

CZECH FILM

Spring 2017



■ czech
■ film
■ center

Czech Film Center

The Czech Film Center (CFC) was established in 2002 to represent, market and promote Czech cinema and film industry and to increase the awareness of Czech film worldwide. As a national partner of international film festivals and co-production platforms, CFC takes active part in selection and presentation of Czech films and projects abroad. Linking Czech cinema with international film industry, Czech Film Center works with a worldwide network of international partners to profile the innovation, diversity and creativity of Czech films, and looks for opportunities for creative exchange between Czech filmmakers and their international counterparts. CFC provides tailor-made consulting, initiates and co-organizes numerous pitching forums and workshops, and prepares specialized publications. As of February 2017, the Czech Film Center operates as a division of the State Cinematography Fund Czech Republic.



Markéta Šantrochová
Head of Czech Film Center
e-mail: marketa@filmcenter.cz
tel.: +420 724 329 948



Barbora Ligasová
Festival Relations-Feature Films
e-mail: barbora@filmcenter.cz
tel.: +420 778 487 863



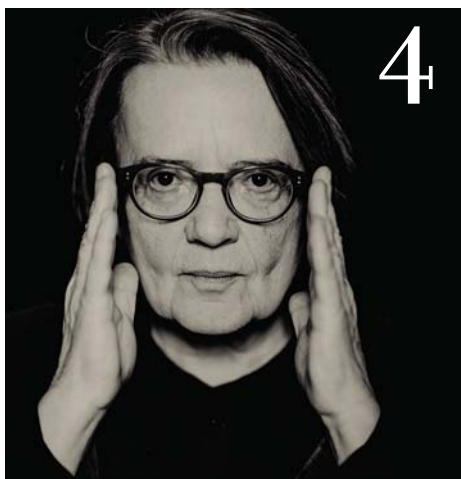
Martin Černý
Festival Relations-Documentary
& Short Films
e-mail: martin@filmcenter.cz
tel.: +420 778 487 864



Irena Kovarova
New York representative
e-mail: irenakovarova@icloud.com

Agnieszka Holland /

The world-famous Polish director introduces her latest film *Spoor* screened at Berlinale's Competition and explains her connections to the Czech environment.



3 stars /
Meet three young talented Czech actors who are predicted to have a starry future.



A Prominent Patient /

The new film by Julius Ševčík will be premiered at Berlinale Special section. Find out more about the film and the renaissance of Czech biographical drama.



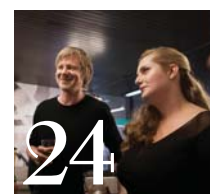
Jan Němec /

Selection of reviews of the work of one of the most distinctive Czech directors on occasion of the extensive retrospective of his films at Rotterdam IFF.



Berlinale Boost /

Czech directors, whose films were selected for Berlinale in the past, explain how the festival changed their careers.



Wasteland / Interview with the makers of a new Czech series that premiered at Toronto IFF explaining its international appeal.

2 CZECH FILM NOW

14 PROFILE / LITTLE HARBOUR

20 PROFILE / FILTHY

22 FOCUS / CZECH FILM COMMISSION

28 PROFILE / IKARIE XB 1

32 CZECH SHORT FILMS 2017

34 FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

36 FILMS TO COME

EDITORIAL

At the start of each year, we tend to look back at the past year almost instinctively, at the same time feeling a sense of automatic expectation about the year to come.

The year 2016 was a good one for Czech film. In fact, for several years now, Czech cinema has slowly, and steadily, been doing increasingly well – more visible at international festivals and markets, as well as more talked about – and the home front is positively on fire with new projects: from intimate, highly personal works to creative documentaries to high-budget epics.

In short, I believe Czech cinema can enter the New Year with its head held high.

The International Film Festival in Rotterdam will screen the most comprehensive retrospective yet of the work of Jan Němec, a key figure in the Central European film avant-garde, a director who never ceased to develop his nonconformist vision, challenging the boundaries of artistic freedom as well as the limits of film as medium.

And, shortly after the festival in Rotterdam, four films produced or coproduced by Czechs will appear in various sections of the Berlinale, while another Czech project will be presented in the Coproduction Market.

With any luck, all our New Year's wishes will come true.

For the Czech Film Center too, 2017 brings a new challenge. As of February, we are joining the Czech Republic's State Cinematography Fund. Thus, after 15 years of building and expanding our activities in the field of international presentation of Czech film, we will become part of the institution that plays a key role in shaping the filmmaking environment in this country. Symbolically, this represents the end of an era. The coming together of the CFC and the State Fund, gathering all our funding and promotion efforts under one roof, will allow us to be more effective in nurturing Czech film and its image in the world. The Czech Republic, at last, has a stable national film institute.

I hope you'll stay with us as the journey continues!

Markéta Šantrochová
Head of Czech Film Center



In early January, **Jan Svěrák finished shooting** on his *Barefoot on Stalks*. In his latest film, a Czech-Danish-Slovak coproduction, the Oscar-winning director tells the story of 8-year-old Eda, whose family is forced to leave Prague and move to the country during the German occupation in the course of the World War II. The young boy experiences his first great adventures, along the way discovering some unexpected family secrets and a courage he didn't realize he had. /



The Teacher, directed by Jan Hřebejk, was acquired for distribution in the US by Movement, a company devoted to foreign language and independent cinema, which is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. The film is slated to premiere at New York's beloved Film Forum cinema in the summer. /

Czech Film



© Pink Productions

Lust for Life

When East Meets West in Trieste featured *Lust for Life*, a documentary project by Radovan Šíbrt, produced by Pink Productions and HBO Europe, about the Tap Tap Band, an orchestra of disabled students from the Jedlička Institute in Prague, who, despite the likelihood of living a shorter life, have made up their minds to enjoy every minute. /

Milada, feature film about the Czech politician Milada Horáková, who was executed by the Communists in 1950, after a show trial on trumped-up charges of treason and espionage, was acquired by Netflix. The release of the film, directed by David Mrnka, is scheduled for October 2017.



Milada

© Loaded Vision Entertainment



© enjorifilm

Family Film

The Czech Film Critics' Awards will be held in late January. *Family Film*, directed by Olmo Omerzu, and *I, Olga Hepnarova*, directed by Petr Kazda and Tomáš Weinreb top the nominations. /

Czech cinema attendance in 2016 with 15.6 mil admissions was its highest since 1993. Apart from the appeal of the films themselves, the increase is attributed to the growing number of theaters and their modernization. Data also show a greater proportion of viewers under the age of 25. The most successful Czech film in 2016 was *Angel of the Lord 2*. /



© Marlene Film Production

Angel of the Lord 2

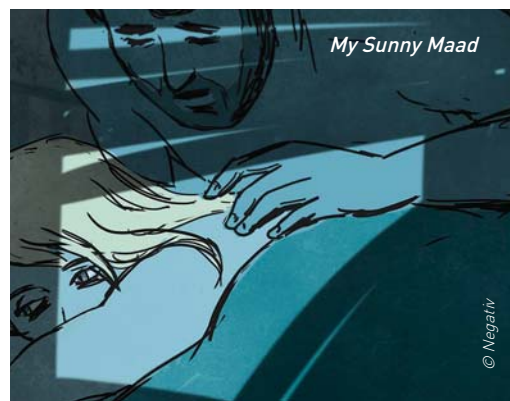


© Black Balance

I, Olga Hepnarova

A feature length animation *My Sunny Maad* directed by Michaela Pavlátová will be presented to international financiers at **Cartoon Forum** (8-10 March 2017) in Bordeaux. A Czech-French coproduction tells the story of Herra, a Czech woman, that falls in love with Nazir, an Afghan, but has no idea about the life that awaits her in post-Taliban Afghanistan, nor about the family she is about to join. /

Czech Film and Television Academy announced the nominations for the annual national **Czech Lion Awards** on January 18. The most successful in number of nominations are *A Prominent Patient* by Julius Ševčík (14 categories) and *Anthropoid* by Sean Ellis (12 categories). The winners of 24th Czech Lion Awards will be announced on March 4, 2017. /



My Sunny Maad

© Negativ

Now

BERLINALE COMPETITION



No Country for Old Women

by Hedvika Petrželková

Agnieszka Holland, the Polish director with deep connections to the Czech Republic, will be presenting her latest film, *Spoor*, an international coproduction with a strong Czech presence, in the Competition section of this year's Berlinale.

The film is based on the best-selling novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, by Polish author Olga Tokarczuk. Holland co-wrote the screenplay with Tokarczuk and Czech screenwriter Štěpán Hulík, author of the successful HBO series *Burning Bush* (also directed by Holland) and *Wasteland*. The rest of the Czech contingent consisted of the production company Nutprodukce, Czech Television, UPP Studios, editor Pavel Hrdlička, and, in one of the starring roles, actor Miroslav Krobot. *Spoor* received support from the Czech Republic's State Cinematography Fund as a minority coproduction (in the same round and at the

same level as Romanian director Radu Jude's *Aferim!*, which appeared in the Berlinale Competition section in 2015).

The heroine of Holland's new film is Janina Duszejko (played by Agnieszka Mandat), an energetic and slightly eccentric retired engineer who teaches schoolchildren English in a small village on the Polish-Czech border. A series of mysterious murders, with no apparent logic or motive, horrifies the local inhabitants, yet the mass killing of wildlife that comes with hunting season serves to pacify most of them. Janina, however, is a great ani-



© Robert Palka

/ Spoor may be a murder mystery, but it also offers a deep message, as well as a reflection on Czech-Polish relations.

mal lover, and, siding with the oddballs and “other” inhabitants of the Kłodzka basin, she decides to fight against the indifference around her, regardless of the consequences.

“Janina may be eccentric, but at the same time she’s typical. Not just of her generation, but also for the sense of powerlessness that people have today — the law doesn’t protect them anymore, especially anyone who’s weak and isn’t part of the mainstream,” Holland says. “The other thing is she’s a woman of a certain age and isn’t a sex object anymore, which means basically she’s invisible. The people she’s trying to convince, the people she’s fighting, don’t pay any attention to what she says, or even her herself. They can’t even remember her name. She revolts against it all, trying to change the reality. Actually, being eccentric — New Age thinking, astrology and so on — is pretty typical for my generation. Most of my women friends are into that sort of thing. They’re searching for some higher meaning in this mixed-up world of ours.”

Spoor is the second time Holland has worked with the Czech production company Nutprodukce. They also collaborated on the HBO miniseries *Burning Bush*, which won a record eleven Czech Lion awards. “Agnieszka came to us about it, right after *Burning Bush* premiered. She’d been working on development for several years, and the film was in the financing phase. The Polish producer, Janusz Wąchata, was looking for partners, and Agnieszka suggested us. A Czech-Polish co-production made sense in this case, since screenplays based on novels are popular in this country, plus the story is set on the Czech-Polish border and Agnieszka found she worked well with the creative people on *Burning Bush*. We were honored by the offer and we’re

delighted to start work on the film,” says Pavla Janoušková Kubečková.

