



THE FILM

# VERDICT

15 SEPTEMBER 2023

DAY  
3

## OLDENBURG REVIEW DAILY



Oldenburg Film Festival

### INTERNATIONAL

#### MAESTRA

**VERDICT:** Maggie Contreras reveals workplace realities for female orchestra conductors as global candidates vie for a Paris contest title, in a warm, glossy doc with surprising political bite.

*Carmen Gray, September 14, 2023*

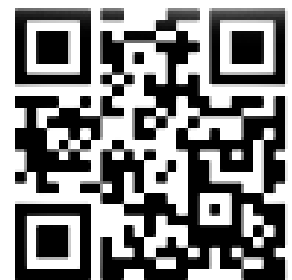
Female conductors are a rare breed: fewer than three per cent of the world's top orchestras have women leading their ensembles. Little-known insights about the realities of this career are set out in documentary

Maestra, the directorial debut of Maggie Contreras, which is screening at Oldenburg International Film Festival, after its Tribeca premiere. Glossily conventional in form, the film is buoyed by an empathetic warmth, as it challenges the norms of a profession that has traditionally been rigidly male-dominated. It closely follows five very likeable, vastly different candidates (of French, American, Polish, Greek and Ukrainian nationalities) of a total fourteen, as they converge in Paris for knock-out rounds of the 2022 edition of La Maestra, the only global conducting contest exclusively for women. Contests

are important for launching conductors' careers — especially for female hopefuls, who are otherwise sidelined from exposure for big roles. Though the contest set-up adheres to a standard doc formula to amp up suspense through

[Full review, click here](#)

#### METaverse ENTRY



# Attend IDFA this year!



8 – 19 November 2023

International  
Documentary Film  
Festival Amsterdam

## VERDICT SHORTS

### DREAM MAKER

**VERDICT:** A man uses virtual reality to experience and retouch the memory of his deceased daughter in this poignant, thought-provoking Iranian sci-fi.

*Ben Nicholson, September 14, 2023*

**Memory is not just unreliable but amendable in Mohsen Mehri Darouei and Milad Kiaei's *Dream Maker*.**

Science fiction is a genre famed for its ability to hold up a mirror to humanity in a way that recontextualises private and social conundrums through high-concept drama. In this instance, notions of simulation and virtual reality meld with questions of memory and subjectivity



Oldenburg Film Festival

to create a quietly challenging film about the potential role of technology in recording personal history. For the unnamed man at the centre of Darouei and Kiaei's short (played by Rez Robatirazi), a deep-seated personal trauma can be slowly massaged from his mind through the use of VR memory that

can be customised and uploaded back into his head.

The unnerving potential of such a narrative might seem a million miles from the early scenes of *Dream Maker*, which are laden with the golden hour sunshine and saccharine aesthetics of nostalgia. But this is exactly what those images are – they are the memories of a father, thinking about his young daughter. Now, he lives in what can only be described as a bunker, his only connection to the outside world coming through time spent in a headset, reliving happier times. It transpires that the man was – accidentally – responsible for a terrible accident that saw his daughter killed. His VR sessions are the dreamier moments of her final

[Full review, click here](#)

## IMPRESSIONS & MEMORIES

### OLDENBURG CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



#### Melanie Miller

*Producer, "Maestra" (2023)*

"My favorite memory of Oldenburg is from 2006, and I don't know if they still do it; they used to do this volunteer party at the end of the festival, where instead of the volunteers waiting on us hand and foot, we actually wait on them. I ended up being the bartender for about two hours that night. I hope they still do that because I would love to do that again."

