



HBO EUROPE PRESENTS

TRAIN TO ADULthood

"I DON'T WANT TO BE A GROWN UP OR A KID EITHER."



Train to Adulthood is a sensitive coming of age drama about three youngsters who find an escape from life's ordeals by working on the Budapest Children's Railway.

Duration	79 min
Shooting format	HD 4.2.2.
Screening formats	DCP, HDCam, Blue Ray
Director	Klára Trencsényi
Producer	Julianna Ugrin
Executive producer HBO Europe	Hanka Kastelicova
DOP	Klára Trencsényi Márton Vízkelety
Production company	Éclipse Film Ltd. 1066, Budapest Jókai u. 1. HUNGARY
In co-production with	HBO-Europe



HBO EUROPE presents an ÉCLIPSE FILM production,
 a film by KLÁRA TRENCSENYI with VIKTOR AL HAJJAR, CARMEN AL HAJJAR and GERGŐ GÁBOR
 KLÁRA TRENCSENYI director JULIANNA UGRIN producer KLÁRA TRENCSENYI and MÁRTON VIZKELETY cinematographers
 JUDIT CZAKÓ H.S.E. editor RUDOLF VÁRHEGYI H.A.E.S. sound ANDOR SPERLING composer
 HANKA KASTELICOVÁ HBO Europe producer ANNA ZÁVORSZKY HBO Hungary producer



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AWARDS

DOK Leipzig 2015 – Golden Dove
ZagrebDOX 2015 – Special Mention

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/148209695>



SYNOPSIS

Documentary

79 min, HD

Train to Adulthood is a coming-of-age story about three Hungarian youngsters who find an escape from life's ordeals by working on the Budapest Children's Railway.

This small-gauge railway system has been in continuous use since it was created for the "Pioneers", Hungary's communist youth organization in 1948. Nearly seventy years on, hundreds of thousands of passengers a year travel along the winding tracks of the Buda Hills in the same old carriages. The railway's antiquated switches, levers, and telephones are operated by children between the ages of 10 and 14, who run all the stations and accompany passengers on their journey.

Our protagonists, **Viktor, his sister Carmen, and Gergo** are passionate about their work on the Children's Railway. For them it is a place of comradeship and order, and a refuge from the chaos and indifference of today's society. We follow these brave youngsters over two years through their biweekly shifts on the railway, but also their everyday lives. Their families are struggling to get by, barely making ends meet in Hungary or working abroad. In the end, Viktor and Carmen lose their home and Gergo has to choose between following his own dream or joining his parents abroad.

While the children enjoy playing at being responsible adults on the Railway, they are forced to mature abruptly due to the difficulties at home. The director of *Train to Adulthood* uses the Children's Railway as a metaphor to explore present-day Hungary: a country faltering in its political and social transition, where community ties have been broken and social institutions collapsed.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Train to Adulthood is a unique and universal story at the same time.

Its scenery is the almost seventy-year old Train, reloaded with positive energy and community cohesion, adapted to the needs of today's teenagers.

Its old values gain new meaning for a generation that has not lived through communism, but grew up in atomized families, with divorcing parents and virtual relationships.

The Children's Train itself is unique. Even though in Berlin or Chemnitz there are other small gauge trains that survived the fall of communism, they are not completely operated by children, and most of them are just small park trains running during summertime for tourists. The Children's Train is the only one that works off-season, running every single day of the year - and with a record number of 500 children on board.

But our story reaches far beyond the story of a communist relic or nostalgic survivor: the Train takes us to the depth of the soul and intellectual development of an entire generation, children who are 10 to 14 years old today. While we tend to talk depreciatively about this Generation X or Z, in my documentary we can closely watch their passion for work and unusual enthusiasm.

This is not just an X-ray of a generation though, but it mirrors an entire society, struggling with poverty and instability like other post-communist countries - and with intolerance and racism, as particularly worrisome features of today's Hungary.

But our protagonists, these teenagers full of energy and adolescent charm, make the story universal in the same time, and their struggles of coming of age resonate with our nostalgia towards our own past. The moving and often funny scenes make the film accessible and understandable for the vastest of audiences.

