

## FIVE QUESTIONS FOR Nuri Bilge Ceylan

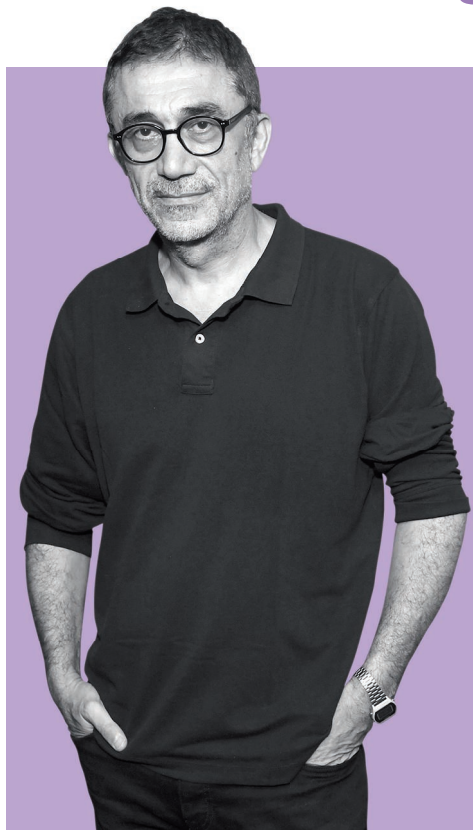
**TURKISH DIRECTOR** Nuri Bilge Ceylan was 36 when he made his first film, 'Cocoon', a low-budget short that was screened at Cannes. Twenty-three years on, this master filmmaker is basically a shoo-in on the Palme d'Or shortlist with every film he makes. The latest in his long line of eloquent, Turkey-set masterpieces is 'The Wild Pear Tree', the story of a young writer struggling to find his place in the world.

### 1 Where did the idea for 'The Wild Pear Tree' come from?

'I met the man who is the inspiration for Idris [the father in the film]. He's difficult, but a very intellectual character – a dreamer. That was the starting point, but I've wanted to make a film about the young people of Turkey for a long time. This story reminded me of my youth.'

### 2 You write with your wife, Ebru. After 'Winter Sleep' she said she wouldn't work with you again. What changed her mind?

'You know, marriage is always like that. You say things, but you always behave the opposite way. We wrote the dialogue together with Akin [Aksu, the co-writer]. For the finished script, I would take one sentence from her, one sentence from him and then another sentence was mine. It's all mixed up.'



### 3 Your films are all based around Turkish life. Would you ever make a film in another setting? Say, London's Turkish community?

'It's difficult – language is an important part of my filmmaking. As are all the details of the culture, and I don't know about the Turkish community in London or other countries. I have had offers from America and there are some actors that I'd like to work with, but if they don't speak Turkish, what do I do? Do I write a special script for them as tourists coming to Turkey? There should be something that forces me to tell the story.'

### 4 What's your biggest challenge as a director?

'Nobody in this world likes a long film, even the audience, and my films are getting longer. I never think about how long the film will be when I write, but in cinema it creates problems. "Winter Sleep" won the Palme d'Or but English television didn't take it, because it is long.'

### 5 What films do you watch to relax?

'Sometimes it's a Hollywood movie – something lightweight – and sometimes you're ready for something difficult. I take my 14-year-old son to see the Marvel movies. I lie to him [about them]. He asks if I like them, and I tell him yes.' ■ *Interview by Greer McNally*

→ 'The Wild Pear Tree' is out Nov 30.

## The Girl in the Spider's Web



### WHAT IS IT...

The debut of Claire Foy as avenging hacker Lisbeth Salander.

### WHY GO...

For 'The Crown' star's reinvention as a screen badass.

→ Director Fede Alvarez (15) 115 mins.



**IF EVER THERE** was a perfect time for Lisbeth Salander, the avenging hacker of Stieg Larsson's 'Millennium' series, to make a comeback, it's in the midst of a #MeToo upsurge. So call it a spectacular failure to read the room that this new action-heavy reboot strips its hero of everything that made her spiky and singular.

It's not that the movie doesn't have a terrific lead in Claire Foy, or a sleek visual template, established by David Fincher with his Rooney Mara-led 'The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo'. But 'Spider's Web' sees nothing to celebrate in Salander but a bland video-game avatar, someone who speeds across icy ponds on a Ducati and flees explosions in slo-mo. Foy wasn't made to frown at laptops; what little psychology there was in the literary version of this antihero has been scaled back to nothing.

Worse, she's up against one of those generic madman-steals-a-nuke scenarios that went out with Roger Moore. (Ineffectual side characters include Sverrir Gudnason as this instalment's hero-journalist Mikael Blomkvist.) When Salander's nemesis shows up it's another woman, clad in red like a supervillain. Did it have to end with a colour-coded cat fight? Director Fede Alvarez has the stylish 'Don't Breathe' under his belt, but this cyber thriller is a major disappointment. Wouldn't a properly cryptic Lisbeth have been better? ■ *Joshua Rothkopf*

### POSTCARDS FROM LONDON →



This pretentious picaresque about a model-pretty Essex boy (Harris Dickinson) arriving in Soho looking for excitement makes you wonder – literally continuously – if you're missing something. It's all shot on soundstages, and this unwillingness to engage with anything approaching the reality of London creeps, miasma-like, into every corner of the film. It's a musical with no songs. The sexuality, the exploration and the self-discovery are as dated, self-conscious and as horribly empty as the look. Dickinson does an okay job with the material, but Soho may never recover. *Chris Waywell*



### BACK TO BERLIN



It's a poignant story: in 2015 a group of Jewish bikers rode from Israel to Germany, their mission being to recreate a similar journey taken by another group of bikers in 1932 to promote the first Maccabiah Games – an Olympics-style sporting event created exclusively for Jewish athletes just as Nazism was on the rise. For this documentary narrated by Jason Isaacs we follow a group of latter-day bikers to Berlin

and the site of the '36 Olympics. Their mission is moving and meaningful, even if the film takes an uninspiring TV-doc approach to storytelling. *Dave Calhoun*

### ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK



Cheesier than an explosion in a Dairy Lea factory and creaking a bit with age (it's set in a time when you'd actually want the US president to be rescued), this 1981 John Carpenter sci-fi has Kurt Russell glowering around the Big Apple as eyed-patched hero Snake Plissken in his coolest role. It's still a guilt-free orgy of quotable dialogue and bonkers action sequences. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

## ALSO OPENING