## BEAUTIFUL FRIEND

World Premiere

Sept. 14th, 7PM  
Cine K / Studio  
Bahnhofstraße 11

Sept. 16th, 7PM  
Cine K / Muvi  
Bahnhofstraße 11





## INTERNATIONAL

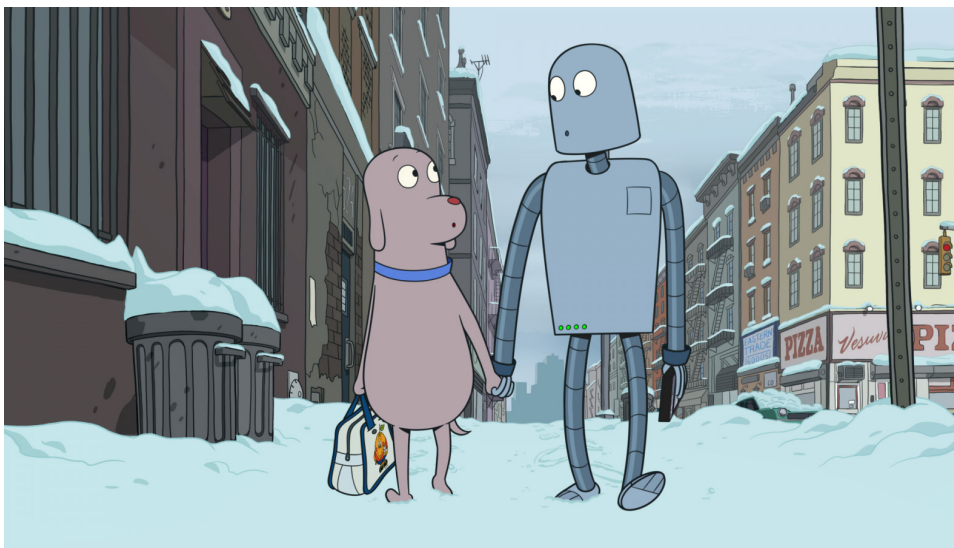
### ROBOT DREAMS

**VERDICT:** A friendship between a dog and a robot in 80s New York provides the foundation for a beautiful and touching exploration of relationships.

Ben Nicholson, September 14, 2023

**At the beginning of Pablo Berger's *Robot Dreams*, Dog is lonely.**

His evenings are spent channel-surfing in his pokey New York apartment until one day he sees a television advert for a robotic buddy. What ensues begins as a freewheeling but deeply felt meditation on the nature of relationships. Based on Sara Varon's 2007 graphic novel of the same name, Berger's dialogue-free animated feature is an exceptionally nuanced comedy-drama that premiered in Cannes before going on to understandably win the Contrechamp Grand Prix for Best Film at Annecy. Come for



Oldenburg Film Festival

the appealing animation, stay for a love letter to falling hard for someone and all of the joys and disasters that entails.

When the film joins him, Dog's life is one of microwave mac'n'cheese while sat in the glow of the TV, flicking through soulless comedies and infomercials. In the apartment block across the street, Dog hears and then sees a couple cuddled on the sofa, giggling and joking, enjoying companionship. Although *Robot Dreams* eschews spoken

dialogue – much like the graphic novel it is based on – the loneliness of its protagonist pooch is palpable. Suddenly, an advertisement explodes onto the TV in front of him offering a cure for loneliness in the form of the Amica 2000, a new metallic mate. Their friendship flourishes immediately and they race around the city having a whale of a time. One day, however, after they fall asleep on the beach, Robot finds that he can't move,

[Full review, click here](#)

## METaverse UNLEASHED:

**Oldenburg Film Festival, MILC Platform & The Film Verdict Are Pushing the Boundaries of Entertainment.**

Unlocking its 30th milestone, the Oldenburg Film Festival teams with MILC Platform and The Film Verdict, venturing into the Metaverse. Experience the virtual Oldenburg, attend panel discussions and discover a curated collection of films from the festival. Unveiled this September at [metaverse.milc.global](https://metaverse.milc.global)



VENUE:



THE FILM  
VERDICT

Oldenburg  
FILMFESTIVAL

# IMPRESSIONS & MEMORIES

## OLDENBURG CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



### Edwin Mullane

Director, "Cleaner" (2023)

"I just arrived in Oldenburg, it's my first day and so far, first impressions, it's all about people – from the industry, from different countries, filmmakers, and it's such a lovely atmosphere. Everybody is mixing together. It's quite unique for a festival really. Generally, you have different spheres of the festival pulled to other venues or other VIP events so to have everybody together is really lovely. There is something very special about that. I can't wait for the next few days."



## Spanish Screenings XXL September 26-28

Creative Investors' Conference  
Zinemaldia Startup Challenge

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# SSIFF

2023  
September  
22/30

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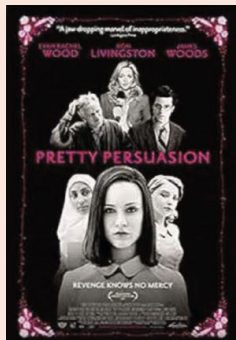
# FAST FACTS

## OLDENBURG CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



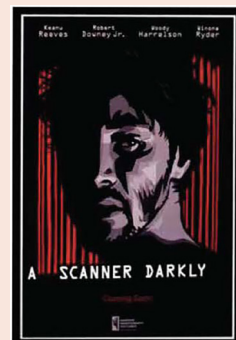
2004

The German Independence Award — Best German Film was presented by an international jury for the first time. The winner is Andreas Struck's "Sugar Orange". The audience award went to the Greek production "Hardcore" by Dennis Illiadis.



2005

Producer/director Christopher Coppola used the festival to tour Oldenburg's surroundings for an episode of his "Biker Chef"-series. Awards went to Catharina Deus for "Die Boxerin" and Marcos Siega's "Pretty Persuasion"



2006

The selection included Richard Linklater's Philip K. Dick adaptation "A Scanner Darkly" with Closing Night offering the German premiere of Darren Aronofsky's "The Fountain." Jerry Schatzberg received retrospective honors

## Oldenburg LIVE



14 SEPTEMBER 2023



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**6TH EDITION**  
**13-20 OCT 2023**

