

Czech film *Zatopek* enters the Oscar race

The Czech Film and Television Academy (CFTA) selected *Zatopek* as this year's Czech Oscar candidate for the 94th Academy Awards in International Feature Film Category. A thrilling sports drama, which describes the life story of the Czech Olympic champion Emil Zátopek, is directed by celebrated auteur David Ondříček and produced by the director himself and Kryštof Mucha of Lucky Man Films. The Czech Film Fund supported *Zatopek* for both development and production.

His nickname was “Czech locomotive”. Eighteen world records holder Emil Zátopek is most famous for the Olympic Games in Helsinki, where he won three gold medals. Nobody has repeated his success and athletics experts doubt that anyone ever will. Emil Zátopek’s grandiose success comes alive in the memories of his loved ones, friends, and rivals. 1968: Ron Clarke, an Australian runner, visits Zátopek. During their dialogue, we are transferred to the past, to the beginnings of Emil’s passion for running, his first success at the WCA in Berlin, his meeting with javelin thrower Dana, his future wife, but we also learn about the increasing pressure of the communist regime.

For David Ondříček, one of the most awarded contemporary Czech filmmakers, *Zatopek* is not the first Oscar experience of his career. In 2012, Ondříček represented the Czech Republic at the Oscars with crime drama *In the Shadow* (2012), set in the 1950s Communist Czechoslovakia, and with this film, he also ruled the Czech Lion Awards with 9 prizes (including Best Film and Best Director) as well as the Czech Film Critics' Awards with 5 wins. Moreover, Ondříček also stood behind the 2015 Czech Oscar candidate *Lost in Munich* (2015) as the main producer and was also involved in Sean Ellis' *Anthropoid* (2016) about Czechoslovak national resistance during the World War II, which was nominated for the British Film Independent Award. In addition, David Ondříček is also the director of Czech cult classic *Loners* (2000).

David Ondříček was listed in the prestigious selection “10 Directors to Watch” in the American magazine *Variety* (2012).

Zátopek was made as Czech-Slovak co-production with David Ondříček & Kryštof Mucha of Lucky Man Films acting as main producers. The co-producers include: Czech Television (CZ), Olife Energy (CZ), Accolade (CZ), ALEF (CZ), Innogy (CZ), T-Mobile (CZ), SEBRE (CZ), Azyll Production (SK), Radio and Television Slovakia (SK), Barrandov Studio.

Ondříček worked on the screenplay together with Alice Nellis and Jan P. Muchow. The world premiere of the film *Zátopek* took place at the 55th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

The Czech Film Fund supported *Zatopek* for both development (EUR 27 000, in 2014) and production (EUR 577 000, in 2018) altogether with EUR 604 000.

The ceremonial gala evening of the 94th Awards of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences will take place on 27th March 2022. The films that will be shortlisted for the Oscars will be published on 21st December 2021 and the nominations will be published on 8th February 2022. This year the academics were choosing from 13 Czech feature, documentary and animated films that had been enrolled by their producers. Just behind the film *Zatopek* there were the films *Bird Atlas* and *Even Mice Belong in Heaven* (in alphabetical order). The voting took place from 27th September to 8th October 2021.

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