

= O ' Horten =

O ' Horten is a 2007 Norwegian film directed by Bent Hamer . The film 's title character Odd Horten is a habit @-@ bound train driver , who is about to retire . On the day of his retirement he ends up in an unexpected situation , and is forced to reconsider his life . As in other films by Hamer , the themes are loneliness and old age , and the courage to take chances . O ' Horten has been described as a film without a strong plot or a clear chronology .

The film 's main cast consists mainly of senior Danish and Norwegian actors , including Bård Ove , Espen Skjønberg , and Ghita Nørby . There are also several cameos from various well @-@ known Norwegians , such as ski jumper Anette Sagen in her first film role . The music was composed by John Erik Kaada . Generally well received by critics , it was chosen for Un Certain Regard at the Cannes Film Festival . Skjønberg was awarded an Amanda Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role .

= = Plot = =

Odd Horten is an overcautious 67 @-@ year @-@ old man about to retire after forty years as a train driver on the route between Oslo and Bergen . As he awakes , he goes through a meticulous daily routine , as he prepares for his second @-@ to @-@ last time driving the train to Bergen . When he gets there , he makes small talk with Svea , who owns the boarding house where he stays when there and whom he now may never see again .

Back in Oslo , his colleagues throw him a farewell party , but Odd ? a timid man ? is uncomfortable with the attention . As the party moves to a co @-@ worker 's apartment , he ends up getting accidentally locked out . He climbs up a scaffold , trying to reach the apartment window , and ends up in a young boy 's room . The boy asks him to stay and wait for him to fall asleep , but Odd falls asleep first . He oversleeps in the unfamiliar room and arrives too late for the train he was to drive on his final working day . He is left standing on the platform without any fixed points in his life , with nothing but a life of emptiness stretching out before him .

A number of scenes then follow whose exact sequence is unclear . Odd goes to visit his mother at the retirement home , which only makes him more unhappy : his mother is senile and spends her days staring emptily out the window , and the visit reminds him of his own impending old age . While Odd is at a restaurant , police come in and arrest the cook . At the shop where he normally buys his pipe tobacco , he learns that the owner has died . He decides to sell his boat , leading to misadventures when the buyer , who works at an airport , asks Odd to meet him there inside the secure zone . Odd goes to the local swimming pool , but his shoes were removed when the facility closed ; as he is leaving , he finds a pair of red high @-@ heeled boots and walks away in them .

By chance he then runs into another man his age , the far more spontaneous Trygve Sissener , who has fallen asleep in the snow @-@ covered street . The two spend the evening in conversation over a few drinks at Sissener 's house , and Odd is led to realisations about his own life . It emerges that his mother ? a free @-@ spirited woman ? was a ski jumper , but Odd himself never had the courage to try the sport . He now feels as if he has let her down , by never having the courage to seize the day and try new things .

In the early morning Sissener suggests the two go driving blindfolded . The stunt goes surprisingly well , but as Sissener pulls over the car , he dies . Odd is now left with responsibility for Sissener 's dog and with an urgency to live life to the fullest . He makes his way up to the Holmenkollen ski jump , where he sees a vision of his mother as a young woman , doing the jump . He comes to a decision and starts to do the ski jump . Odd , for the first time no longer wearing his railwayman 's jacket , rides the train to Bergen , where Svea is happily waiting for him on the platform .

= = Main cast = =

Bård Ove as Odd Horten : The " O " in O ' Horten stands for " Odd " . The name " Odd " is a quite common boys ' name in Norway , and does not carry the same meaning as the English word " odd "

, though the film and the character 's bizarre qualities have been pointed out by some . Though not intentionally meant as a pun , Hamer himself has said : " I know the meaning of the word in English , and that doesn 't hurt . " Born in Norway , Owe has spent most of his professional career in Denmark , where he is known to a contemporary audience primarily from Lars von Trier 's The Kingdom . His career , however , goes all the way back to Carl Theodor Dreyer 's classic Gertrude from 1964 . Owe has also done much theatre and television work , yet after acting in over thirty films , this was his first leading role .

Espen Skjønberg as Trygve Sissener : Trygve lives alone in one of the finer parts of Oslo , and when he meets Odd he is happy to have someone to share a few drinks with . Skjønberg has been a presence in Norwegian theatre and film since 1945 , and debuted on film as a child , as early as 1937 . He has received several awards , among them an honorary Amanda in 2004 .

Ghita Nørby as Mrs. Deinboll : Mrs. Deinboll works at the store where Odd buys his tobacco . Nørby is a well @-@ established actress in Denmark , where she has been referred to as " the first lady of Danish theatre " . She had also worked in Norway prior to O ' Horten ; in 1996 she played the role of Marie Hamsun in the film Hamsun .

Henny Moan as Svea : Henny Moan plays the part of the old lady who owns the boarding house where Odd lives when he is in Bergen . There is a special connection between the two . Moan has acted in films since 1955 , and at the time O ' Horten was made , she had just retired from a long career at the theatre .