Holland has felt close to the Czechs ever since her days as a student at the FAMU film school in Prague. “That’s where I spent the five most important years of my life, when I was formed both as a person and as a filmmaker, so my relationship to the Czechs has always been very deep, and it got even stronger during the year I spent in Prague working on *Burning Bush*. In a way, it was a journey into the past for me, but it also made the dangers that I see in today’s world very real,” the director says. “Working with the young producers from Nutprodukce was creatively very engaging and personally satisfying.”



© Robert Palka

*/ A Woman Is Invisible
Once She's No Longer
a Sex Object*

Besides Poles and Czechs, *Spoor*, a relatively large production by European standards, also used Germans, Swedes, and Slovaks. Pavla Janoušková Kubečková explains the benefits: "Apart from the obvious advantage, which is the pooling of funds for production, you have an expanded market to distribute the film. Movies from other countries in Europe tend to get only marginal distribution in theaters. But when there are local directors and actors, a movie's got a much better chance of getting to more viewers, reaching a larger number of territories. This way, for instance, we can get more Polish films coming here and more Czech films in Poland. Besides that it also enriches the cultural space of the individual states."

Holland chose the outstanding Czech actor Miroslav Krobot for one of the starring roles. "He's one of my favorite actors, not just Czech or Polish, but overall. Mirek's got a unique personality that I find not only appealing but different. It's so authentic, like he isn't even an actor at all. He also put in a tremendous amount of work to learn the dialogues in Polish, which really are not easy. Most people think it just comes to him naturally," she says.

Spoor may be a murder mystery, but it also offers a deep message, as well as a reflection on Czech-Polish relations. "In a way, it's my most Czech film," says Holland. "In the novel, Bohemia's kind of like a paradise for Jani-



na, since when things were hard for her, she walked across the border, to the nearest Czech town, and found a used bookshop where she got into a deep discussion with this man named Honza. Plus, she had this idea that the animals were fleeing to Bohemia to escape the hunters' massacres." The director adds: "It's sort of this romantic notion that a lot of Poles have about the Czech Republic — especially ones like Janina — that it's a place of individual freedom. I honestly don't think it's true, to me it's not a paradise. But it could seem like that at times, when it gets oppressive in Poland."

Holland has already got another new project under way: *Charlatan*, again with a Czech production team. The screenplay was written by Marek Epstein, based on actual events in the life of healer Jan Mikolášek. "It's a very beautiful, very original screenplay," Holland says. "I get a lot of scripts — mostly, but not only, from American producers — and it's been a long time since I read anything that intrigued me as much as this. So I said yes, and together with Marek and Jarda Sedláček, from Czech Television, we started to work a bit on the script. I hope we'll be shooting it this year, or early next year."

Janoušková Kubečková says she and her colleagues from Nutprodukce are also putting together some new projects of their own. "We're currently finishing up two documentaries: *Nothing Like Before*, directed by Klára Tasovská and Lukáš Kokeš, and *With Mum on the Outside* by director Veronika Jonášová. They're both in editing now and will be finished this year. Besides that, most of our projects are in development: We're developing several things with Štěpán Hulík; we're working on a serial adaptation of the novel *Invisible* with Ondřej Hudeček, Kristina Májová, and Vašek Hašek; also the feature-length animation debut by Filip Pošivač and Bára Valecká; an adaptation of *Viktoria* by Kristina Májová and Zuzana Špidlová; an animation project with Matuš Vizár; and a few other things with Lukáš Kokeš, Klára Tasovská, and Petr Hátle."



Charlatan

Director: Agnieszka Holland

Writer: Marek Epstein

Producers: Šárka Címbalová, Svatka Peschková

Production Company: Marlene Film Production Ltd.

Development support from the the Czech Republic's State Cinematography Fund

Coproducers: Czech Television, Noemo / ITAFILM - ITA agentura (Slovakia), Radio and Television Slovakia

Timeline

Development – until the end of 2017

Production – spring 2018

Release – winter 2018

Charlatan

Holland's New Czech Coproduction

© Robert Palka

After last year's *Outside* by Michal Hogenauer, in 2017 the Czech Republic returns to the Berlinale Co-Production Market with *Charlatan*, directed by Agnieszka Holland, produced by Marlene Film Production. *Charlatan* tells the story of an extraordinary man, blessed with exceptional abilities.

Jan Mikolášek represents the last hope for dozens of people in the totalitarian state of Communist Czechoslovakia. Although lacking in any formal medical education, he is gifted with an inexplicable talent for diagnosing and healing illnesses that have left doctors baffled, and yet he seems utterly helpless when it comes to his own self-destructiveness. His healing powers are seen as a threat by the Communist Party establishment, and he is arrested.

During the course of his interrogations we learn that he was painfully sensitive as a child, and that as a young man in World War I he was forced to join a firing squad and shoot deserters. A never-ending battle between good and evil unfolds in his mind as his psychosis progresses to schizophrenia, and his attempt at suicide allows him to leave the army. He discovers that treating others offers relief, and becomes a master at identifying diseases and the herbal treatments to counter them. He enters an unhappy marriage, mistreats his wife, then abandons her. He opens

his own healing practice and hires an assistant, Antonín, who becomes the one person he can love.

During World War II, Mikolášek is arrested by the Gestapo, who accuses him of supporting the Resistance and sentence him to death. Instead, however, thanks to the Nazis' penchant for mysticism, he becomes a healer to the German elite. After the war, he is accused of collaboration, but when he cures the future president, he becomes a protégé of the new Communist regime.

Eventually, Mikolášek is accused of a murder that he could not have committed, and again, he has to make a life-or-death decision. He claims his assistant is the only one who could have mixed poison into the herbs, and, unexpectedly, Antonín takes the blame. But Mikolášek realizes that the evil inside him can be defeated by something greater than hate, and he confesses. Antonín is still sentenced to death, and Mikolášek receives six years in prison. After his release, he never works as a healer again.

"When we first set out," says producer Šárka Címbalová, "we were looking for a story with extraordinary potential, a story that would be inherently transcendental and identify universal phenomena that hold true for everyone. It would find a surprising way to make viewers feel an emotion they already know and desire. We wanted a story that would work as a reflection of the protagonist's inner strength, but at the same time go beyond this unique character in this particular period and social context. And then we came across *Charlatan*, a script by Marek Epstein based on historical events."

She adds, "It was obvious such a challenging script would need a strong-minded director, someone with a mature personality and years of experience, yet still searching for new ways of storytelling in film. Once Agnieszka Holland confirmed her interest in the project as a director, both the budget and the scope became even more international."

Since 2004, when the Co-Production Market was launched, Czech projects have been selected six times: *Substitute*, by Martin Krejčí (Bionaut Films) in 2004; *Three Seasons in Hell*, by Tomáš Mašín (Dawson), in 2005; *Protector*, by Marek Najbrt (Negativ), in 2006; *My Dog Killer*, by Mira Fornay (Cineart TV Prague), in 2010; and *Outside*, in 2016. /

PROFILE

A PROMINENT PATIENT

© In Film Praha

A Prominent Patient

BERLINALE SPECIAL

by Jakub Jiříš

A Prominent Patient, the new film by talented Czech director Julius Ševčík, is getting its international premiere in the Berlinale's prestigious Berlinale Special section. The project reflects a new wave of interest in the genre of biographical drama, for many years neglected in Czech cinema.

From 1991 to 2014, only eight Czech films were made dramatizing the life of a historical figure, and in four cases, ironically, the subject was a murderer. Unlike Polish and German filmmakers, Czech directors and producers haven't felt the urge to look back at controversial periods in Czech history and address their legacy. Instead, for the most part, historical dilemmas have been hidden under the veil of family fiction, adopting a conciliatory tone consistent with the nostalgic feelings of many Czechs.

In the past two years, however, Czech cinema has undergone a remarkable evolution. To a great extent, this is thanks to increased financial support. Grants from the State Cinematography Fund improve the conditions for costly projects requiring extensive development. Likewise, being able to draw on European funding and take part in coproductions means that producers can avoid relying solely on revenues from theatrical distribution. The fact that non-mainstream films are more likely to obtain institutional support is

probably why Czech producers are now changing course to pursue the genre of "art mainstream," in many cases based on sweeping subjects and stories. From this perspective, having a turbulent history to draw on is a great advantage, offering plenty of story ideas and fascinating characters.

The producer of *A Prominent Patient*, Rudolf Biermann of In Film Praha, has also produced the most successful Czech comedies in recent years, but is now changing direction. Together with Ševčík, he is currently preparing the next release in a series of historically based films aimed at an international audience: an adaptation of the Simon Mawer novel *The Glass Room*, about the Jewish family who lived in the famous Villa Tugendhat before World War II.

In 2016, as a result of the shift described above, five biographies were made, in addition to *A Prominent Patient*. Surprisingly, the only one to challenge the standard account of history was *Anthropoid*, by British director Sean Ellis, depicting the events around the assassination of Nazi Reich Protector

Reinhard Heydrich. But many films now in the works do dare to confront history, including the story of politician Milada Horáková (*Milada*), who was executed by the Communists, and a film portrait of Zdeněk Toman, the contradictory head of the Czechs post-World War II intelligence service (*Zdeněk Toman*).

Now, *A Prominent Patient* is the first Czech film (not counting TV) since the fall of the Iron Curtain that seeks to present an authentic portrait of a prominent political figure. For his dramatic material, Ševčík draws on the not so widely known story of diplomat and foreign minister Jan Masaryk, son of the first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš G. Masaryk. Several directors before have tackled the story of Jan Masaryk's death, shortly after the Communist takeover, under circumstances that remain unclear to this day. However, Ševčík, together with his two cowriters, each representing a different generation (Alex Koenigsmark, who died before the film's completion, and Petr Kolečko, a rising star of satirical comedy), chose instead to focus on the formative period of his life.

The story concentrates on the turning point in Jan Masaryk's life, set against the backdrop of the Munich crisis, in late 1938 and early 1939, when the leaders of Europe sought in vain to preserve peace on the continent by sacrificing the Czechoslovak state to Hitler. The British government played a crucial role in this decision, and Masaryk (played by Karel Roden), who at the time was serving as Czechoslovak ambassador to London, was a key figure in the diplomatic negotiations, holding the fate of his nation in his hands. The negotiations ended up being a futile struggle for attention, and the frivolous-minded Bohemian came out of them a crushed man. The weight of responsibility gradually drove him to the very edge of self-destruction. Unable to live up to the legacy of his deceased father, Jan Masaryk felt he had failed. Despite that, he stood confidently at the head of the government in exile, fighting for the liberation of his occupied homeland.

This crucial period, marked by Masaryk's mysterious disappearance over the ocean at one point, serves as a frame for the film, supported by the two pillars of Masaryk's interior transformation: Dr. Stein (Hanns Zischler), an American writer and head of a psychiatric hospital, and Marcia Davenport (Arly Jover), the woman who becomes his fiancée. Here, the arduous process leading to Masaryk's decision to reaccept his historical role is intertwined with images of his deepening collapse. Thus, working on two different time levels, the filmmakers create a captivating study of inner conflict, simultaneously reflecting the national and personal fates.