There has not been a feature documentary made about the Children's Train ever since its existence. Only in 1958, when the Train turned 10 years old, a short documentary was shot - with a propagandistic tone.

I have spent nearly three years with these teenagers, in order to better understand their life and make them used to the presence of an external eye: a camera. I gained a unique access to their stories, and managed to look behind their serious, disciplined behavior and talk about the issues that really matter to them.

The project has been developed within the frames of the

IDFA World View Summer School in 2013 and 2015, and When East Meets West 2015 Last Stop Trieste, by leading commissioning editors and filmmaker tutors. As the director of Train to Adulthood I would like to offer an often humorous, but rather bitter-sweet, moving character based story - that talks honestly about a democracy in trouble.

Klára Trencsényi - director



Synopsis by Grit Lemke, DOK LEIPZIG Catalogue

"The pioneer railway where children can be engine drivers or conductors, sell tickets or dispatch trains used to be the dream of every boy (and many girls) between Leipzig and Vladivostok. The Budapest twins Viktor and Karmen and their friend Gergő, too, operate old fashioned switches, levers and telephones, line up for the flag ceremony and sing the old hymn around the camp fire: "The pioneers' land is full of happy tunes..." What could easily have been an exercise in sugary and phony nostalgia unfolds as a nuanced and sensitive coming of age drama – and not a happy one. Because the three of them, all on the threshold of adulthood, must shoulder responsibilities not only at the railway: they were confronted with the tough reality of capitalism at an early age. The twins' single mother works hard but earns hardly enough to buy food, and the family are losing the roof over their heads. As for Gergő, he lives with his grandparents because his parents are forced to work abroad and he must decide whether this will be his future, too.

Klára Trencsényi shows a world in which a relic from the past is the only thing that offers security on the road to the future, while all the institutions that are supposed to do this are absent. The image of the rolling train as a symbol of longing acquires a different meaning – a bitter railway romanticism."

DokLeipzig, 2015.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1948, shortly after the Second World War devastated Budapest, the Communist party decided to offer a gift to the Hungarian children. They built a small-gauge train to carry the Communist youth from the city centre to the utopian destination called Children's Republic, a huge international pioneer camp in the heart of Budapest.

With the help of comrades from all the "friendly countries" the rails and the stations were constructed in no time, erasing golf fields and luxury estates that were in their way.

Soon the Train started to run on its 12 km track fulfilling its "real" mission: it was meant to initiate Hungarian children into "the world of labour", since all the railway work had to be done by the children themselves. Children changed the switches and gave permission to the trains to arrive and leave the stations, they sold and controlled the tickets on board, and it was their thin voice we could hear from the railway megaphone.

However in 1989, when the communist regime fell, "pioneer" and "communist" became pejoratives, and children railway workers gradually disappeared. The train was almost closed down.

But soon after the former pioneers joined forces to save their beloved Train. In the early nineties they re-baptized it so it has become more presentable under the name of Children's Train. And drafting started once again - teenager activists visited all.



INTERVIEWS WITH THE DIRECTOR

Hungarian Press:

<http://magyarnarancs.hu/film2/a-kilakoltatasnal-is-segitettunk-98646>

http://hvg.hu/kultura/20160321_a_tisztelges_a_reggelenkenti_zaszlofelvonas_a_napi_rutin_resze_trencsnyi_klara

<http://magyar.film.hu/filmhu/magazin/remenyvasut.html>

<http://www.nlcafe.hu/ezvan/20151210/remenyvasut-hbo-dokumentumfilm/>

http://kulturpart.blog.hu/2016/03/17/remeny_helyett_vasut

<http://www.mafab.hu/movies/remenyvasut-275074.html>

<http://magyar.film.hu/filmhu/hir/kulondijat-nyert-zagrabban-a-remenyvasut.html>

<http://inforadio.hu/hir/kultura/dijat-kapott-trencsenyi-klara-remenyvasut-cimu-filmje-lipcseben-771002>

<http://nol.hu/kultura/arany-galambot-nyert-az-uttorovasutrol-szolo-dokumentumfilm-1572875>

