



RESTORED

# Twilight (Szürkület)

## Twilight (Szürkület)

Director: György Fehér

Production Company: Budapest Filmstúdió

Production Manager: Tibor Dimény

Screenplay: György Fehér

Based on writing by: Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Cinematography: Miklós Gurbán

Editor: Mária Czeilik

Production Design: Tamás Vayer

Costume Designer: Gyula Pauer

Sound Design: László Vidovský

Sound: János Réti, Péter Kardos

Consultant: Béla Tarr

Cast

Péter Haumann (*chief detective*)

János Derzsi (*K*)

Judit Pogány (*woman*)

Kati Lázár (*mother*)

István Lénárt (*psychiatrist*)

Gyula Pauer (*hawkler*)

Mónika Varga (*young girl 1*)

Erzsébet Nagy (*young girl 2*)

Hungary 1990

101 mins

Digital 4K (restoration)

The 4K digital restoration using the original image negative and magnetic tape sound was carried out by the National Film Institute Hungary – Film Archive and Film Lab in 2022. Digital grading supervised by Miklós Gurbán, Director of Photography

## REGULAR PROGRAMME

### Missing Believed Wiped 2023

Sun 3 Dec 12:00

### The Stylish World of ITC + intro by Lord Michael Grade

Sun 3 Dec 15:00

### Woman with a Movie Camera: Strange Days

Tue 5 Dec 20:10; Sat 30 Dec 20:00

### Members' Festive Evening

Thu 7 Dec 18:00-20:30 BFI Foyer

### Art in the Making: Imprint + Dancers

Thu 14 Dec 18:20

### Silent Cinema: A Woman of Paris

Sun 17 Dec 13:30 (+ intro by Mark Fuller, Michael Powell expert); Thu 28 Dec 18:20

### Film Wallahs: Mr India + Q&A with producer Mr Bonny Kapoor

Sun 17 Dec 14:30

### Relaxed Screening: A Year in a Field + intro

Mon 18 Dec 18:10

### Restored: Distant Thunder (Ashani Sanket) +

### pre-recorded intro by Sangeeta Datta (UK Premiere of 4K Restoration)

Tue 19 Dec 18:00

### Member Picks: The Thin Red Line

Sat 30 Dec 19:40

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+ intro by Jason Wood, BFI Executive Director of Public Programmes and Audiences, and Second Run's Mehelli Modi.

An occasional colleague of both Miklós Jancsó (as an actor) and Béla Tarr (as a producer), György Fehér (1939-2002) served an apprenticeship in Hungarian theatre and television before making just two cinema features, *Twilight* and *Passion* (*Szenvedély*, 1998) – the latter premiered less than five years before his death at the age of just 63. Produced at a time when international interest in Eastern European cinema across the board was at a very low ebb, Fehér's films were barely seen outside festivals and swiftly forgotten, only to be very slowly revived as the 21st century progressed, for much of that time courtesy of VHS-quality off-air recordings from Hungarian television, with picture so murky as to be borderline unwatchable.

Not that this new 4K restoration, shown at Berlin in February (after a 2021 preview in London) banishes the murk. On the contrary, the murk is an integral part of Fehér's approach, atmospherically faithful to Friedrich Dürrenmatt's source novel ('Outside, the fog hovered in front of the window, a dull, faceless twilight that crept into the little room full of books and stacks of files. The air was chilly and stale...') while also part of a powerful visual conception that's more than a little reminiscent of Tarr's later films. That said, when *Twilight* premiered, Tarr had only made *Damnation* (1988) in his mature style, his previous films having adopted a more social-realist approach.

Like Tarr, Fehér favours exceptionally long takes (there are just 50 or so shots across the film's 100 minutes), often with little outwardly happening. Similarly, two-way conversations are usually an excuse for lengthy scrutiny of the listener's face rather than that of the speaker. One particularly remarkable shot lasts nearly six minutes, bookended by prolonged extreme close-ups of a man's unshaven, heavily moustached face, initially as he's being berated by his wife, and then in the aftermath of a frenzied table-top incident that might be either marital rape or consensually cathartic rough sex, all set to a soundtrack that suggests that their home's weather-proofing is paper-thin. There's no privacy in this environment, and seemingly no end to the surrounding landscape.

The cinematography isn't so much black and white as a set of endless variations on a general theme of grey, especially emphasised by the many prolonged shots of the camera drifting unmoored through landscapes defined more by gentle undulations than clearly marked features. Almost every exterior is suffused with moisture of some kind, usually drifting fog or torrential rain, and the interiors feel similarly oppressive. Echoes of Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) abound on the soundtrack – both films repeatedly use music

## IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

### Michael Mann in Conversation

Sun 3 Dec 18:00

**Preview: Ferrari + intro by Michael Mann**

Sun 3 Dec 19:50

**TV Preview: The Kemps: All Gold + Q&A with Gary and Martin Kemp**

Tue 5 Dec 18:10

**TV Preview: Truelove + Q&A with cast Lindsay Duncan and Clarke Peters, writer Iain**

**Weatherby, co-creator Charlie Covell and director Chloë Wicks**

Wed 6 Dec 18:15

**Sofia Coppola in Conversation**

Sat 9 Dec 12:15

**Lost Christmas + Q&A with actor Eddie Izzard and director John Hay**

Sun 10 Dec 14:30

**10th Anniversary Screening: The World's End**

Tue 12 Dec 17:40 (+ Q&A with Edgar Wright, Simon Pegg and Nick Frost), 20:40 (+ intro)

**Yorgos Lanthimos in Conversation**

Wed 13 Dec 18:15

**Preview: Poor Things + intro by Yorgos Lanthimos**

Wed 13 Dec 20:15

**The Crown – Final Episode + Q&A**

Sun 17 Dec 15:45

**Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI**

Mon 18 Dec 18:30

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by the band Popol Vuh and a choral arrangement of the Georgian folk song 'Tsintskaro' (which was sampled by Kate Bush in her 1985 track 'Hello Earth'). Sometimes this sort of thing is needlessly distracting, but not here, with the music underscoring the pervasive suggestion that a potential vampire, or at least recidivist child-murderer, might be lurking just off camera throughout.

For, despite outward appearances, *Twilight* is a crime thriller (as was *Passion*, which was the fifth screen version of James M. Cain's 1934 novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice*). It is adapted from *The Pledge* (1958), itself adapted from a screenplay that Dürrenmatt wrote the previous year. The best known out of quite a few film and TV adaptations of *The Pledge* is Sean Penn's 2001 feature, which starred Jack Nicholson as the troubled detective who comes to believe that the prime suspect in the vicious murder of a young girl was innocent, notwithstanding his confession and subsequent suicide.

In Fehér's film, the detective (unnamed here, Matthai in the novel) is played by the grim-faced Peter Haumann: initially a frequently mute witness to frustratingly slow investigative proceedings, who gradually comes to play an increasingly proactive but potentially unethical leading role, since the only truly fruitful source of information is a very young girl who may be in line to become the next victim. Dürrenmatt had already stripped the classic detective story down to its barest essentials (he even subtitled the book 'Requiem for the Detective Novel'); Fehér goes even further, reducing the narrative elements to occasional anchor points in what is otherwise a relentless but mesmerising study of tone and texture – not least aurally: the sound of fingers painstakingly sifting through broken glass in search of crucial evidence is as compelling as any music.

Tarr fans are very unlikely to be disappointed, but so should anyone else curious to sample the work of a clearly major talent who has been neglected for far too long.

Michael Brooke, *Sight and Sound*, June 2023