Their participation in the prestigious ScriptEast workshop, in 2015, demonstrated the creators' commitment to making the story accessible to an international audience, by getting input from other filmmakers around the world. *A Prominent Patient's* dramatic arc recalls the acclaimed 2010 British biographical drama *The King's Speech*, which also depicted a personal transformation driven by the exigencies of power politics. But the originality of Ševčík's

film resides in his more introspective, intimate approach, underlined by the remarkable visuals of DoP Martin Štrba, whose melancholic sunsets resonate with the mood of swing melodies supplied by acclaimed Polish composer Michal Lorenc.

The film, with a budget of 2 million euros, was made as a Czech-Slovak coproduction, with support from the

Czech Republic's State Cinematography Fund (including production incentives) and the Slovak Audiovisual Fund. Other significant contributions came from the Czech and Slovak public television companies, and from the German ZDF, in exchange for ARTE broadcast rights. One great advantage for international presentation is that a large part of the film was shot in English, using British actors. /



Director Julius Ševčík and Karel Roden as a main protagonist.

© In Film Praha

/ Jan Masaryk as seen by the director

"Jan Masaryk was the enfant terrible of Czechoslovak diplomacy. Given that his father was the founder of Czechoslovakia, international circles saw him more as a celebrity than a career diplomat. On a symbolic level, in the tough times leading up to World War II, the name 'Masaryk' represented the continuity of the state – similar to the way democratic principles unite the states of Central and Eastern Europe today. Jan was an outgoing idealist, and loved people. In that respect, he didn't really fit in politics. I think the most obvious manifestation of his idealism was after the Communist putsch, in 1948, when he tried to oppose the rising power of the monstrous Russian regime by trying to keep that continuity intact, 'for the people's sake.' He paid for that quixotic endeavor with his life."

JULIUS ŠEVČÍK

A graduate of New York Film Academy and FOMU in Prague, Ševčík made his debut in 2005 with *Restart*, a visually innovative examination of a relationship in crisis. His next film, the psychological thriller *Normal* (2009), was a standout achievement in Czech cinema. Telling the story of "Düsseldorf butcher" Peter Kurten, set against the expressive backdrop of the Weimar Republic, it won him the Best Director award at the Shanghai International Film Festival. Currently, Ševčík is working on a new project in the UK, *The Keys to the Street*, written by Christopher Nolan.

The Berlinale Boost



© endorfilm

by Hedvika Petrželková

A Night Too Young

As one of the top five festivals in Europe, the Berlin International Film Festival can change a filmmaker's life. Several Czech directors and producers have experienced this firsthand, when their films were screened in the prestigious Panorama and Forum sections. "Huge" is the word they use to describe the impact it had.



Daniel's World



I, Olga Hepnarova

“Next to Toronto and Sundance, it’s the biggest and most important festival we’ve been to,” says director Jan Hřebejk of Berlinale. In 2009, his feature *Kawasaki’s Rose* opened the Panorama section, earning two awards. Currently he’s finalizing a trilogy titled *Gardenstore*. “This trio of coproductions with Poland and Slovakia, produced by Viktor Tauš, will be released to cinemas gradually over the course of 2017,” he says. All three films take place in the period preceding the setting for Hřebejk’s cult comedy *Cosy Dens* (1999). The first installment, *Family Friend*, takes place in the early ’40s, under the Nazi German occupation, with three women and two children waiting for their fathers and husbands to come home.

Vojtěch Frič, the producer of *I, Olga Hepnarova*, which was well received at last year’s Berlinale, sees the festival as the starting point for international sales. “At the big film market, which is part of the festival, our film was quite visible. After the premiere at Berlinale, we sold it to distributors in four countries, and we’re currently anticipating sales to three more territories. Also thanks to Berlinale, another 50 festivals showed interest in our film. The key is to have an international sales agent.” The producer says he’s currently putting together another existential drama with Tomáš Weinreb and Petr Kazda, the directors of *I, Olga Hepnarova*, and he also has a sci-fi project in development. “At the moment we’re doing tests, storyboards, and working on financing,” Frič says.

Director Petr Vaclav introduced his feature *We Are Never Alone* at last year’s Berlinale. He sees the festival as a place to boost his chances for further projects. “Plus you get to see how the whole community of producers, critics, sales agents and filmmakers react to your film,” he says. Jan Macola, the producer, adds, “The German

audience’s reaction to our film was better than we ever dared to expect. The fact that we won the Tagesspiegel Award proved this.” Together, Vaclav and Macola are now finalizing their road movie *Skokan* and preparing to start on *Il Boemo*, a period drama about Josef Mysliveček, a Czech who was the most gifted and prolific composer in Italian opera of the late 18th century. For production on this film, they recently received a major grant from the State Cinematography Fund. “This support means we can actually start the film,” says Vaclav. “It was absolutely necessary, since with the usual level of funding, we wouldn’t even be able to start bringing such a demanding project to life.” In this respect, the director stressed the importance of his participation in the Berlinale.

Director Veronika Lišková and producer Zdeněk Holý, the team behind the documentary *Daniel’s World*, which portrays a young pedophile, both attended the Berlinale in 2015. Their film screened in the Panorama section, and Lišková says this was key for a film as controversial as theirs. “After rejections from several other festivals, either with no explanation or with open acknowledgement that the subject was too daring for them, we got full support from the section coordinator Wieland Speck and his team,” she says. “By not being afraid to screen the film and by supporting it, they encouraged other festivals to pick it up.” Currently Lišková is at work on her first feature film, inspired by the diary of a woman whose life is turned upside down after the sudden loss of her husband. The director is writing the screenplay together with her husband. “It’s about the clash between a person’s individual perception of a situation and reality, which ruthlessly goes on about its business,” she says.

Producer Zdeněk Holý says the benefits of attending Berlinale are immense. “You get interest from distributors and TV buyers, and if you don’t already have a sales agent



© Mimesis Film

We Are Never Alone

yet, you can definitely find one. Plus it kicks off the festival life as another distribution channel, even for a film with a topic as controversial as ours.” He also praises the professional approach of festival staff. “Like any other festival, they use seasonal employees, but they don’t come across as students who are just learning the profession. The volume of services they provide is enormous,” adds Holý. His current project, *Pepik the Czech Goes to Poland in Search of the Love of God*, is directed by Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda. “It’s a three-way international coproduction that examines the question of whether Poles are too religious and Czechs not enough, and how challenging it can be for us to live so close to each other, with our similar modern histories and ethnic composition.”

Successful Czech producer Petr Oukropec presented *In Your Dreams!* — targeting a young audience — at last year’s Berlinale. “Just the fact that it was selected for the Generation 14+ section was a great start in itself,” says Oukropec. “It was well received by both the public and the professional audience. Our screenings were attended by festival programmers from all over the world, and as a result the film got picked up by festivals in 25 countries last year. Thanks to Berlinale, we got into all the important festivals for children and youth topics,” he says. Oukropec says the Berlin festival is ideal for business appointments as well as making initial contacts. And Czech producers are well aware of it. “It takes time to build good relationships. Often the results don’t come until much later. What matters is the quality and innovativeness of the projects, and when it comes to that, there’s a lot to improve.” Oukropec is currently finalizing a new coproduction directed by Bohdan Sláma, titled *Ice Mother*, and together with a French coproducer, he’s got a feature-length animation by Michaela Pavlátová, with the working title *My Sunny Maad*, now in development.



© Václav Kadrnka

Eighty Letters

In 2012, Olmo Omerzu’s debut, *A Night Too Young*, which he directed as his graduation film at FAMU, screened in the Forum section at Berlinale. “It was my first time at such a big festival. I was just caught up in the euphoria,” he recalls. “The day after the premiere, we got great reviews in the international press. I was already working on the screenplay for *Family Film* at the time, and Berlinale made it easier to find coproduction partners.” Besides the screening at Forum, *A Night Too Young* also appeared in the Berlinale Goes Kiez program, which raised its profile even more. Omerzu is now shooting a new, yet untitled film, a winter road movie based on a screenplay by Petr



Matchmaking Mayor



© Negativ

In Your Dreams!

Pýcha, about two boys and their winter trip across the countryside. "In summer 2017," he says, "I'm planning to shoot a 30-minute film called *Room by the Lake*, which I wrote together with Petr." The project will be presented in February, as part of the Euro Connection short film co-production platform, in Clermont-Ferrand.

Documentary filmmaker Erika Hníková also has nothing but positive words about her experience at the Berlin International Film Festival. Her feature *Matchmaking Mayor* was selected for the Forum section there in 2011. "Thanks to Berlinale, *Matchmaking Mayor* was selected



© Foot'n Desire Films

The House

for other festivals and purchased for distribution in a number of countries. I realized how lucky I was. I was nervous and proud at the same time, sitting there during those sold-out screenings in the big festival theaters," she says. Currently Hníková is preparing a documentary titled *Every Single Minute*. "Nineteen years ago, in Velké Meziříčí, the father of a newborn child decided his son would someday be a top athlete. He dedicated all his time, trying all kinds of sports with his son, who excelled in all of them. In September 2016, Pavel Zacha joined the NHL as a forward for the New Jersey Devils. We've been talking to the family for six months now, studying the chronicles that Pavel's father wrote for his son. I would be thrilled if we manage to make the film and screen it at Berlinale," Hníková says.

Slovak director Zuzana Liová's feature debut, a majority Czech coproduction titled *The House*, screened in the Forum section in 2011. She says being in the festival was not only a great way to start before the domestic release, but also helped to attract attention from an international audience, which opened doors to other festivals. "The fact that my film was selected for such a major festival surprised me, and I felt really honored. It gave me a chance to meet colleagues and journalists, and build new contacts," Liová says. She also stresses the importance of having contact with the audience. "The Berlinale audience was the first to see my film, which gave me even more reason to pay close attention to their reaction." Currently Liová is continuing work on the script of a new feature titled *Čakanie (Waiting)*, presented as part of the Pitch & Feedback event co-organized by the Czech Film Center at Karlovy Vary IFF every year. She has also just finished *Prvá (The First)*, a documentary series portraying female innovators.



© endorfilm



Let's Play Family

© Hulapa film

by Louise H. Johansen

Little Harbour, the second feature by Slovak director Iveta Grófová, tells the true, unsettling story of an 11-year-old girl. It celebrates its world premiere as part of Berlinale's Generation Kplus.

Jarka is left alone with nothing but her imagination to fend off the loneliness. This controversial story of a girl who is abandoned by her young partying mother and runs away with a pair of twin babies she finds at the train station, is based on an actual event that took place in the Czech Republic. The story was first adapted into a novel, titled *The Fifth Boat*, by Monika Kompaníková, then brought to the screen by Iveta Grófová and Marek Leščák.

Starting out as a classic tale of harsh neglect, the story takes a turn to become a film of magical realism, visually evoking the world of children and their imagination.