<http://magyar.film.hu/filmhu/hir/dijat-nyert-trencsenyi-klara-dokumentumfilmje-lipcseben-trencsenyi-klara-remenyvasut-lipcse.html>

<http://www.filmnett.ro/cikk/4086/trencsenyi-klara-remenyvasut>

<http://magyar.film.hu/filmhu/magazin/dobozban-magyarosan-dobozban-tv-musor.html>

http://index.hu/kultur/cinematix/2015/12/15/dokumentumfilm_hbo_europe_uttorovasut_vasut_gyermekvasut_retro/

<http://mno.hu/film/felnott-sem-gyerek-sem-1319144>

International Press and Blogs:

<http://dafilms.com/selection/>

<http://films2015.dok-leipzig.de/de/film?ID=11806&title=Train+to+Adulthood>

http://www.edn.dk/news/news-story/article/doc-alliance-selection-award-2016-nominees-of-the-9th-edition-announced/?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=111&cHash=fc13c608444ebee91b643d053caf68b5

<http://www.filmkommentaren.dk/blog/blogpost/3406/>

<http://www.filmkommentaren.dk/blog/blogpost/3395/>

<http://www.cinemaitaliano.info/news/32896/dokfestival-leipzig-58-i-vincitori.html>

<http://www.wemw.it/2015/11/02/brothers-and-train-to-adulthood-selected-at-last-stop-trieste-2015-winners-at-dok-leipzig/>

<http://cineuropa.org/nw.aspx?t=newsdetail&l=en&did=301209>

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TRAIN TO ADULTHOOD



Directed by Klára Trencsényi / Hungary 2015 / 79 min

Train to Adulthood is a coming of age story about three children who work passionately at the Children's Train, a small gauge railway built in 1948 by the communist leaders of Hungary. The sixty-six-year-old wagons still run every day carrying hundreds of thousands of passengers a year. Both in the communist times and today the Train has been entirely operated by the children themselves.

In the feature documentary the Children's Train is a metaphor to talk about current day Hungary, a country not managing the political and social transition - falling from a communist regime to Orban's "illiberal democracy".

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NEWS



**DOC ALLIANCE SELECTION AWARD
2016: FRESH DOCUMENTARY
TALENTS AT THE UPCOMING NINTH
DAS AWARDS**

Ever since 2008, Doc Alliance has been organising an international award intended especially for first-time directors. The **Doc Alliance Selection Award** helps up-and-coming filmmaking talents to put their name on the documentary map,

Doc Alliance Selection Award 2016: Nominees of the 9th Edition Announced

16.06.2016

The Doc Alliance platform recently announced the final selection of films nominated for the 9th Doc Alliance Selection Award (DAS Award). Aiming to showcase and honour fresh documentary talents, Doc Alliance spearheads a dedicated festival alliance that supports and promotes quality documentary films which are essential to the existence of every documentary film festival.

Based on a collaboration that started in 2008, Doc Alliance annually presents the DAS Awards which include one film from each of the seven partner festivals: CPH:DOX, Docs Against Gravity FF, Doclisboa, DOK Leipzig, FID Marseille, Jihlava IDFF and Visions du Réel. Each festival selects one film representing outstanding creative quality and further nominates a jury member from the ranks of film critics from a country where the particular festival is based.

"The selected films greatly benefit from the very fact that they have been nominated. All seven Doc Alliance festivals have made an agreement to include three of the titles nominated for the annual award in their festival programme," says project manager Nina Numankadić about the prospects for selected films of the DAS Award.



Still from 'Steam on the River'
by Filip Remunda and Robert Kirchhoff

Nominees for the DAS Award 2016:

Gulistan, Land of Roses (directed by Zaynê Akyol; CA/GE, 2016, 86 min)

Nominated by *Visions du Réel*

A story of present-day female Kurdish guerrilla fighters combating ISIS terrorists that unfolds on the backdrop of an investigation of the tragic death of one of them.

Jarocin. Against the Stream (directed by Lech Gnoinski, Marek Gajczak; PL, 2015, 109 min)

Nominated by *Docs Against Gravity FF*

A documentary look at the history and the present of the cult Polish film festival that used to be one of the few bastions of the long-desired freedom in communist Poland.

