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**'Class Enemy'**

By Sophie Braccini

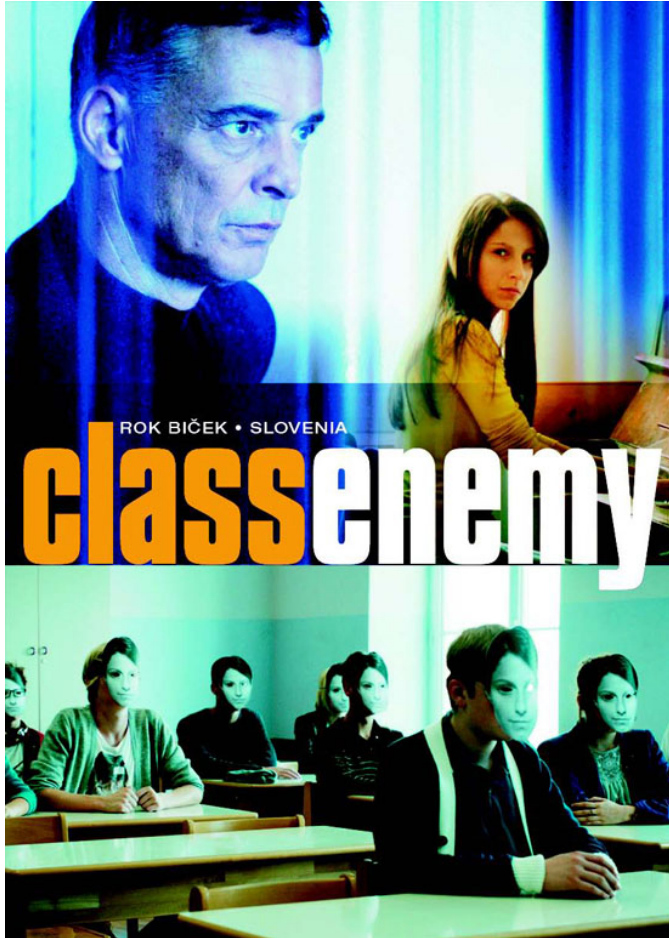


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The International Film Showcase brings the Slovenian movie "Class Enemy," the first feature film of young director Rok Bicek, to the Orinda Theatre for a one-week engagement. This enthralling drama, set in a high school, casts a penetrating eye on the generation gap between young rebellious teens and their strict professor. An intense atmosphere, like a thunderstorm minutes from breaking, adds to the strength of this brilliant psychological drama.

A group of friendly high school students is suddenly faced with more discipline when a new and demanding head teacher comes to their class. This German teacher quickly focuses all the youths' criticisms, and the students begin to rebel. When a young female student commits suicide, her classmates blame the teacher for what happened. The accusations begin to spiral. Other teachers are helpless and the students are left facing their own violent contradictions. The film reveals the share of responsibility that each group had in the drama.

The screenplay was written by Bicek, Nejc Gazvoda and Janez Lapajne and is based on an event that happened in Bicek's high school when he was a student. Although the topic is very personal, the director manages to touch on a universal theme of the generation gap and the clash that happens when two groups that have to live together have very different values. The movie questions the

validity of overindulging a generation of spoiled children, wannabe rebels, that educational systems often have difficulty handling. The movie does not condemn the youths' desire to change things, but reveals that those who protest most may exhibit the exact behaviors they so loudly condemn.

The movie won the "Critics' Week" award at the Venice Film Festival for good reason. First, the actors are remarkable. The teacher is played by Igor Samobor, who is one of the most acclaimed actors in Slovenia. In an interview with CineEuropa, director Bicek said that the young actors and Samodor never met before filming. "They met on the first day of filming," said Bicek. "The reason I did this was to prevent the young actors from having a close relationship with Igor, since it might subconsciously influence their performance in the film." The young actors have an honesty and boldness that makes the movie so real and captivating, as well as very moving.

"Class Enemy" is a subtle movie, interesting and worth discovering. It will play at the Orinda Theatre for one week, starting Sept. 4.

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