

## **This Film is so North End! *East of Euclid* Highlights a Golden Winnipeg Era**

Teresa Stolarskyj – *The Manitoban* – March 17, 2004

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To some, nothing says ethnic North End Winnipeg like images of Kub bread, perogies, pickles and kubasa. While these staples of any Ukrainian Baba's kitchen are among the most satisfying and comforting of foods, there are those who envision a slightly less orthodox purpose for them.

As a north end-raised Ukrainian, I'm not sure how I would feel about being met in the streets – even Winnipeg's - by garlic sausage-wielding ex-KGB gamblers. It's an easy scenario to laugh at, however, when that fate is somebody else's, and especially when seen through the eyes of Winnipeg filmmaker Jeff Solylo. If this past week's world premiere of Solylo's debut feature film *East of Euclid* is any indication, a wealth of others are apparently twisted enough to agree. As the inaugural screening of the NSI FilmExchange's late night series, the black-and-white comedy noir was eaten up by a full house like a plateful of perogies with so much fried onion and bacon on top.

In a question-and-answer period with Solylo and a number of the film's actors, including Michael O'Sullivan, Brent Neale and Daina Leithold, following the screening, Solylo expressed a debt of gratitude to the "actors and great crew" who stuck by the project, some since its original conceptualization some six years ago. The crew, in turn, presented Solylo with the "Perogie d'Or," a commemorative trophy topped by a golden perogy.

*East of Euclid* pays homage primarily to the area that is North Point Douglas, which half a century ago was densely populated by working-class Eastern Europeans, many of whom immigrated to Canada after the Second World War. The film's beautifully constructed miniatures immortalize the CN rail lines, the Byzantine churches and the factories in an era of plaid suits, the Guess Who and polka dancing at the Northern Hotel; a time in which, for Russian gambler Vilosh, "the world is my onion."

With *East of Euclid* there is no putsyking around: while so accurately and unabashedly celebrating the quirks of the stereotypical Ukrainians of Winnipeg's North End, it remains entirely accessible to those who aren't of such a designation themselves. One hopes that Solylo's film finds life in the city and far beyond it, and that Solylo himself will continue to create such brilliant and wildly fun films.