We spoke to Iveta Grófová, Slovak producer Katarína Krnáčová, and Czech

producer Jiří Konečný about the challenges of working at eye level with young actors and audiences alike.

Cast Is Key

Take Jarka, the main character, who's in every take on screen. "The whole film hinges on her performance," says the director of her star, Vanessa Szamuhelova.

The casting process started in 2013, and Grófová says she wasn't willing to take any shortcuts. "Instead of accepting offers from casting agencies, I went looking for kids in schools, camps, and sports facilities all over Slovakia. A hundred girls made it to the second round, and I did short rehearsals with all of them."

"The main thing I was looking for in all the actors was appeal and charisma, like the characters in the book. That's why I cast singer Katarína Kamencová as the young mother, Lucia, even though she had no acting experience. On the other hand, I chose the excellent Czech actress Johanna Tesařová to play the role of the grandmother, Irena."

Grófová clearly draws on her background and methods from documentary filmmaking, as she did for her debut feature, *Made in Ash* (2012). In *Little Harbour*, she shows a great sensitivity to the nonactors and their real-life experiences.

And, as producer Katarína Krnáčová explains, "During the process, we realized that most of the cast had even more in common with the characters

they were playing than we initially realized.”

“I spent a lot of time in pre-production with Vanessa,” says Grófová. “We rehearsed a few of the challenging scenes that needed more preparation. The easier scenes we rehearsed just a few days before shooting. I didn’t want the kids to miss out on that precious moment when you discover something new and interesting.”

From the producers’ perspective, the main concern was to create a safe and comfortable environment, while still leaving space for creative improvisation.

“It’s important to find kids who have the energy and endurance to handle the difficult process of shooting. You can’t push them too hard,” says producer Konečný.

Children’s Realism

One key to the film is the realism of the characters and their environment in the suburbs of Bratislava, the Slovak capital city. Another is to illustrate the way the kids use their imagination to survive their gritty reality. Here Grófová succeeds in creating a fantastical world not unlike the one seen in recent festival darling *Swiss Army Man*. Anything can be used as a tool or a toy as the kids’ world literally takes the shape of a ship—and from there out, anything is possible. The director leans on her studies in animation to give *Little Harbour* its magical realist touch.

The camerawork of DoP Denisa Buranová was also essential in creating the feel of eye-level and intensity. As Grófová says, “We focused on telling the story using closer shots. The camera often gives significance to tiny details and fragments of life that become magical when seen through the eyes of children.”

The result is a strong, playful, even feminine film that can appeal to young adults and families alike. As producer Krnáčová points out, the key members of the crew are all women. “This film has a female perspective, from the start all the way to its dominant target audience: daughters, mothers, and grandmothers.”

Society as Backdrop

How do you balance a fantastical plot with the sociopolitical context of the novel’s original story?

“I see the film mainly as a personal quest by Jarka, but obviously it reflects the reality of our society,” says the Czech producer, Konečný.

The director herself elaborates: “I tried to play into the social context, but along the way I changed my mind. For me, it’s more appealing and more powerful to portray the internal mental process children use to protect themselves from the cruelty of life. The external world of ‘adults’ and society just slips into the background.”

When asked about the release strategy, and whether they see any potential for the film to be studied in schools, Slovak

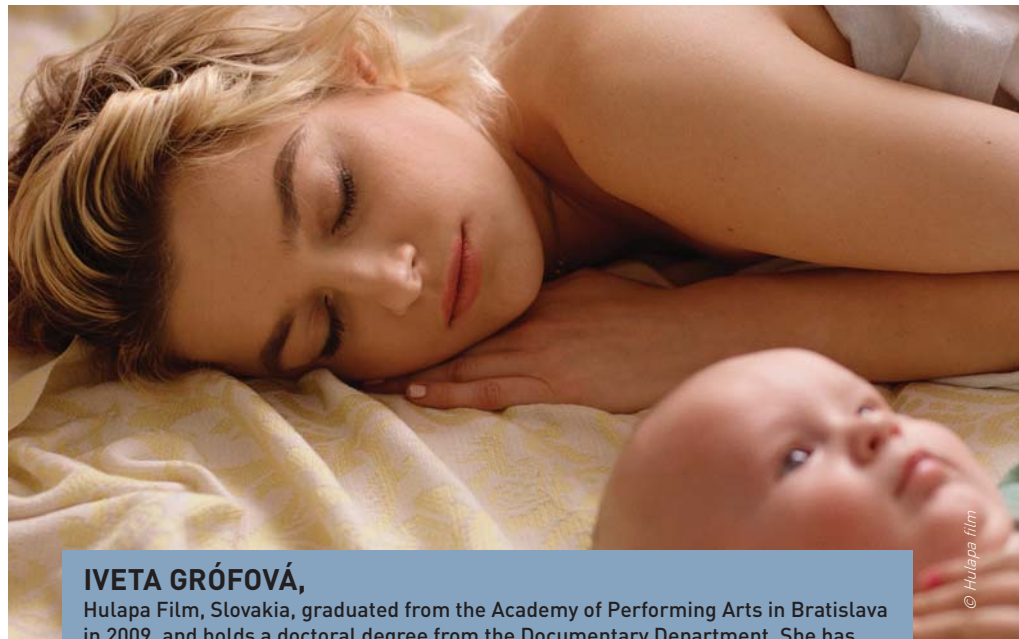
Produced by Katarína Krnáčová, Iveta Grófová
– Hulapa film (SK), Jiří Konečný
– endorfilm (CZ)

Coproduced by Katapult Film (HU), RTVS (SK), Silverart (SK)

Supported by
Slovak Audiovisual Fund
State Cinematography Fund Czech Republic
Eurimages
Creative Europe Media
Ministry of Culture, Slovak Republic
Bratislava Self-Governing Region

International Sales: Loco Films

producer Krnáčová says, “We do plan to work with schools in distributing the film. It still isn’t very common to do that in Slovakia, so we’re looking for ways to attract students to see the film and hold discussions with the film crew and experts, like a psychologist.”



IVETA GRÓFOVÁ,

Hulapa Film, Slovakia, graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava in 2009, and holds a doctoral degree from the Documentary Department. She has directed both animation and documentaries, and her debut feature, *Made in Ash*, was Slovakia’s entry for the 2013 Academy Awards. She co-wrote, produced, and directed *Little Harbour*.

JIŘÍ KONEČNÝ,

endorfilm, Czech Republic, is the producer of *Family Film* (2015), by Olmo Omerzu; *Aferim!* (2015), by Radu Jude, and *Koza* (2015), by Ivan Ostrochovský. He was also one of the producers for Iveta Grófová’s debut feature, *Made in Ash* (2012).

KATARÍNA KRNÁČOVÁ,

Silverart, Slovakia, has produced shorts and documentaries since 2009. She is a graduate of Ex Oriente 2009 and EAVE 2015. Recently, she founded the production company Silverart, with a focus on debuting feature film directors, and she has two features and a TV series in development.

IFF ROTTERDAM



The Mastery of Jan Němec,

Martyrs of Love

Rediscovered

by Irena Kovarova

Director Jan Němec passed away in March 2016, just days before the last scenes of his final feature, *The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street*, were shot. Now, in advance of the film's international premiere, at the 46th International Film Festival Rotterdam, which will also feature an extensive retrospective of the intrepid director's more than 50-year career, we offer a selection of reviews of his work from the pens of international film critics, who paint him as a compelling auteur for our times.



© National Film Archive



© National Film Archive

Diamonds of the Night

The IFFR 2017 program celebrates one of the most clear-eyed artists the Czechs have ever had, an uncompromising voice not only in film, but also in the public realm. NĚmec made more films after the fall of communism in 1989, than during the “film miracle” of the 1960s Czechoslovak New Wave, and this year’s Rotterdam festival presents an in-depth exploration of his oeuvre, covering the breadth of his life-long career. It will be the largest retrospective of NĚmec’s work ever programmed by an international festival, including several of his films screened with subtitles for the first time. In addition, all the staples of the auteur’s filmography—*Diamonds of the Night*, *The Party and the Guests*, *Late Night Talks with Mother*, and *Toyen*—will be screened, in pristine archival 35mm prints.

In “Off the Blacklist: The Films of Jan NĚmec,” published during the 2013–14 touring retrospective of NĚmec’s work in North America, **Max Nelson**, writing in *Film Comment*, offers a close look at NĚmec’s first three features, describing them as the source text for the Czechoslovak New Wave: “The films have, among other things, the same brand of slapdash anarchism as Vĕra Chytilova’s *Daisies*; the same clipped, elliptical approach to storytelling as František Vlačil’s *The White Dove*; and—at least in the case of *Martyrs of Love*—the same sensitivity to the pangs and pitfalls of first-blush romance as Jiří Menzel’s *Closely Watched Trains*. But where his New Wave colleagues (Vlačil and Chytilova in particular) tended to aspire to a kind of filmed poetry, in which each image feels as if it’s always wrestling out of its narrative context, NĚmec seems most at home making the cinematic equivalent of novellas.”

Nelson continues: “In NĚmec’s cinema, abstract questions—What makes us free? What, if anything, serves as a stable basis for political authority? What makes us un-

Diamonds of the Night

“A brilliantly stylized and tensely disturbing study”

Dave Kehr, New York Times

Jan NĚmec (1936–2016, Prague, Czech Republic)

was a key figure in Central European avant-garde cinema and the Czechoslovak New Wave. He made his debut with internationally acclaimed *Diamonds of the Night* (1964) and continued with another masterpiece, *The Party and the Guests* (1966), which had the British magazine *Films and Filming* hail him as one of the year’s top five directors, and got him on the wrong side of the authorities in his own country. After making *Oratorio for Prague* (1968) about the Soviet-led invasion and the crushing of the Prague Spring, he was definitively banned from filmmaking and in 1974 he was forced into exile, living in Western Germany and the USA. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc he returned home and shot the majority of his films, mostly via his own company Jan NĚmec – Film established with Iva Ruszelakova, whom he later married. Throughout his career NĚmec never stopped developing his nonconformist vision, challenging the boundaries of artistic freedom as well as the limits of film as medium – turning to more autobiographical subjects in the last twenty years of his career.

free: ourselves or others?—are borne concretely out in the movement of bodies: at some moments penned chafingly in, at others set in nervous, unstable motion.” Nelson notes that NĚmec demonstrates this trait from his very first feature, *Diamonds of the Night*, praising the director for his economy of style. Nelson writes that NĚmec wastes no time on exposition, to “startling effect.” He goes on: “It’s immediately evident that [the boys are] running for their lives—which, it soon becomes clear, means that they’re running primarily for the freedom to keep running.” He also comments approvingly on the “breathless, associative editing” and the director’s decision to forgo historical context in favor of “distilled emotional truth.”



