



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Isn't Spring lovely?

Our next screening date, 19th October, coincides again with the Bowral Classic, the big bicycle race over several courses. It will probably affect a few of us, as several roads are closed to traffic from varying (but early) times in the morning. To check your area, please view detailed road closures online at bowralclassic.com.au/community or email info@cyclingclassics.com.au

A gentle reminder of our **courtesy code**: please turn off your phones; arrive before the film starts; and **remain seated** until the credits cease rolling, even if they are in a language you do not speak.

We welcome to our committee Milena Stojanovska, and Simon Woffenden is our new Treasurer. These are the only changes resulting from our AGM.
Best wishes from us,

Roz Garwen.



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 19th October 2025

8.15 pm Tuesday 21st October 2025

SONS

Synopsis:

Everything changes for a dedicated & compassionate prison guard, when a young man with a link to her past is transferred to her prison.

Review: Davide Abbatescianni

When we see the first few scenes of Gustav Möller's second feature *Sons*, we may feel that its captivating protagonist, an idealistic prison guard in her fifties called Eva Hansen (Sidse Babette Knudsen), is the sort of fish-out-of-water character who may be more suited to teaching children's history lessons in a primary school. Luckily enough, the director of *The Guilty* proves us wrong all the way.

Through solid writing and an engaging narrative pace, this picture, which was premiered in the main competition strand of Berlinale [2024], is teeming with surprises.

At first, Eva looks like a patient, caring – yet energetic and determined – presence who works in a prison block where, for most of the inmates, rehabilitation is a rather realistic, achievable goal. In detail, we get acquainted with a leading character who is totally absorbed by her work and who seems to have no life to speak of outside of the prison.

Möller tasks Jasper J Spanning's camera to follow Eva up close all the time. Moreover, the constant claustrophobic feeling is further enhanced by the compressed aspect ratio. Spanning and Möller chase and peek at Eva while she runs in and out of the jail cells and up and down the corridors, helping the in-mates study or teaching them yoga with pre-recorded audio tracks playing on an old stereo.

But rest assured, there is no sugar-coating at all. On the contrary, as the first turning point arrives, Möller's tale takes a very violent, cruel path. In particular, Eva is forced to face the dilemma of a lifetime when a young man from her past, Mikkel (Sebastian Bull), is transferred to the prison where she works. Eva is obsessed by his presence and asks to be moved to his block, the toughest and most dangerous in the facility. From this moment on, her character develops significantly – and we'll find out her darker side.

Interestingly, the narration continuously teeters in between the boundaries of the psychodrama and thriller genres – it is a balance that's not particularly easy to strike, but Möller's direction and dry dialogues (penned with Emil Nygaard Albertsen) certainly help.

What might not totally convince the audience – and understandably so – is the fact that Eva's connection with Mikkel seems hard for her colleagues and the other prison staff to uncover. It's still a more or less plausible fact, but in fairness, we need to acknowledge that such "poetic licence" is required for the whole story to unfold, and to set up clear conflicts and motives.

It's also worth adding that Knudsen, Bull and Dar Salim (who convincingly plays Rami, one of Eva's supervisors in the most dangerous prison block) deliver credible portrayals of their respective characters. In particular, Knudsen's interpretation of Eva's evolution is spot on, and Bull imbues his role with the right dose of unpredictability.

All in all, Möller has crafted a solid sophomore feature that reminds us of some uncomfortable truths about the goals and limits of rehabilitation, while delving into the inner struggle of a leading character torn between her sense of duty and her personal dilemmas.

Source: ~www.cineuropa.org ~ Davide Abbatescianni 22/2/24 ~ Edited extracts accessed 12/6/25

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COMING UP:

November	<i>An Unfinished Film</i> [China]	Sunday 16 th & Tuesday 18 th
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December	<i>The Movie Teller</i> [Chile/Spain]	Sunday 14 th & Tuesday 16 th
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Some thoughts on: Holy Cow

I was terribly divided by this film. It had a great story to tell, with many very positive features and many elements to enjoy, but for me, unfortunately, it missed the mark by a country kilometre.

The film commenced with a stunning opening scene in a style that has been perfected and used to great effect by Martin Scorsese, (*Goodfellas* and *The Irishman*), where the camera follows directly behind a character as they make their way through a busy location full of wonderfully coordinated 'extras'. This initial scene in *Holy Cow*, from calf in car, through stalls of produce and fairground sweets and treats, right through to booze consuming young folk, was just so engaging and so well crafted.

From that promising start, I felt the film slowly slipped away, despite some lovely moments like the glorious rural cinematography, the safe delivery of a calf, the insight into cheese production, (and the massive hygienic concerns with amateur attempts!!), Totone's care and concern for young sister Claire and quite reasonable cast performances from totally inexperienced amateurs. Then, the wonderful final shot, which must be the most original 'Come back, all is forgiven' gesture on film, as a smiling girlfriend lifts her shirt to reveal her feminine charms to a weary and almost down and out Totone.

However, for me, these features weren't enough to save the film from its failure to establish an empathy and real concern in it's audience for the film's cast.

I think this may have been because we weren't given enough emotional background on Totone to understand his behaviour and attitude. What were the circumstances of the missing Mum? We only see the father briefly as a grumpy hard worker and a heavy drinker. His death was virtually an insignificant, emotionless occurrence. Why was there no real emotional impact reflected?

I won't even start on the most ridiculous car 'race' ever portrayed on film which concluded this outing!

One could admire Totone for his never give up, cheese competition desperation and his sibling care, but his character was deeply flawed.

He lied, stole, betrayed and used people repeatedly. I found that there wasn't enough background development to feel any real empathy at all for his difficult circumstances.

Most of our recent films had forged a real sense of care and concern and involvement. I felt these were severely lacking here and let the film down as the circumstances portrayed, really deserved them.

This had the makings of a very good film, but I felt the heart was missing.

Ross Armfield [Reviewer in Chief]

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