaks several languages he lives quietly in his home village having mushroom hunting as a hobby.

It was only a short visit owing to the fact that we met each other in front of a local shop and he invited me over to his house. We sat together in his study room and without my hinting at it in any way he started talking about regional history, local people, mining, future and above all the present-day young people. Having that conversation when I met other local people I understood that there is an interesting contrast there. And so I put down some notes, managed to get some money and shot it.



Your actors' film *I Am a Miner, Who's More* won a first prize at the students' festival *Áčko*. What can you tell us about how the documentary *Miners' Bread* was created alongside it? Is it an edited version of what was left from the actors' film or you knew that you were shooting two independent films from the beginning?

The actors' film was shot over one summer. The other one was shot a year later. We're talking about two completely independent films with the material of their own.

What was it like to shoot a film in your home village? Did the people undergo any changes in the process of shooting?

When somebody returns to a particular place after almost 16 years they kind of feel out of place. It took some time to mingle. But nevertheless it didn't take me that long. Two months actually. A distinct integrating element in our environment is a local pub. There I got to know young people relatively quickly. Through the meetings and narratives of Mr. Fábian I found older miners fairly quickly as well. And step by step it went like that. For the sake of graduation actors' film a year before I had organized a casting in two villages and I knew several people from there too. At that time I had no idea that I would come back to this region to shoot a documentary but their stories were so inspiring and everything fell into its place almost on its own accord. As for the second question, I don't think they changed in any way over the time I spent there.



Appealing landscapes of Gemer are presented to the viewers by the means of an attractive camerawork and dynamic editing. How would you describe your collaboration with the cinematographer and the editor? Could you comment on your common visual concept or plan?

Although only few people can relate to this kind of approach, with the cinematographer Ivan Mika we don't have any specific ways of analyzing things. Having some experience with shooting in authentic environments I just told myself that I would like to have two cameras. While one of them focuses on the protagonist or the situation in context – it captures the whole so to speak – the other one picks the details, moves, refocuses and so on. That is why I offered collaboration to two young cinematographer – Ivan Mika and Rast'o Trizma. We cleared up what we expect from which one and we more or less followed it. And then we just went there and did it. It is thanks to these two cameras that the editor had a richer material at hand.

As for the editor, his work had a great impact on the final form of the film since we put it together in the cutting room. It was there that we turned the original concept upside down. The meaning remained the same but the structure ended up to be quite different.



What was it like to work with non-actors? Did you experience any hard times worth mentioning?

We didn't want to push them into anything. Rather than that we tried to be around them and just let them live their natural lives as much as possible. In this respect we didn't experience any problems or difficult situations. On the contrary, when shooting the protagonists, I could see that most of the crew listened to those people quite intently and just as it had happened to me they started putting the pieces together creating a bigger picture. Those people were just splendid. We were happy having them and at the same time enjoyed being around them.

The film was produced in collaboration with the production company Positive film and RTVS as a medium-length film for television broadcast. It seems, though, that there is already a feature-length version for cinemas. What are the circumstances of this having happened and what other distribution plans do you have regarding it?

It is thanks to the support of RTVS and the Slovak Audiovisual Fund that the film was made as a 52-minute-long documentary. There was more material than could be covered by this footage and since there were positive reactions from people despite the fact that



the film didn't have any specific artistic ambitions (I just wanted to show the things I considered being interesting in the most simple way), we decided to add several more minutes and give it a chance to be seen by a larger number of viewers. The longer footage makes it more viable. I would be happy if it could reach the secondary school students, which is why we try to arrange various school screenings. I would also be glad if people from other parts of Slovakia could see it because the problems it talks about does not apply to that region exclusively. This is the reason why it might be enlisted in the Kinobus program. Also we try to get it into small club cinemas where it might have a bigger chance of finding its viewers. It will also appear on TV. Among these things we also plan to enlist it with international festivals so we'll see.

Miners' Bread **is not a student's film. Although you studied actors' film directing, you made your debut with a documentary. How do you see your future as a director?**

Honestly, I wasn't thinking about whether I was making a debut much at all. I felt that these things might be worth telling people about and so I did it. I have just finished writing a screenplay to a feature actors' film and at the moment I am working on another screenplay. In one of them I would like to cast non-actors despite the fact that it should be an actors' film. As for the other one I think of it distinctively as of an actors' film. I don't preoccupy myself with thinking about the future. For the time being I am satisfied doing what I like doing alongside doing something that earns my living. Or maybe it is the other way round.



