

Baltic film festival

Films about pivotal events in the history of the Baltic States starting with **Latvia's** fight for independence in 1919, followed by a documentary about **Estonia's** singing revolution and TV footage of events in **Lithuania** in the late 1980s.

Admission free with ticket from box office

For further information see www.glasgow.ac.uk/crcees

Monday 8 March @ 6.00 p.m.

Rīgas Sargi – Defenders of Riga

Film by Aigars Grauba
2007, 118 minutes
with English subtitles



The film "Defenders of Riga" is a story of friendship and love, set against the background of the events of November 11, 1919 - Lāčplēšis Day - a crucial date in the battle for Latvia's independence. World War I is over and, after many years spent fighting abroad, Mārtiņš returns to his bride Elza in newly independent Latvia. He does not realise that the decisive battle, both for Elza's heart and the newly established Latvian state, is still ahead. An army of 50 000 troops led by rogue German General Rüdiger von der Goltz and Russian Colonel Bermont-Avalov is preparing to attack Riga as part of a plan to take over Latvia and Estonia and create a new German-led state in the region. At first it seems that Latvia's only hope in fighting German domination lies in gaining support from the Western Allies. Yet Mārtiņš and a small group of his comrades are willing to fight. Though vastly outnumbered, 11 000 troops consisting of Latvian army regulars and non-military volunteers were eventually able to push back and defeat the Germans. The heroism of the defenders of Rīga helped to strengthen belief in the Latvian state, both at home and abroad.

Released in November 2007, the film is not only the most ambitious feature-length production in the history of Latvian cinema, but also the highest grossing box office film to be released in Latvia.

Friday 12 March @ 6.00 p.m.

The Singing Revolution

Documentary film by
James Tusty and Maureen Castle Tusty
2007, 92 min

Most people don't think about singing when they think about revolutions. But song was the weapon of choice when, between 1987 and 1991, Estonians sought to free themselves from decades of Soviet occupation. During those years, hundreds of thousands gathered in public to sing forbidden patriotic songs and to rally for independence.



"The young people, without any political party, and without any politicians, just came together ... not only tens of thousands but hundreds of thousands ... to gather and to sing and to give this nation a new spirit," remarks Mart Laar, a Singing Revolution leader featured in the film and the first post-Soviet Prime Minister of Estonia. "This was the idea of the Singing Revolution."

James Tusty and Maureen Castle Tusty's *The Singing Revolution* tells the moving story of how the Estonian people peacefully regained their freedom--and helped topple an empire along the way.

Saturday 13 March @ 2.00 p.m.

Lithuania and the Collapse of the USSR

Documentary film by Jonas Mekas
2008, 286 min

Forces of time, memory, change, and human collide in Jonas Mekas' compelling work *Lithuania and the Collapse of the USSR* (2008). The work's title refers to the historical time when the world watched as Mekas' home country of Lithuania fought for independence from the stronghold of Soviet rule.



With a video camera, Mekas recorded newscasts that played daily from 1989 to 1991 on his television set at home. Footage includes reports of the Soviet Union's use of "aggressive actions" that called for Lithuanian back down, freedom demonstrations, interviews and statements made by top politicians, journalists and analysts that include Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis, Deputy Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene, Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, United States President George H.W. Bush among others, as well as moving portraits of the Lithuanian people who were directly affected by the conflict. Mekas' account, reported by news outlets in the United States, also reveals the shaping and shifting of political, economic and social relations between the Eastern Europe and the West at the time.

This screening be introduced by Louis Benassi, curator, artist and filmmaker. Louis Benassi has curated and programmed experimental film for numerous international film festivals, including Jonas Mekas' retrospective at Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2002. In 2001 he began Spool-Pool, a transient forum for film and the spoken word. www.spoolpool.com.

The event will be followed by a Question and Answer session. Professor David Smith from the Department will be on the panel.