The Party and the Guests

Diamonds of the Night

The Party and the Guests

“A daring satire on power relations under the Communist government” **Dave Kehr**, *New York Times*

“Constructed with effortless economy, sharp-edged and riveting” **David Wilson**, *Monthly Film Bulletin*

Němec’s second feature, *The Party and the Guests*, “is widely considered [his] most politically charged,” writes Nelson. The director “has a sharp ear for the kind of psychological manipulation practiced by regimes in his day [...] yet it would be a mistake to read the film as a direct, one-to-one allegory.” In fact Nelson considers the film to be closer to parable: “Ultimately, it has less to do with this or that authoritarian regime than it does with the fragile nature of human freedom, and the capacity of people to let themselves be corralled within a certain prescribed system of thought.”

“Němec has often cited Kafka as a formative influence, and *Party* can be seen as one of his most direct attempts to find a cinematic analogue for his literary hero’s deadpan, slightly stiff, disarmingly blunt prose style. With its unexplained-imprisonment scenario, the film echoes *The Trial*, but it’s arguably closer in spirit to one of Kafka’s *Zürau Aphorisms*: ‘a cage went in search of a bird.’”

Finally, Nelson writes of the third feature film, “whereas the conflicts in NĚmec’s first two films boiled down, at least on one level, to bodies having their freedom of movement physically constrained by outside forces, *Martyrs of Love* takes place in something closer to a prolonged dream state, where external conflicts tend to act as surrogates for inner ones.”

Critic **Eric Hynes**, in his *Time Out New York* 4-star review of *Diamonds of the Night*, writes: “Jan NĚmec’s debut stunner feels even more potent now that it’s been freed of the expectations and delineations of a national movement. In 64 fleet minutes, we’re utterly and overwhelmingly immersed in a Jewish fugitive’s singular experience, from hunger pains to hallucinatory reveries. NĚmec’s technique is as emotionally intuitive as it is masterful, purposefully scrambling past and present, handheld realism (a breathless opening tracking shot) and Buñuelian surrealism (fever-dreamed ants colonizing [the boy’s] angelic face). It’s a torrent of life—and cinema—in the face of death.”

In another glowing review of *Diamonds*, **Glenn Kenny** writes for **MUBI.com**: “What we are in store for is not merely—as if ‘merely’ is the right word for such a thing—a historically grounded artistic simulation of the massive psychosis we refer to as ‘war,’ but a magnificent and piercing existential riddle.” Kenny concludes: “This is one of the most intensely concentrated films of all time.”

Graham Fuller, in his article for *Blouin Artinfo*, pays special attention to NĚmec’s surrealist influences: “Significant among his later works are his self-portrait, *Late Night Talks with Mother*, and *Toyen*, about the eponymous Czech Surrealist painter and illustrator of feminist erotica who had sheltered her Jewish artistic partner Jindřich Heisler during the German occupation.”

Fuller continues: “A believer in ‘pure film,’ NĚmec was always drawn to the unconscious language and imagery of Surrealism. Although he is wary of giving too much credit to his influences, there are trace marks of Luis Buñuel and avant-garde era René Clair in his movies, especially *Martyrs of Love* (1967), a delicious non-political musical comedy.”

Martyrs also pays homage to the elegant farcicality of classic American silent comedy and, in its use of jump cuts and shots of characters looking directly into the camera, to the nouvelle vague. Except for the sound effects and chansons and jazz tunes Němec includes, the film is itself virtually silent, containing just a few spoken lines—as if, in matters of love, words are redundant. [...] More potent than the storytelling is the sensuousness and humanity conveyed through Němec’s poetic eye and his delight in the medium’s plasticity and the musicality of editing.”

Peter Hames, in his book *The Czechoslovak New Wave*, the definitive assessment of that era, writes: “Němec’s films have not achieved the same international reputation as the work of Forman, Menzel and Chytilová. One reason probably lies in their brevity, resolute experimentation and occasional rough edges. Němec admitted that all his films were made in a rush for fear that he would not be allowed to complete them, [yet] the speed with which the films were made gives them an urgent individuality that is one of their most attractive features.”

“There is also a cultural barrier to the appreciation of Němec’s work. Despite the pretensions to universality, *The Party and the Guests* undoubtedly means a great deal more when seen as a comment on the Czechoslovak experience, while the particular Poetist/Surrealist tradition that gave rise to *Martyrs of Love* can be regarded as an acquired taste. They are, nevertheless, films that reward repeated viewings, and have been unjustly neglected by foreign audiences.”

Hames concludes: “[...] dedicated to the concept of a personal style of filmmaking, Němec made no concessions in his attempt to develop a nonrealist cinema.”

Michael Koresky writes, in his essay accompanying **The Criterion Collection’s** Eclipse edition of *The Party and the Guests*: “At once whimsical and frightening, it confronts its audience with unsettling social realities. And though its message—simplified, that people are all too willing to be manipulated and controlled—resonated with viewers everywhere [...], in Czechoslovakia it was downright incendiary.”

In her aptly titled “Czech Master Rediscovered,” **Kristin M. Jones**, writing for the *Wall Street Journal*, describes “the startling early feature *Diamonds of the Night*” as “a feverish blend of beauty and terror.” She suggests that “the work of the director [...] deserves to be seen more widely,” and of his late works concludes, “Probing eloquently into the layers of the past, Mr. Němec’s nonfiction films are further evidence of a remarkable life and career.”

Ivana Košuličová comments, in *Central Europe Review*, that Němec, building on the Brechtian model of epic theater, “does not want the viewer to experience emotions based on the identification with film characters. He tries to provoke a philosophical, spiritual reflection about the themes that are presented in a film.” By employing

“The idea of making a retrospective came up two years ago, after *The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street* was presented in Karlovy Vary as a work in progress. Ever since then, we’ve been waiting for Němec to finish his new film, though of course we never thought things would go the way they did. He passed away soon after completing the film, which was tremendously sad news for everyone. Still, we don’t see the program as a postmortem tribute, or anything remotely like that. In fact, the incredible playfulness of Němec’s work suggests that he himself would be opposed to any formal-type memorial. It’s also the most extensive retrospective of his work ever assembled. Many of these films are being shown internationally for the first time, which we hope will trigger more interest in his diverse and very special oeuvre.”

Evgeny Gusyatskiy, IFFR programmer and co-curator of Jan Němec retrospective (with Irena Kovarova)



supreme stylization, Košuličová writes, “he creates a new specific spiritual world that reflects his thoughts and fears and testifies not only about himself, but also gives a general testimony about human existence.” This, she argues, is evident throughout the director’s oeuvre.

Toyen

A. S. Hamrah writes, in his notes to the touring program for **Harvard Film Archive**: “Němec’s films have a toughness of their own. More clear-eyed, less wistful, and weirder than the films of his compatriots, their sense of freedom amid repression and hope within darkness now appears to have sealed Němec’s fate as much as any overt political provocation did. Poised between the anarchic confrontations of Věra Chytilová and the humanist whimsies of Miloš Forman, Němec’s films are terse and absurd, snatched from real life in a country that no longer exists but whose problems Němec presented as universal. Recent events in Ukraine show they are timely today.”

Filthy:

Violence Harms Not Only the Body, but Also the Soul and Society

by Tomáš Stejskal

The theme of alienation is popping up increasingly in debut works by Czech and Slovak directors. Whatever subject the young filmmakers tackle in their films, their protagonists are often uprooted individuals, struggling with a lack of understanding from the surrounding world.



Director Tereza Nvotová and screenwriter Barbora Námerová, in the Czech-Slovak coproduction *Filthy*, focus on sexual abuse, but at the same time the film uncovers the feelings of young people in general, their attitude toward the world and, metaphorically, the state of society as a whole.

“People in Slovakia say that most Slovak films are depressing, and that’s why they don’t draw an audience as big as commercial blockbusters. But what people don’t realize,” says Nvotová, “is that every film reflects a part of reality, so the reality of Slovakia must be pretty depressing.”

Filthy is Nvotová’s FAMU graduation film, produced by Miloš Lochman, of Moloko Film, and Peter Badač, of BFILM. Besides them and FAMU, support for the film, with its budget of 365,000 CZK, came from the Czech Republic’s State Cinematography Fund and the Slovak Audiovisual Fund.

The film tells the story of 17-year-old Lena, raped by a man she had trusted: Robo, her favorite teacher in school. To complicate matters, Lena and her friend both secretly have a crush on him, and Lena’s entire family admires him. Like most survivors of sexual abuse, Lena decides to keep the gnawing truth to herself.

“Stories like the one in our film are happening all around us. *Filthy* is a scream at a society that keeps ignoring the screams of individuals,” says Nvotová. The remarkable thing about her film, though, is it isn’t noisy at all. It takes on this painful subject matter — which many still consider taboo, even in today’s society, making it intimidating or shameful for women to discuss — with ease and silence, avoiding overacting, relying instead on imagery and the actors’ strong performances.

At one point, Lena enters a mental hospital whose adolescent patients actually have experience with other institutions: Nvotová decided to cast kids from children’s homes and detention centers. “I didn’t have to explain too

much to them how these places work. They brought a huge dose of realism to the scenes,” says the director, talking about the experience of mixing professional and nonprofessional actors. “We were shooting inside the biggest mental hospital in Slovakia, so it wasn’t hard to start believing we were actually all locked up in there.”

In the film, the children’s psychiatric hospital isn’t just a dreary place, but symbol of a dysfunctional system, where radical therapeutic methods are actually fairly common. *Filthy* puts the natural behavior of its young protagonists to good use. DoP Marek Dvořák gets in nice and close — for example, when the patients are running around the ping-pong table — but also often films from a distance, in cold, yet emphatic takes. Some of the scenes are even tinged with humor, like the vulgar suggestiveness of the group therapy sessions, or a nighttime conversation between Lena and her roommate about the most embarrassing way to commit suicide.

Lena is torn from her world in a way similar to the main character in last year’s *I, Olga Hepnarova*, or David, the protagonist of Jan Těšitel’s directorial debut of the same name, from two years ago. None of the three suffers from a clearly diagnosable mental illness. Yet all of them — Lena, Olga the mass murderer, David the runaway — stand out from the rest of the community because of their introversion and quirky behavior, and, each for their own reasons, either can’t or doesn’t want to fit in.

It’s also noteworthy that characters like these have introduced a very physical type of acting to Czech and Slovak cinema. Patrik Holubář, the actor who played David in Těšitel’s film, also plays Lena’s physically disabled brother in *Filthy*, and the theme of the siblings’ complicated relationship is intertwined throughout the film.

Until now, Nvotová had mostly made documentaries. *Mečiar*, her portrait of former Slovak prime minister Vladimír Mečiar, now retired and living in the peaceful atmosphere of his villa, in fact offers a portrait of the country as

a whole. Images of the pensioner barbecuing sausages, drinking wine, and chatting are framed by scenes of two journalists watching the footage and providing a much less cheerful sociopolitical commentary.

Nvotová’s feature debut follows *Eva Nová* and *Koza*, the first feature outings by her older Slovak colleagues Marko Škop and Ivan Ostrochovský, both of whom also focused on documentaries in the past. Both of their main characters, too — an ex-boxer nicknamed “Goat” and a former actress battling alcoholism — face a similar social exclusion. What



all three films have in common is that they’re built on the language of images and physicality. Still, they’re mainly concerned with the soul.