Makers' biographies

Roman Fábian

story, screenplay,
direction

Roman was born in 1981 in Rožňava. He studied film and television directing at VŠMU in Bratislava. While still studying he shot films *The Stranger* (2008), *Big Washing* (2007;), *Piercing* (2009) and *Rainy Blues* (2011). His graduation actors' film *Ja som baník, kto je viac* (2012; *I Am a Miner, Who's More*) was awarded a Grand prix at festival Áčko 2012, an Igrič for student's work and gained a nomination at the festival in Amsterdam. As an assistant director he collaborated on the film *Marhuľový ostrov* (2011; *Apricot Island*). At present he is working as a film and television director (*Prvé oddelenie*, *Druhý dych*, *Horúca krv*, *Búrlivé víno*). The documentary film *Miners' Bread* is Fábian's feature-length debut film.

Ivo Miko

cinematography

Ivo was born in 1978 in Sabinov. After graduating from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports in Bratislava he started his studies at the Film and Television Faculty at VŠMU in Bratislava. He received his degree in camerawork and photography and he works as a postgraduate student in this area. It was already during his studies that he worked with Roman Fábian on films *Cudzinec* (2008; *The Stranger*), *Veľké pranie* (2007; *Big Washing*), which received a prize at a students' festival Áčko, and *Ja som baník, kto je viac* (*I Am a Miner, Who's More*), which among other things received a prize for camerawork at festival Áčko. He also participated on Lukáš Hanulák's graduation film *Otec* (2009; *Father*) and various projects of the director Peter Begányi such as *Erotic Nation* (2009) or *Výstava* (2012; *Exhibition*, second cinematography), which was awarded a prize at the Fabio Fest film festival. Together with the director Miro Remo he worked on a feature documentary film *Comeback*, which is being post-produced at the moment. He is working as a film and television cinematographer: *Prvé oddelenie*, *Aféry*, *Najväčšie kriminálne prípady*, *Najväčšie tragédie*.



**Rastislav
Trizma**
cinematography

Rastislav was born in 1986 in Bratislava. He graduated at VŠMU in Bratislava. During his studies he collaborated on films such as *Môj posledný výstrel* (2006; *My Last Shot*), *Sen* (2007; *A Dream*), *Random* (2008), *Piercing* (2009), *Obraz do Ameriky* (2009; *Portrait to America*), *Reklama na auto* (2010; *A Car Advertisement*), *Kto je K?* (2010; *Who's K?*) a *Obedár* (2010; *The Lunch box*). As a second cinematography he worked on the film *Marhuľový ostrov* (2011; *Apricot Island*) and as a 1st assistant camera on films *Osadné* (2009), *Otec* (2009; *Father*) and *X=X+1*. He also works for television: *Pod lampou*, *Odsúdené*, *Druhý dych*, *Áno šéfe* and others. He worked as a second cinematography on the feature-length documentary *Banický chlebiček* (*Miners' Bread*).

**Peter
Harum**
editing

Peter was born in 1978 in Bratislava. He completed his studies of editing at VŠMU in Bratislava. His most successful films include a documentary film *Vladkova cesta* (2010, *Vladko's Journey*, the Literary Fund award for the artistic performance in the area of documentary film), actors' film *Ja som baník, kto je viac* (2012; *I Am a Miner, Who's More*, Grand prix at festival *Áčko 2012*, nomination at festival in Amsterdam) and feature-length documentary film *Cigáni idú do volieb* (2012; *The Gypsy Vote*, special recognition for the exceptional editing work - Silver Eye Award 2012). He also works for television (*Nové bývanie*, *Áno šéfe*, *Gen.sk*, *Nebíčko v papuľke*).



David Kollár

music

David was born in 1983 in Prešov, where he studied at Jazz School until he was seventeen. In 2009 he started working on film music. He has created music to more than 15 films and several theatrical performances. The last one was premiered in London's East Moon Theater. Among others he worked with the theatrical group Debris Company. As regards his film production he collaborated with the directors such as Miro Remo, Roman Fábian, Srdjan Sekicki, Dmitry Trakovsky, Veronika Mikalová, etc. Music Publisher Hevhetia issued two albums with his film music: *Film Soundtracks and Ideas and Film Works 2011*. In 2012 he started his collaboration with the Norwegian guitar magician Eivind Aarset, who composed music to several films. At the moment he is collaborating with Lenka Dusilová, Andrea Ladanyiová, India Czajkowska and Gergo Borlai on the physical performance Artrance.

Mirka Dírerová

executive
production

Mirka was born in 1986 in Humenné. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University in Bratislava and simultaneously studied production at the Film and Television Faculty at VŠMU in Bratislava. She is working on production of various popular television and commercial projects and events. However, she takes more pleasure in film production. It is documentary films that she likes working on most and participates in their production not only as a production executive but also a producer: *Odchádzanie* (directed by Dušan Hudec, 2013), *Čo mu iné ostáva* (directed by Peter Kováčik, in the production), *0800 800 818* (directed by Marcel Pázman, 2011), *Camino* (directed by Jana Bučka, 2011), *Mamma who born me* (directed by Jana Kovalčíková, 2010), *Druhý život* (directed by Peter Kováčik, 2010). She also organizes and gives lectures at film workshops and other events.

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