Bjørn Floberg as Flo

Kai Remlov as Steiner Sissener

Per Jansen as Train driver

Bjarte Hjelmeland as Conductor

Trond Viggo Torgersen as Opsahl

Anette Sagen as Young Vera Horten

= = Production = =

The film contains several cameos from well @-@ known actors and other celebrities , made possible by Hamer 's high standing as a director . His previous film was the international production Factotum , based on the novel by Charles Bukowski , starring Matt Dillon , Lili Taylor , and Marisa Tomei . Some of the appearances are relatively brief ; Nørby , for instance , is on screen for less than three minutes , while the well @-@ known Norwegian entertainer Trond Viggo Torgersen appears for only 59 seconds . Before the film 's première on Boxing Day 2007 , a pre @-@ screening was held for journalists on 22 December . This was followed by dinner , attended by all the protagonists , at the restaurant Valkyrien in Oslo , where Odd Horten is also a regular customer in the film .

Among the more original castings was Anette Sagen , the world 's leading female ski jumper , in her first film role . Sagen , 22 at the time , played the part of 70 @-@ year @-@ old Owe 's ski jumping mother , although in a younger incarnation . Hamer had already considered Sagen for the role , when he ran into her by chance at the Holmenkollen Ski Museum . Without knowing to whom he was talking , Hamer mentioned that he was shooting a film in this location , and was planning to ask Anette Sagen to be in it . The reason the theme of ski jumping was chosen was that Hamer 's own mother performed the sport , and the film has been described as a tribute to all female ski jumpers . Sagen herself had also earlier been involved in a controversy over women 's access to professional venues and competitions . Incidentally , Sagen and Owe are also both from the Norwegian town of Mosjøen .

The two lonely old men make part of a recurring theme in Hamer 's films , as seen also in Eggs (1995) and Kitchen Stories (2003) . However , Hamer himself has described the film as equally much about women ; " the women who once gave birth to these men . " He also cites a great fascination with trains as an inspiration for the film 's setting , and claims that he had long wanted to make a film with this theme .

= = Reception = =

Norwegian newspapers Verdens Gang and Dagbladet both gave the film five out of six points . Verdens Gang 's Jon Selås called it " a little film about living " and praised it for its " applied existential philosophy " . Dagbladet 's Vegard Larsen had certain objections to a few unnecessary scenes , but nevertheless found that the film had met the high expectations created by Hamer 's previous films . Aftenposten 's Ingunn Økland , on the other hand , felt O ' Horten failed to live up to the director 's best work , and gave it only four points . She nevertheless pointed out the good qualities in the film , in particular the filming and the soundtrack by John Erik Kaada .

Foreign reviewers also gave the film generally positive reviews ; Duane Byrge of The Hollywood Reporter called it a " Warm story from frigid Norway " . Variety 's Alissa Simon wrote that it " lacks the fully developed characters and tightly constructed narrative of his more poignant and substantial Kitchen Stories " , but that it " nevertheless provides a warm and gently humorous divertissement " . She also found the production and score excellent . James Rocchi , writing for Cinematical , chose to highlight Bård Ove 's performance , and his " warm demeanor " and meticulous " capacity for double @-@ takes " . Entertainment Weekly 's Lisa Schwarzbaum compared Ove to Jack Nicholson 's Warren Schmidt in the film About Schmidt . Like others , she also used Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki as a reference to describe Hamer 's particular cinematic style .

O ' Horten was picked for the Un Certain Regard @-@ section of the Cannes Film Festival . Here it was praised by one reviewer as " deliciously funny " in a festival that contained few happy stories . This marked the fourth time that Hamer was represented at Cannes , which makes him one of only two Norwegians to accomplish this feat . This instance , however , marked a step up for Hamer , as his previous appearances had been in the slightly less prestigious Directors ' Fortnight @-@ category . At the festival , the film was picked for international distribution by the distribution company Sony Pictures Classics . Hamer also won the Norwegian Film Critics ' Award in 2008 , thereby becoming the first director to win this award three times . At the Amanda Awards that year , O ' Horten was nominated for a number of awards ? including " Best Film " and " Best Direction " ? but won only two : " Best Sound " and " Best Actor in a Supporting Role " for Espen Skjønberg .

In spite of good critical reception , the film did not perform very well at the box office , with only about 35 @, @ 000 tickets sold domestically . Hamer expressed some disappointment with this , while hoping that the DVD @-@ release would fare better . Internationally , the film did somewhat better , and was sold to forty countries . By early August 2009 , the film had in fact been seen by more people in the United States than in Norway .

= = Soundtrack = =

The soundtrack of the film was released in 2008 , under the name Music from the Motion Picture O ' Horten . It was fully composed by Norwegian pop / experimental singer Kaada .