



MOVIES



L I T H U A N I A

LITHUANIA THROUGH FILM

Lithuanian movies don't often play at your local multiplex but the country has a long cinematic tradition. As this list suggests, many of its most popular recent films deal with the tragedies of World War Two and Soviet occupation. But Lithuania and its filmmakers are drawn to a variety of subjects and styles. You'll find here movies ranging from a teenage love story saturated in sensuality and color to a strange, silent favorite of the film festival circuit.

ASHES IN THE SNOW

DIRECTOR: MARIUS A. MARKEVICIUS (2018)

Made in English and based on a *New York Times* bestselling novel by Ruta Sepetys, this historical drama is set in 1941 when Stalin deported huge numbers of Lithuanians to prison camps in Siberia. A 16-year-old aspiring artist risks her life to document, through drawing and notes, her family's harrowing expulsion and experiences. Her dream is that her artwork will make their way to her father, held in a secret prison camp.

BACK TO YOUR ARMS

DIRECTOR: KRISTIJonas VILDZUNAS (2010)

This Cold War thriller, lauded by critics in Lithuania, revolves around a father and daughter separated during World War Two. She goes to the USA, he remains in Lithuania. When they arrange to meet in Berlin in 1961, the KGB becomes involved and their safety threatened.

FEW OF US

DIRECTOR: SARUNAS BARTAS (1996)

Made by one of Lithuania's most acclaimed directors, this is a mysterious film about a woman withdrawing from society. After an act of violence prompts her to leave her village, a woman makes a long, rugged journey in search of a nomadic tribe living in Siberia. Without dialogue, the film is slow-moving but many find it intriguing and poetic.

NOBODY WANTED TO DIE

DIRECTOR: VYTAUTUS ZALAKEVICIUS (1966)

Director Vytautas Zalakevicius set out to make a film in praise of Lithuanian guerrilla groups who fought against the Soviets during and after World War Two. But he also had to beat the Soviet censors decidedly unkeen on such a message. See how he achieved these goals in this Wild

West-like drama about sons of a local communist leader bent on vengeance after the killing of their father by nationalist partisans.

THE CHILDREN FROM THE HOTEL AMERICA

DIRECTOR: RAIMUNDUS BANIONIS (1990)

A drama set in 1972 in Soviet Lithuania. A group of teenagers, desperate to listen to the officially banned rock and roll, draw the attention of the secret police. They become caught up in the Kaunas Spring, the protests in Lithuania against the Communist regime.

THE GAMBLER

DIRECTOR: RUPERT WYATT (2013)

An intense drama about a brilliant paramedic dogged by a gambling addiction. He risks all in a desperate scheme to pay off his debts through an illegal game related to his profession.

THE SAINT

DIRECTOR: ERNIE BARBARASH (2017)

A drama about the human costs of Lithuania's economic meltdown in 2008. Vytas undergoes a crisis when he is laid off from his job as a factory mechanic and is unable to provide for his family. Alongside weightlifting and drinking beer, he becomes obsessed by a YouTube video claiming that Jesus Christ has been spotted in his Lithuanian town.

THE SUMMER OF SANGAILE

DIRECTOR: ALANTE KAVAITE (2017)

Two female teenagers fall in love in this lush romantic drama and coming of age story. Sangaile is fascinated but fearful of flying until she meets Aunte who is determined to live with daring and creativity.