



Alex de la Iglesia: Dancing with the Devil



FILM
TORONTO

Fri, January 30–
Sat, March 28, 2015

Venue

Toronto International Film Festival, 350
King Street West, Toronto, ON M5V 3X5

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More information

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Credits

Curated by producer and Twitchfilm.com
founder Todd Brown.

A retrospective of the Spanish Filmmaker at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.

Spain's answer to Peter Jackson and Sam Raimi, *Midnight Madness* favourite Álex de la Iglesia has gone from anarchic purveyor of high-grade schlock to festival-feted auteur.

The Day of the Beast

On January 30 at 9 pm.

With the birth of the Antichrist imminent, a simple Spanish priest resolves to sacrifice his own salvation in a desperate effort to slay the hellspawn before it can emerge, in Álex de la Iglesia's succulently sacrilicious sophomore feature.

Dying of Laughter

On Tuesday February 3 at 9 pm.

In Álex de la Iglesia's pitch-black showbiz comedy, a superstar 1970s comedy team reunites for a New Year's Eve TV special, where their long-simmering tensions erupt into full-on violence.

Perdita Durango

On Saturday February 7 at 8:30 pm.

Álex de la Iglesia's ambitious adaptation of the novel by Barry Gifford (*Wild at Heart*) stars Javier Bardem and Rosie Perez as lusty, loose-screwed lovers who cut a bloody path down Mexico way.

The Oxford Murders

On Sunday February 8 at 9 pm.

A Yank at Oxford (Elijah Wood) becomes embroiled in a mysterious



series of murders that seem to be linked to arcane mathematical formulae, in *Álex de la Iglesia's* atypically classy, elegantly constructed mystery thriller.

Common Wealth

On Saturday February 21 at 9:30 pm.

Álex de la Iglesia's deliciously dark comedy of murders focuses on a real estate agent (Almodóvar star Carmen Maura) who stumbles upon a cache of cash in an abandoned apartment and soon finds herself marked for death by the rest of the building's oddball tenants.

800 Bullets

On Thursday February 26 at 9 pm.

Álex de la Iglesia's salute to the grand old days of spaghetti westerns is far and away his sweetest film — albeit with the usual hefty helpings of nudity, foul language and over-the-top violence.

A Ferpect Crime

On Tuesday March 3 at 9:15 pm.

After he accidentally murders a hated rival, a smooth-talking department-store salesman finds himself blackmailed by an ugly duckling clerk with amorous designs on him, in this hilarious comedy of errors that was one of *Álex de la Iglesia's* biggest critical hits in North America.

As Luck Would Have It

On Saturday March 14 at 8:45 pm.

Salma Hayek stars in *Álex de la Iglesia's* dark satire of media madness, about a washed-up ad exec whose freak accident becomes a potential cash cow when he whips up a bidding war for exclusive interview rights.

Witching & Bitching

On Saturday March 21 at 9 pm.

Fleeing through the impenetrable forests of the Basque countryside after a jewel heist, a hapless band of robbers runs afoul of a bloodthirsty coven of witches, in *Álex de la Iglesia's* madcap supernatural spectacle.

The Last Circus

On Saturday March 28 at 9:45 pm.

Álex de la Iglesia's gonzo allegory about the legacy of the Spanish Civil War is both his wildest and most wildly ambitious feature to date.

PROGRAMMER'S ESSAY

Like his cult-cinema contemporaries Peter Jackson and Sam Raimi, Spanish maverick *Álex de la Iglesia* began his career as an anarchic purveyor of high-grade schlock splashing his every fluid-drenched fever dream across the screen, before achieving international



recognition as a bona fide festival-feted auteur. The endorsement and mentorship of Pedro Almodóvar certainly helped in this regard, immediately placing the former comic-book artist on the critical radar and garnering Goya Awards (Spain's Oscars) for even some of his earliest and strangest work.

But while his Kiwi and American colleagues have conquered the multiplex largely by watering down their stranger impulses, de la Iglesia has given no quarter: his films are as strange and transgressive as ever, his sense of humour every bit as dark, biting and absurd. While his work has definitely grown in scope and ambition, de la Iglesia has never surrendered or compromised his unique vision. In this sense, de la Iglesia shares much with Canada's own purveyor of the peculiar, the perverse and the frequently disgusting, David Cronenberg: both filmmakers have forced the film world to adapt to them rather than the other way around.

This select retrospective of de la Iglesia's twisted oeuvre — sadly, rights issues prevent us from screening his rip-roaring debut *Mutant Action*, which caused a sensation at its debut in Midnight Madness at the 1993 Toronto International Film Festival — offers Toronto audiences a crash course in one of the most bizarre, brilliant and singular cinematic talents working today. Strap yourself in and get ready for a very strange ride!

—Todd Brown