

**Adviser's Review for Jane Spasikj's Master degree thesis:
The Films of Stefan Sidovski: a catalog of the amateur Macedonian filmmaker's works**

Jane Spasikj, candidate for a Masters degree in Film Directing through CDM at FAMU, has investigated the films of an amateur film director and pedagog from Macedonia, Stefan Sidovski. He believes a study of this filmmaker would contribute to a deeper understanding of Macedonian cinema. He justifies this by proving that Sidovski has been a persistent force at work on the Macedonian film scene for 50 years, and that he has influenced other filmmakers primarily through his work as a teacher (teaching both philosophy and film), and his active involvement in various film clubs and festivals within Macedonia. Jane explains that Sidovski is quite well known among his compatriots, even suggesting that there is a cult following of the man, and that Sidovski has recently received recognition as a film artist by UNICA (an international union of non-professional cinema associated with UNESCO) for his contribution to the spread of film culture in Macedonia.

To build his thesis, Jane has cataloged the more than one hundred works (109) made by Sidovski over five decades (since 1967). For each film he describes the genre and gives a very brief synopsis of the film's content. He also makes notes regarding technology used by Sidovski, collaborations involved and includes any comments related to the films made by Sidovski in retrospect. He moves through all this chronologically and at the end of each decade, Jane summarizes any persistent themes taken up by Sidovski over those particular years and in this way, Jane systematically traces the over-all development of this filmmaker, paying special attention to the filmmaker's thematic and technological development. All of this is presented in language that is fairly clear and with observations supported by each film's content. He does not go into great depth with any one film. At times, the thesis seems repetitive because at times, Sidovski's films were repetitive. In the conclusion, Jane summarizes the main thematic preoccupations held by Sidovski in his filmography and uses the themes of the film to gain a better understanding of the filmmaker's personality, as well as to point out ways in which these themes reflected cultural preoccupations in his country.

I commend Jane for following through on a rather tedious task of finding and examining each short film produced by Mr. Sidovski over so many years, and for presenting his findings in a clear manner. The subject which Jane chose, Stefan Sidovski, intrigues me for his persistence as an amateur filmmaker, despite many obstacles, and for his possible influence on a generation of filmmakers through his work as a teacher. Jane, as a promising young filmmaker herself, through his sincere admiration for the subject, to some extent proves his point that Mr. Sidovski has exerted a strong influence on the development of Macedonian film.

I believe his catalog will be of value to a deeper understanding of Macedonian film history and trends. (He notes in his introduction that he intends to give the catalog to the Macedonian film archive.) As for the importance of Jane's thesis beyond a Macedonian interest, he has documented the activities of a Socrates-like figure engaging Macedonian youth in actively questioning existence through film, which I take to be a subject of rather universal appeal. I recommend this thesis for defense, and I would propose the grade of B.

Mary Angiolillo, Ph.D.