“The world of survivors of sexual abuse is, for the most part, inaccessible to those around them,” says Nvotová. “I wanted to give the audience a chance to penetrate their souls and minds. I didn’t want to let them leave the theater with nothing but some shocking statistics about the number of rapes.”

Through her silence, Lena manages to communicate this to viewers. What she offers even more than her experience of this inexcusable act, still often trivialized by society, is a view of a world in which, in a single moment, love can turn into hate — but hate can also turn into love, and the old maxim that “appearances can be deceiving” can be true in more ways than one. *Filthy* is a quiet film, telling us there is no way to heal the scars on a soul if an individual and society remain quiet. /

2016:

a Successful Year for the Czech Film Industry

Britannia First Look, Kelly Reilly

The filming of three large international television series, cooperation with European, Bollywood, and Hong Kong productions, the opening of new regional film offices in the country, and a special feature in the prestigious magazine *Variety*: the Czech Film Commission had a hand in these success stories of 2016.

For Czech filmmakers, the highlights of 2016 certainly included the filming of three international television series: *Britannia*, *Knightsfall*, and *Genius*. All three are period pieces and their first ten-part seasons were filmed completely in the Czech Republic, totalling 330 filming days and 2.7 billion crowns of production spend, plus the use of dozens of locations as well as jobs for thousands of people.

Britannia is being produced in cooperation between Sky and Amazon Studios and the series is set in the year 43

AD, when the Roman army returned to the British Isles in order to finally crush the centre of the Celtic empire. The History Channel project *Knightsfall* brings to life the last days of the Templar Knights in the 14th century, and National Geographic's *Genius* series is an anthology of stories of exceptional minds, with its first season dedicated to Albert Einstein.

"The Czech Republic is ideal for historical projects primarily thanks to the huge selection of suitable locations of all architectural styles and periods, renowned set

construction crews, and top professionals in trades such as the creation of historical costumes, period props, and weapons,” said Ludmila Claussová, who has led the Czech Film Commission since its establishment in 2004.

Also in 2016, German television producers shot several period pieces in the Czech Republic. Among them were two films about Martin Luther. The successful cooperation with filmmakers from Scandinavia also continued with the Swedish film *Borg vs. McEnroe*, about the rivalry between the two famous tennis players with Stellan Skarsgård and Shia LaBeouf in the starring roles, and the Norwegian fantasy film *Ash Lad*. Chinese and Hong Kong filmmakers shot action films on Czech locations (such as *The Adventurers* with Jean Reno), and Bollywood came with a romantic road-move (*The Ring* with superstar Shah Rukh Khan). – This is just a sampling of the dozens of films and TV projects that were shot here last year.

Variety, the most widely read trade magazine in the world, named the Czech Republic a “billion dollar location” and gave the Czech film industry exceptional attention and space in one of its June weekly issues. The Czech Film Commission contributed to the preparation of the special feature entitled *Billion Dollar Location: Czech Republic*.

“It’s so satisfying and such an honor to be chosen as a billion dollar location by *Variety* magazine. And it’s an equally great feeling when producers who worked here confirm this recognition and when you hear them on the set expressing their appreciation for and praising the Czech crew. The final scene hasn’t even been shot yet and they’re already planning to return to the Czech Republic with their next film. At that moment you know that you’re part of something good!” said Czech film commissioner Ludmila Claussová.



German TV film *Himmel und Hölle*



The Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan filmed *The Ring* in Prague

According to Claussová, 2017, too, is shaping up to be extremely interesting as far as foreign productions in the Czech Republic are concerned. “Already in January, Fox Searchlight Pictures and Scott Free Productions shot parts of the film *The Aftermath* with Keira Knightley in the lead role here. It’s a drama set in Hamburg after World War II. In February, scenes for the third season of *12 Monkeys* will be filmed, and production will begin on the American film *The Catcher Was a Spy* starring Paul Rudd,” said Claussová.

“Another interesting ‘visitor’ to the Czech Republic will be Canadian director Xavier Dolan, who is coming here to shoot part of his new film *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan*. Also worthy of mention is a two-part television film *Maria Theresia* which begins shooting in April and is a co-production between the Czech, Austrian, Hungarian and Slovak public broadcasters. And of course German television will be here – we’ve become a favorite destination for their period films and serials. Every year, they bring a dozen projects here,” said Claussová.

In 2017, the State Cinematography Fund is ready once again to offer production incentives. As in previous years, domestic and international productions can earn a 20% cash rebate on qualifying Czech spending and as well as rebates on withholding tax they pay in the Czech Republic by international cast and crew. The incentives apply to film and television, including all post-production work.

Since the rebate was introduced in 2010, the Czech government has paid out more than CZK 2.53bn (EUR 93m / USD 99m) in rebates to a total of 186 film and TV projects. Currently, rebates of CZK 956m (EUR 35m / USD 37m) are allocated to a further 54 projects. /

INTRODUCING
WASTELAND

Dark and Dirty,

*,Wasteland‘ Holds
International Appeal*

by Louise H. Johansen

The makers of a new Czech miniseries on HBO Europe seem to know their T. S. Eliot. A barren landscape of industrial coal mines surrounds the small border town of Pustina, scene of the psychological drama *Wasteland*. But the fictional town (whose name actually means “wasteland” in Czech) has already proven its cross-border appeal: The series premiered at Karlovy Vary, followed by the full season’s international premiere at the Toronto IFF in September.

INTRODUCING

WASTELAND

*April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow*

— T. S. ELIOT, *THE WASTE LAND* (1922)



Ivan Zachariáš & Tereza Polachová

“That was how I saw it when I read the script,” says director and creative supervisor Ivan Zachariáš, though he is quick to point out that *Wasteland* wasn’t directly inspired by any other series.

Over the course of its eight episodes, *Wasteland* tells the story of the town’s controversial mayor, Hana Sikorová, and her two teenage daughters. Their father lives on his own, in a hut in the woods—apparently the couple’s split was due to his unstable mental condition. In the first episode, their 14-year-old daughter Misha goes missing, and Hana embarks on a long, nightmarish investigation parallel to the local police’s lackluster, and often laughable, efforts.

Several different storylines wind their way through the universal “whodunnit” plot. Hana’s main political and personal project is to keep the inhabitants of Pustina from signing away their land to a Polish mining company digging up low-quality coal in the region of northern Bohemia. Coal equals gold, and the audience begins to fear along with Hana just how much people are willing to bury in order to make a quick profit.

A story like this could easily be set in lots of other parts of the world where locals face tempting offers from greedy corporations. But director Ivan Zachariáš says he wanted to go beyond this theme to introduce an aesthetic aspect: “I was pretty familiar with the area where we

We spoke to series director Ivan Zachariáš and HBO Europe executive producer Tereza Polachová about their creative choices and what it means to have Europe, and not just the Czech Republic as their target market.

A Czech Original

Wasteland is the latest Czech addition to the HBO Europe catalog, tapping into the tradition of quality TV with its long-stretched crime plot and evocative aesthetics, a likely choice for fans of *True Detective* and *Fargo*, or even *Twin Peaks*.

INTRODUCING

WASTELAND

were shooting, and I've always liked it. I remember thinking, I want to show something everybody thinks is ugly in a much more poetic light."

Wasteland's locations consist of great expanses of black, mining-gouged landscape contrasted with the claustrophobic settings of a small town: the pub where everyone knows everyone, the truck stop and its prostitutes, and a home for juvenile delinquents, housed in the iconic yet run-down castle of Jezeří.

Blending in Documentary Methods

Although born in the Czech Republic, Zachariáš comes to the project as an outsider, having spent most of his career in the US, where he is a highly renowned director of commercials. Yet even in his TV ads for cars, beverages, and sportswear, you notice his strong sense of location. Visually, *Wasteland* stands out from the opening credit sequence, fully on par with the other renowned series at HBO.

Zachariáš in fact studied documentary filmmaking at FAMU in Prague, until his graduation in 1996, and his sense of realism is clear:

"I wanted to make *Wasteland* as realistic as possible, so my real-life observations of ordinary people were very useful. I like minimalist acting, so you feel the character's emotions rather than seeing them."

In order to achieve that naturalism, Zachariáš and his team cast professional Czech actors side by side with amateurs whose physical appearance is visibly scarred by their upbringing and living conditions:

"I tried to cast all my actors so their faces could tell us enough to understand who they are and what their lives are like."



Another strong storyline that sets *Wasteland* apart from other contemporary TV series and lifts its realism to a new level is the one that takes place at the center for juvenile delinquents. Here we meet an ensemble of troubled teenage boys, who may or may not have known Hana's missing emo daughter Misha. Again, Zachariáš brings documentary methods to bear:

"Working with all those kids was great. They got better and better throughout the shoot — even though most of them had no experience with filming. It took a while to find them, but I think we got lucky. Most of them aren't actors, and a few of them have experience from detention centers."

Real Stories

Wasteland's Czech predecessor on HBO Europe was the popular and critically acclaimed three-part miniseries *Burning Bush*, fronted by Polish film and TV director Agnieszka Holland (*Treme*, *House of Cards*), working with the creative team of writer Štěpán Hulík and the young producing duo Pavla Janoušková Kubečková and Tomáš Hrubý. The same team is behind this new series. In fact the powerful realism of Hulík's script was what brought the director onboard and back to the Czech Republic for his first feature as a director:

"I liked that it's a real story about real people — nothing fake. I liked the social drama even more than the crime story line that drives it forward. For me it's about the effect that parents have on their kids."

The Challenges of Quality TV

Heavy on theme, with a single crime stretched over eight episodes, *Wasteland* tests viewers by demanding their

INTRODUCING

WASTELAND



Bringing in Zachariáš was initially a bold move on the part of the producers, says Polachová:

“We’d been looking for a director for a while, since we wanted someone with a new and unique approach. Ivan was a great find, since he was also looking for a project outside of advertising. It was a bit of a challenge for us, given that he didn’t have any experience working in longer format — feature films or series. But his previous work convinced us that he had a strong visual and creative approach, which was exactly what we were looking for. Alice Nellis [who also directed four episodes], being a renowned and experienced filmmaker, was a natural choice to accompany him.”

“Do What You Believe In”

With its universal themes but distinctly local flavor, *Wasteland* has the potential to reach beyond viewers with an emotional connection to the actors, locations, and the popular music used so effectively throughout the series. We asked the producer what it means to have Europe as her target market and how that affects the creative path.

“We primarily produce for a Czech/Slovak audience, but not even HBO Europe can afford to produce for a territory as small as ours. So you always have to keep in mind that the story you’re telling has to be potentially accessible and interesting to every HBO market.”

Polachová continues: “International success should be a byproduct, not the main goal. My main goal is a good story—a great script and intensely creative. Besides, it never works to make something by calculating its appeal to an international market. You have to do what you believe in.”

loyalty until the plot pays off. But neither the director nor the creative producer had any doubts about this slow-burning dramatic arc.