Fragment 53 (directed by Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli, Federico Lodoli; IT/CH, 2015, 71 min)

Nominated by *CPH:DOX*

A documentary exploration of the essence of war as a social phenomenon and behavioural pattern whose main protagonists have remained unchanged for centuries.

Maybe Desert, Perhaps Universe (directed by Miguel Seabra Lopes, Karen Akerman; PT/BR, 2015, 98 min)

Nominated by *Doclisboa*

A close look at the slow pace of life at a psychiatric ward whose interns have been convicted of the most serious felonies.

Steam on the River (directed by Filip Remunda, Robert Kirchhoff; SK/CZ, 2015, 90 min) Nominated by *IDFF Jihlava*

A documentary probe into the original artistic worlds of a trio of world-renowned jazz musicians who fled communist Czechoslovakia.

Maestà, the Passion of Christ (directed by Andy Guérif; FR, 2015, 60 min)

Nominated by *FID Marseille*

A visually stunning film adaptation of the famous polyptych "The Passion of Christ", freed from the constraints of camera perspective and endowing the painting with motion.

Train to Adulthood (directed by Klára Trencséni; HU, 2015, 79 min)

Nominated by *DOK Leipzig*

A film metaphor of the hardships of living in contemporary Hungary that is slowly shifting away from democracy, as symbolised by a unique relic of the communist era – a children's train.

More information about the nominees and the Doc Alliance platform can be found [here](#).

Further links at [edn.dk](#)

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Archive:

Klára Trencsényi: Train to Adulthood

Skrevet den 16-12-2015 13:34:48 af Tue Steen Müller

This film was awarded as the best in the "Next Masters" section of the DOKLeipzig festival this autumn. Very well deserved as Klára Trencsényi already before (primarily with



"Bird's Way") has shown how masterful cinematography looks, when she is behind the camera. With "Train to Adulthood" she adds to the skills by getting close to two families with kids - and huge social problems. She has made an emotionally strong documentary that is telling us about a social reality in Hungary, that could have taken place in other Eastern European countries. In one family: Mum and Dad work abroad, the kids live with their grandparents. In the other family: Mum lives with her three children but is forced out of her home as she can not pay rent and electricity.

Klára Trencsényi, however, frames her story about kids journey

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Mikhail Barynin: 24 Snows

Ryan White: Serena

Two of the Competition Films at MIFF

to leave childhood with a bitter-sweet story about them being part of

the so-called "Budapest Children's Railway". I quote from the description of the film: "This small-gauge railway system has been in continuous use since it was created for the "Pioneers", Hungary's communist youth organization in 1948. Nearly seventy years on, hundreds of thousands of passengers a year travel along the winding tracks of the Buda Hills in the same old carriages. The railway's antiquated switches, levers, and telephones are operated by children between the ages of 10 and 14, who run all the stations and accompany passengers on their journey..."

So this is where Viktor and his sister Carmen go as well as Gergo. Their stay there, have fun, learn how to work together, dress up in nice train uniforms - I understand that they go "on biweekly shifts", away from the harsh reality at home.

Viktor and Gergo get a voice in the film. You see their worry, especially Viktor, whose mother has to move into a single mother's place, Viktor and Carmen come home, if you can call it a home, after time at the camp of the Children's Railway. And Gergo argues with his parents that he does want to go to Germany as they think he should, to study. He wants to stay in Hungary, gets accepted to a school and can help the grandparents.

It's not a bright picture that Klára Trencsényi paints of Hungary today through the description of the living conditions of the two families, a description, which is, I am sure, quite representative. Yet, you leave the film in the mood that they - against all odds - will make it, these kids, when they grow up. Or is this wishful

Yet, you leave the film in the mood that they - against all odds - will make it, these kids, when they grow up. Or is this wishful thinking...?

Loved to watch that film. Let's get more well built stories about what happens in Hungary. We have had enough of journalistic reports from a country that has fine filmmakers. Klára Trencsényi is one of them.

Hungary, 2015, 79 mins.

