

Tim Burton Turns Up At Moscow Film Fest

By [Christopher Brennan](#)

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A still from Bekmambetov's latest, "Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter." **Alan Markfield**

The 34th Moscow International Film Festival officially opened late Thursday with the premier of "Soulless," an adaptation of the controversial novel by Sergei Minayev about a middle class Muscovite's descent into debauchery.

American director Tim Burton is the biggest star to come to the festival for the Russian premier of Timur Bekmambetov's "Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter," which he produced. Bekmambetov, the director of the Russian hit films "Night Watch" and "Day Watch," will also be in attendance.

Seventeen feature films will take part in the competition section and although there are no big names, the section, which only features premiers, has a number of possible hits. Spanish director Fernando Cortizo's "O Apostolo" follows the journey of an escaped convict through 3D stop motion animation. Renowned American composer Phillip Glass provides the music.

Other notable movies in the competition include "Junkhearts" by British director Tinge Krishnan about an American ex-soldier who takes in a homeless teenager and "A Cherry on a Pomegranate Tree" about village politics in China.

As usual the festival will have a parallel competition section called Perspectives from lesser-known directors, which is known for often producing more compelling movies than the main competition.

There is also documentary film competition and the highlight is expected to be Mads Brügger's "The Ambassador." Brügger, a previous winner at the Sundance Film festival continues his gonzo journalism style by pretending to be a diplomat in the Central African Republic.

Apart from the competition section, the festival will, of course, have more than a hundred other films ranging over a dozen different genres and periods, including retrospective German-American director Ernst Lubitsch.

The Moscow International Film Festival runs through June 30. Oktyabr Cinema. 24 Novy Arbat. Metro Arbatskaya. Tel. 725-26-22. All films are shown in the original language with English and Russian subtitles. www.moscowfilmfestival.ru

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