“I just trusted the script and my actors,” says Zachariáš.

HBO producer Tereza Polachová elaborates:

“It’s natural when you spend such a long time so close to a project, putting almost all your time and energy into it, that you’ll occasionally get doubts. But oddly enough, it never even crossed my mind this time. I just concentrated on delivering the best show possible. Right from the start, I truly loved and believed in the script, and I trusted the creative choices we made. When I saw the first episodes, I was happy and felt good about it, but as the edits of the new episodes kept arriving and the story unfolded, I got more and more absorbed by the later episodes. So I believe the audience, once they get hooked, will stay with it.”

The Core Creative Team

After the collaboration with writer Hulík and producers Janoušková Kubečková and Hrubý on *Burning Bush*, Polachová and HBO knew they wanted to work with them again. The writing process for *Wasteland* began in 2013. Polachová explains:

“The development process took us a long time, since originally we tried to build a local sort of writers’ room. Štěpán, Pavla, and some other people as well got together on a daily basis and came up with ideas about character development and story lines and took notes on all of it, but ultimately Štěpán wrote the script by himself. It was a writers’ room, Czech-style. HBO gave creative comments at every stage of script development.”

Format: 8 x one hour, HD

Directed by: Ivan Zachariáš and Alice Nellis

Starring: Zuzana Stivínová, Jaroslav Dušek, Eliška Křenková, Leoš Noha, Jan Cina

Producers HBO Europe: Tereza Polachová, Steve Matthews, Antony Root

Produced for HBO Europe by Nutprodukce and Etamp.

The score is written by David Boulter of the band Tindersticks.

Wasteland is fully financed by HBO Europe

More than 3 years in the making

World Premiere: Karlovy Vary IFF 2016

International Premiere: Toronto IFF 2016

The international sales agent outside HBO territories: Beta Film
Wasteland has run, runs or will run in the near future across HBO Europe territories (16 countries)

PROFILE

IKARIE XB 1

BERLINALE RETROSPECTIVE

Restored Classic Ikarie XB 1

© National Film Archive



– from Cannes to Berlin

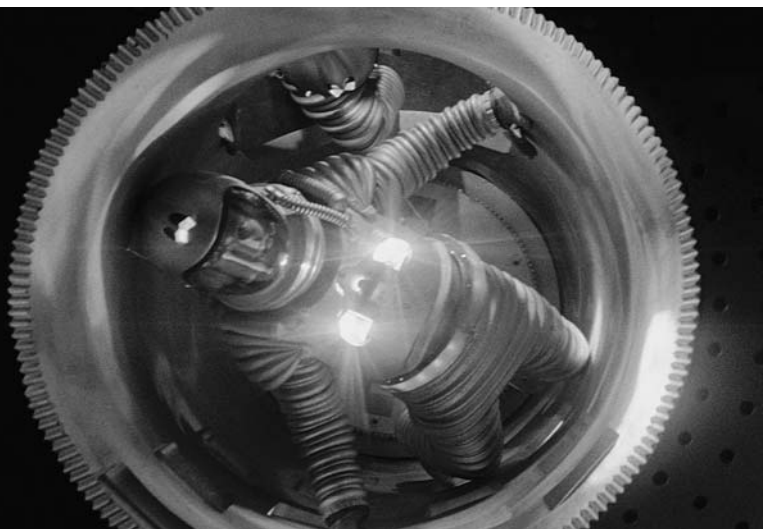
Jindřich Polák's 1963 iconic sci-fi movie proves that a film can have another life, even after more than 50 years from the original premiere thanks to the digital restoration, in this case carried out by the Czech National Film Archive. After being selected for Cannes Classics section in 2016, the film is also part of Berlinale Retrospective this year.

"A game-changing film that profoundly influenced the genre and showed that science fiction movies weren't only about special effects; they were also high art. Of the hardest and most admirable kind." said Alex Cox from The Guardian.

The restoration of the film was done at the Hungarian Filmlab in Budapest, under the supervision of the National Film Archive. After the renewed premiere at Cannes Film Festival, *Ikarie XB 1* was invited to several other festivals including Karlovy Vary IFF, Sevilla European Film Festival or Thessaloniki IFF.

The selection of Berlinale Retrospective 2017 focuses mainly on two themes of the sci-fi genre – the society of the future and the strange and Other, and consists of 27 features including well-known classics, cult films and long-forgotten or largely unknown titles from Asia as well as Central and Eastern Europe. *Ikarie XB 1* will be screened in this section together with Jan Svěrák's short film *Oilgobblers*, which was in 1989 awarded a Student Oscar in the Foreign Student Film category.

The Czech Centre Berlin has also prepared on the occasion of the presentation of *Ikarie XB 1* at Berlinale a lecture of the Czech journalist Ivan Adamovic called *Tomorrow's World in Socialist Czechoslovakia* on the reflections of communist utopia in Czech culture. It will take place on February 15 at 7 p. m. at Czech Centre Berlin, Wilhelmstrasse 44.



© National Film Archive

Ikarie XB 1

Based on the novel by Stanislaw Lem *The Magellanic Cloud*, this pioneering Czech science fiction film, set in 2163 following a space mission to remote Alfa Centauri in order to search for extra terrestrial forms of life, makes use of extraordinary special effects and unique production design as well as modern electronic music and innovative costumes. The film distributed in the 1960s in various countries including USA is said to be one of the important sources of inspiration for Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

3 Czechs, 3 Stars



Eliška Křenková



Jan Cina



Václav Neuzil

by Martin Hradecký

Meet three young Czech actors predicted to have a starry future. They have the talent, the commitment, and now the chance to shine on the international film scene.

INTRODUCING

TALENTS



Wasteland

Jan Cina

Jan Cina's the kind of talent you don't often see in Czech cinema. Luckily, filmmakers realized it in time. Though just 29, last year for him was like a dream—a dream few of his peers will ever have a chance to live. How did it happen?

It's 2002, Cina's a fresh-faced fourteen years old, and Zdeněk Tyc's social drama *Brats* is hitting the Czech silver screen. Cina shines in this story of a Czech couple who adopt two Roma boys and come face to face with society's narrow-mindedness and lack of understanding. As the older of the two sons, Cina is a natural in front of the camera — nothing at all like the typically sweet child stars who can be so irritating. The acting on display is unsensational, and yet promising of a big future. Will the promise come true? Yes, it will.

Throughout his years as a student at DAMU (Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague), and after graduating, the young actor worked mainly in television. But while TV series are a good place to practice acting technique, they aren't good for much more than that. Cina had roles in several series (*Cold Feet*, *Comeback*), but luckily never got stuck in any of them for too long. Then, in 2011, he got his first chance to work for HBO Europe, winning a role on the show *Terapie*, based on the Israeli series *BeTipul* (known to most viewers from the US version, *Treatment*, starring Gabriel Byrne). This was the key moment in Cina's career thus far, marking the start of his work in higher-quality projects.

In 2014, Cina played the starring role in *Places*, a drama about friendship, directed by the talented Radim Špaček. Although the film wasn't as critically well received as



Family Film

Špaček's previous two, Cina's performance was hailed as a standout, and in 2016, the actor got a well-deserved promotion to the big leagues: HBO Europe cast him as a lead in the miniseries *Wasteland*. With his subtle build and curly hair, Cina calls to mind more a spoiled prince or a classroom nerd, but the makers of this dark drama took a chance — and it paid off. Cina's Lukáš, who runs into trouble with the law because of drugs, is one of the most articulate characters on the show — and, from a viewer's perspective, also one of the most credible.

Currently, Cina's ascent to the Czech acting elite continues. Thanks to the internet series *Semestr*, released in late 2016, he had a chance to try his hand at a new format, not yet common in the Czech milieu. And now he is getting attention from a truly mass audience through the TV show *Your Face Has a Familiar Voice*, a variety show with popular personalities impersonating the looks and voice of other famous figures.

Eliška Křenková

Eliška Křenková, Cina's costar from *Wasteland* and colleague from DAMU, has taken a different path. Before studying acting, she was a committed dancer, graduating from the prestigious Duncan Centre Conservatory. Still, she's hardly just a darling of arthouse and indie film. Křenková first tried her hand at acting on TV, appearing in 2005 in the soap opera *The Street*. She followed this with the popular TV series *Tell Me a Story*, about the dark period following the 1968 Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, then rounded out her TV career with another much-loved series, *The Wine Growers*.



Svět pod hlavou

After a number of smaller roles in the movies, the first serious part Křenková played was in an adaptation of *The Angels*, directed by Alice Nellis based on the novel by Michal Viewegh. She played one of the four main angels, the young rebellious one. The film itself wasn't a particular standout, but it helped Křenková make her name among Czech moviegoers. Her next part was in *Family Film*, directed by Olmo Omerzu, who is one of the most talented filmmakers in the Czech Republic today. Křenková played just a supporting role in this drama about a family in crisis. Yet she drew a lot of attention with the authenticity of her performance, bringing an unexpected quality to the otherwise negative character of Kristýna, adding mystery and eroticism. Omerzu immediately cast her in his next film too.

Now we've gotten a little ahead of ourselves, though — we forgot to mention Křenková's role in *Wasteland*, the HBO Europe series. This is far and away the biggest jewel in her filmography up to now, and despite the darkness and chaos that dominates the atmosphere, Křenková literally shines in her role as Klára, the elder daughter of mayor Hana Sikorová (played by Zuzana Stivínová).

Václav Neuzil

Václav Neuzil, the last of our rising stars, graduated from the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno. After his studies, he performed on several local stages (National Theatre, Theatre 7, HaDivadlo), before moving from the Moravian capital to Prague, in 2006, to take up an engagement with the Dejvice Theatre, one of the most popular and critically acclaimed compa-

nies in the country. Neuzil became a part of the permanent troupe, starring in numerous choice roles. One of the actor's most original performances was his impersonation of Mick Jagger in *Brian*, staged by Miroslav Krobot.

It came as no surprise, then, when film directors took notice of Neuzil's exceptional talent (and considerable good looks). The first to give him a substantial role was Jitka Rudolfová, who in her 2009 debut, *Dreamers*, and her 2013 follow-up, *Delight*, describes the joys and troubles of people coming up on 40 who are just as insecure as they were when they were 20. Neuzil featured in both. Next, in 2015, he played the bumptious Prince Norbert in Alice Nellis's epically rich adaptation of the classic fairy tale *Seven Ravens*. Soon after, he played the jealous husband of the main character in the comical fiction-documentary *Lost in Munich*, an alternative take on the 1938 Munich Agreement, directed by Petr Zelenka.

The roles offered to Neuzil just seem to get better and better. This past year, he starred as Josef Valčík in the internationally acclaimed *Anthropoid*, depicting one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of Czechoslovakia, the assassination of Reich Protector Reinhard Heydrich. This gave Neuzil his first taste of a major international production. Now, Bohdan Sláma, one of the most respected Czech directors, has him as the main character's son in *Ice Mother*, released in February 2017. And in January, Czech Television began airing the 10-part series *Svět pod hlavou* (*The World Beneath Your Head*), with Neuzil playing the policeman who travels from the comfortable present into a past inhabited by servile monsters. /

New Collection of Short Films

The Czech Film Center releases another collection of newly-produced Czech short films, which will be presented to the international film industry at short film festival and market in Clermont-Ferrand. The collection contains 10 feature, animated and documentary films, selected by a jury of film professionals.