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Asif Kapadia: Amy /2
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Moscow International Film Festival

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D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus på SVT

Michael Madsen: The Reviews

Cameraperson wins in Sheffield

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Michael Ware: Only the Dead

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CREATIVE TEAM



DIRECTOR

Klára Trencsényi is a freelance director and cinematographer committed to creative and social documentaries. She graduated from the Hungarian Film Academy in Budapest as Director of Photography in 2005.

So far she has directed two mid-length documentaries and has worked in many international productions as cinematographer with Dutch, American and Hungarian directors. She was the D.o.p for IDFA awarded *The Angelmakers*, directed by Astrid Bussink in 2005.

FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTOR

2013-14 - *Train to Adulthood* – HBO Europe – Éclipse Film

2011 - *Corvin Variations 57'*– creative documentary, Inforg Studio – Hungary

2009- *Birds Way 56'*– creative documentary, Libra Film – Romania

2009 - *3Weddings – Elena & Leo 27'* – documentary, Campfilm, Hungary

AWARDS

Birds Way – Astra Film Festival Sibiu 2009, Mediawave Documentary Film Festival 2010, Film.Doc Miercurea Ciuc 2010

The Angelmakers – IDFA 2005 – First Appearance Award, Astra Student Film Award 2006, ZagrebDox – Little Stamp award etc.



PRODUCER

Julianna Ugrin graduated from ELTE University in 2005, she started to work in the film field at Flora Film International. In 2009 she was selected to EURODOC producers workshop. From March 2009, she worked at Havas Films as producer and production manager (Une île de musique au Coeur de l'Europe – broadcasted by Arte; Farewell Comrades! – in co-production with Artline Films, Gebrueder Beetz and Arte). In 2010 she participated at Dragon Forum. In 2011 she co-organized the 1st session of EURODOC in Budapest. She established Éclipse Film, an independent film production company in 2011. She developed projects at various international workshops and pitching forums like in Trieste – When East Meets West, IDFA Summer School and so on. Since 2013 she teaches at the Hungarian Film Academy in Documentary MA studies. She is part of Emerging Producers 2014 and an EAVE graduate 2015. She joined Café Film as a producer in 2014. She is organizer of DunaDOCK Master Class and Pitching series, co-organizer of EURODOC 2015, and KineDOK 2015. Member of EDN.

FILMOGRAPHY and AWARDS

- 2015 – Train to Adulthood – documentary 79' – dir: Klára Trencsényi
DOK Leipzig – Golden Dove – Next Masters Competition 2015, ZagrebDox 2016 – Special Mention
- 2015 – Song Brothers – documentary 77' – dir: Balázs Lévai
- 2015 – Tititá – documentary 87'– dir: Tamás Almási
Sarajevo IFF – Special Jury Prize for competition programme documentary 2015
- 2015 – HOT Men COLD Dictatorships – documentary 90' – dir: Mária Takács
- 2015 – War of Wits – feature – executive producer – dir: Béla Paczolay
- 2013 – Stream of Love – documentary 70' – dir: Ágnes Sós
IDFA – main competition 2013, Trieste IFF – Best documentary award 2014, Espansioni award 2014
Zagreb DOX – Special Mention 2014
- 2013 – The Sailor – documentary 52' – dir: András Kollmann
- 2012 – Pietà – short fiction 11'– dir: Dániel Márton Szerencsés
- 2011 – Farewell Comrades! – 6 x 52' documentary series – dir: Andrei Nekrasov
- 2010 – Une île de musique au cœur de l'Europe – documentary 90'– ARTE – dir: Laurent Hasse

PRODUCTION COMPANY



Éclipse Film is a Budapest-based independent film production company, founded by Julianna Ugrin in 2011. The company concentrates on high-quality productions with relevant, particular or artistic content. It develops and produces mainly documentaries, but also author fiction films, commercials and corporate films on an international level. However, our primary focus is on creative documentaries. Since its foundation, Éclipse Film has managed to connect young, talented Hungarian filmmakers with experienced members of the industry. Our films have participated in festivals like IDFA, DOK Leipzig, Sarajevo IFF, to name but a few. The company is also a co-organizer of DunaDOCK, EURODOC and KineDok.