

REVIEWS



Here And There

By [Andrew Palmacci](#) on July 18, 2011. @

From the outset of *Here and There*, as we watch unshaven, unkempt protagonist Robert arise from slumber in a packed-up New York apartment, the film's other locale, Serbia (the "there" to the "here," or vice versa), is foreshadowed by an Eastern European-sounding band made up of winds and accordion. This melody captures the ethos of the film, a wistful, slightly doleful tune that is nonetheless spare. This sparseness, lightness of touch, could describe the storytelling by director Lungulov and the playing of his actors—resting mainly on their offbeats, their pauses. The expressions of laconic, funk-mired, lapsed sax player Robert—befuddled, ticked off, world-weary—and Branko—frustrated yet plucky—drive *Here and There's* dual story (or melody) lines of New York City and Belgrade.

Once Robert arrives in the latter city on a scheme to raise money for himself, the ride from the airport is scored with an up-tempo full-band version of the earlier Balkan-esque jazz. In a fairly transcendent moment in Belgrade, Robert plays saxophone to liven up the flowers in Branko's mother's apartment (where he is staying), which is followed by a non-diegetic (or exterior to the story's action) jazz saxophone solo.

In a strong turn, Fedja Stojanovic plays talkative Tosha, a neighbor and friend of Branko's mother, who is at times officious and fawning towards Robert, though ultimately provides him with beer and a bed at a critical juncture for the visiting American (and the movie). On the New York side of things, Branko finds himself negotiating with a Puerto Rican-American who is a mechanic, in order to save his business. This chance encounter adds to the culturally-complex fabric of the film that Lungulov stitches. Other notable moments include a *Taxi Driver* reference early on and a cameo by Cyndi Lauper, who also contributes an original song with the same as the Serbian/German/United States co-production.

Lungulov's economic and direct filmmaking never wastes any on-camera time and the actors, led by David Thornton and Mirjana Karanovic, provide honesty and weight that make *Here And There* a worthy watch.