



Three Monkeys (Üç maymun)

Spring
Season
2009

Release: 2008

Cert (UK): 15

Runtime: 109 mins

Directors: Nuri Bilge Ceylan

Cast: Ahmet Rifat Ungar, Hatice Aslan, Rifat Sungar, Yavuz Bingol

As a kind of cultural globalisation takes over world cinema, one should be grateful for directors such as the Hungarian Béla Tarr, the Romanian Cristian Mungiu, the Iranians Abbas Kiarostami and Bahman Ghobadi and the Turkish Nuri Bilge Ceylan who keep alive a personal, regional and stylistically individual form of film-making. Their work is never likely to become widely popular at home or abroad, but they're beacons of hope for the future of a troubled art.

A photographer by profession, Ceylan turned to film-making in the mid-90s and works largely with non-professional actors and small budgets. He belongs in the tradition of Tarkovsky, Bergman, Antonioni, Angelopoulos and other masters that seemed in the 60s and 70s to be on the point of becoming a new or, at least, parallel mainstream but has now been marginalised. His new film, *The Three Monkeys*, like its two predecessors, won a major award at Cannes, in this case the prize for best director, and it begins with that familiar dramatic device for the creation of tension, guilt and dangerous consequences - the hit-and-run accident.

Philip French

On paper, the story of 'Three Monkeys' involves manslaughter, adultery and murder. It sounds busy, but Ceylan typically interests himself more in the psychology of his characters than their actions. None of these events even takes place on camera. He also follows the pattern of his earlier films by limiting dialogue to the essential. It's his habit, he says, to keep chipping away at chat - 'until, finally, there is none,' he jokes. 'I don't like talky scenes, but we have to give some information, so I include as little as possible.' This translates into an approach that's familiar: long, silent studies of individuals, often with their faces in close-up, there to be read. Familiar, too, are the lack of music, the flashes of dark humour and the slight colour manipulation of high-definition digital video that he began working with so artfully in 'Climates'. 'For me, film is dead,' Ceylan told an audience at the BFI when he presented a preview of 'Three Monkeys' the night after the opening of his photo exhibition.

Time Out