Benny

Michal Hruška / fiction / 18 min

A successful young man, Benny makes good money as a hitman and he knows his way with beautiful women. But what will he do when he is assigned to murder himself? A cynical crime-comedy, this duel of words deals with twisted values and empty relationships.



The Collision | Nehoda

Šimon Štefanides / fiction / 13 min

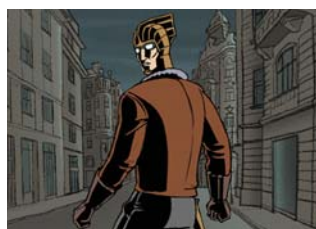
Old Mr. Tošovský has knocked down Mrs. Pařízková by a car. His daughter Zuzana takes the car keys away from him to prevent him from further driving. On one hand, Zuzana solves the problem with her father, but on the other, she antagonizes her mother Jana, who is planning a trip. After a quarrel with her daughter, Jana decides not to leave the things as they are.



The House | Domek

Veronika Zacharová / animation / 5 min

A short animated film from a world much akin to ours. It begins with a family that leaves their small suburban home, something the house cannot abide. Thus begins its journey to find the family. The one clue left to the house is a shiny red business card that leads it to a strange part of the city.



Shadow Over Prague | Pérák

Marek Berger / animation / 13 min

Animated short based on an urban legend from the era of Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia during the WW II. The phantom avenger with spring-heeled shoes jumps above the streets of Prague and fights the occupants. He has to stop the Nazis from waking up the Golem - a dreadful artificial being from the Old Jewish Town.



I ♥

Lenka Benešová / documentary / 12 min

I'm searching under the bed, behind the wardrobe, in the cellar and I'm still not finding it. I'm searching behind the corner, I'm searching in the pot, but it is not even there. A short movie about my loneliness and my urgent need to change this state of being.



Recovering Industry | Rekonstrukce průmyslu

Andrea Slováková / experimental / 19 min

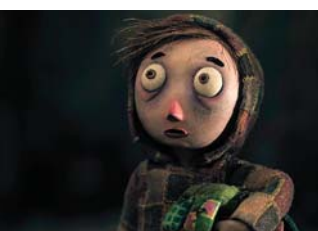
This metric film portrays the development of Czech industry in the past six years. The transformation of automobile, chemistry and heavy industry is captured in individual 6 minutes long compositions that layer shots from the factories.



Traces, Fragments, Roots | Stopy, střepy, kořeny

Květa Příbylová / documentary / 24 min

A personal and inner film poem about the blending and ingrowth of the past and the present, the dead and the living. Traces are the imprints of the past in the present. Fragments are the result of the sudden change of state, the shattering of the continuity between the past and the present. Roots are the connection and the bond to the past.



The Christmas Ballad | Vánoční balada

Michal Žabka / animation / 12 min

The Christmas Ballad is based on the very last script by Břetislav Pojar. In the ruins of the city, destroyed by the war, a small boy survives. He is hiding from fighting machines and collecting old broken toys to repair them. They replace his friends and family. One day he finds a Christmas gift and runs away with him to the mound of the fairgrounds.



Imprisoned | Vězení

Damián Vondrášek / fiction / 27 min

Due to his insufficient qualifications, Jakub lost his job at an elementary school. One of the few job opportunities appears to be the work at the out of town prison, also employing his father-in-law. In spite of their mutual animosity, Jakub decides to take the job to support his family.



Who's Who in Mycology | Kdo je kdo v mykologii

Marie Dvořáková / fiction / 15 min

A young trombone player spends an adventurous night trying to open an impossible bottle of wine. An unconscious girl, a crooked bookcase and some mold get in his way, turning his world upside down. When the night is over, he is forced to commit the ultimate act of courage.



Euro Connection 2017:
Room by the Lake

FICTION

original title: Dům u jezera

runtime: 25 min

date of shooting: September 2017

director: Olmo Omerzu

produced by: Jiří Konečný – endorfilm

This night will most likely be his last and he knows it. He is 75 years old and he's a doctor. His name is Ivo. Behind the doors of the hospital room, his family members and friends are waiting. Ivo's grandson also comes to the hospital with his young new girlfriend who got pregnant recently. When he introduces her to the old man, Ivo asks tiredly if he could see her breasts. In the hallway, the old physician's wish becomes a public affair. Everyone realizes this might be his last wish but at the same time, they try to stay more or less considerate towards the young woman. How will the family solve such a delicate situation? And is this truly Ivo's last wish?

CZECH SHORT FILMS Vol. 8
2017

Discover the films online
www.filmcenter.cz/shorts2017





Festival Highlights of 2016

I, Olga Hepnarova opened Panorama section at Berlinale. Two Czech shorts scored big in North America. Here is the summary of the festival highlights of Czech films in the past year.

The start of 2016 was very favourable for Czech cinema. The talented young director Ondřej Hudeček received the Special Jury Award for Best Direction at Sundance Film Festival for his original short film **Peacock** and later appeared among the finalists of Student Academy Awards. Three Czech features were selected for Berlinale: **I, Olga Hepnarova**, the long-awaited debut by Petr Kazda and Tomáš Weinreb based on true events, opened the Panorama section, followed by the invitations to more than 40 festivals around the world, including competition sections at Sofia, Guadalajara, Hong Kong or Vilnius, where it won the Best Film award. Furthermore, Kazda and Weinreb were awarded for Best Direction in Sofia and Minsk IFF Listapad and the film became a part of EFA Selection. Petr Vaclav's latest drama **We Are Never Alone**, premiered at Forum and won Tagesspiegel Readers' Jury Award, which resulted in several festival invitations including Contemporary

World Cinema section at Toronto IFF or competition sections at Arras and Cairo. Petr Oukropec's second feature, the family film **In Your Dreams!**, picturing the Prague parkour community, world-premiered at Generation 14Plus and resonated throughout the year at more than 30 festivals both at home and abroad, including festivals in Sofia, Sarajevo, Reykjavík, Cottbus or Cinekid in Amsterdam. In April, Crossing Europe festival in Austrian Linz dedicated the

Tribute section to the world-famous Czech documentary director Helena Třeštíková and screened 14 of her documentaries including the most recent portraits, **Mallory** – which was also part of the EFA Selection - and **Doomed Beauty**.

Quite a diverse Czech line-up at Cannes 2016 was very significant for the future of the individual selected films. Short animated **Happy End** by Jan Saska was





H*ART ON

© Duracifilm



Normal Autistic Film

© Mimesis Film

What do Czechs like?

The year 2016 was a good one for Czech films in the domestic cinemas - 45 features, 3 animated and 17 documentary films were theatrically released in the Czech Republic with several titles such as *The Devil's Mistress* by Filip Renč, *Tiger Theory* by Radek Bajgar or the animated family comedy *The Oddsocketers* by Galina Miklínová gaining more than 300 000 admissions each. Although, the top spot in the Czech charts has been taken only in December by *Angel of the Lord 2* directed by Jiří Strach, the sequel of a very popular Christmas fairy tale from 2005, which reached the magical one million of admissions in the Czech cinemas and the authors are considering making a third film about the adventures of the angel Petronel and the devil Uriah on the Earth.

screened in Directors' Fortnight - to later amuse the audiences at Anney and Clermont-Ferrand. In November, the film was shortlisted for Short Animated Film category of American Academy Awards. The presentation of Jindřich Polák's iconic sci-fi *Ikarie XB1*'s restored version within Cannes Classics started off its glorious journey around the globe, which continues up until today and has covered many festivals, including Berlinale Retrospective section this year. Three Czech minority coproductions made it to Cannes last year - the spooky feature *Personal Shopper* by Olivier Assayas was a part of Competition, biographical *The Dancer* by Stéphanie di Giusto was in Un Certain Regard and the short animation *Superbia* by Luca Tóth in Critics' Week.

Karlovy Vary at the beginning of July hosted three major Czech premieres. Jan Hřebejk's powerful story of manipulation and fear *The Teacher*, which was consequently picked up by more than 20 festivals, including major events such as Pusan, Tokyo, Chicago, Dubai or Trieste, will be theatrically

released in even more countries. The final film of Jan Němec *The Wolf from Royal Vineyard Street*, which had its Czech premiere in Karlovy Vary, waited with its first international presentation for prestigious Rotterdam International Film Festival, which dedicated a special retrospective to the director this year. Karlovy Vary and Toronto IFF saw also the premiere of the HBO Europe drama series *Wasteland* written by Štěpán Hulík and co-directed by Ivan Zachariáš and Alice Nellis, which depicts the disintegration of the relationships of one family and one village on the geographic and social periphery of the country.

The autumn belonged to the Czech documentaries - *H*ART ON* by Andrea Culková, *Normal Autistic Film* by Miroslav Janek and the minority coproduction *A Hole in the Head* by Robert Kirchhof made it to the official selection of DOK Leipzig. At Jihlava IDFF, 14 Czech documentaries competed, including the winning *Normal Autistic Film* and *FC Roma* by Tomáš Bojar and Rozálie Kohoutová, Dagmar Smržová's *Love Me If You Can* opening the question

of sexual assistance for disabled people in the Czech Republic, or the spiritual road movies *Blind Gulliver* by Martin Ryšavý and *My Name is Hungry Buffalo* by Pavel Jurda. /



© Jan Šaška, FAMU

Wasteland

© HBO Europe



© Produkce Trěštková

Doomed Beauty

FILMS TO COME

IN DEVELOPMENT

Films to come

New Czech feature films in development, production, postproduction or ready for release.

For more information please contact us at info@filmcenter.cz.

IN DEVELOPMENT

68 (The Story Of Jaromír Jágr)

A feature film about Jaromír Jágr. The incredible life story of the greatest Czech hockey player as seen through his eyes. A unique format of a feature film with documentary elements tells the story of the ups and downs in the amazing life journey of the best European player in the history of NHL and one of the best hockey players of all times.

FICTION

original title: 68 (Příběh Jaromíra Jágra)

runtime: 100 min

estimated release: October 2017

director: Jiří Menzel

produced by: Jiří Jurtin – NOGUP agency [CZ]

By a Sharp Knife

DEBUT

Ludovít has lost his son in a ruthless neo-Nazi attack. But because of a hole in the Slovak legislation, the attackers are soon released and Ludovít is faced with absurd injustice. He struggles with the apathetic police force, the opportunistic judge, but also with the fact that he was never close with his own son. The more he blames himself for his son's death, the more he becomes distant from his wife Zuzana and the younger daughter Janka, and the more he tries to influence the investigation. When he learns that the attack was not an accidental neo-Nazi incident, but involved an organized crime gang, he realizes that he is facing an enemy beyond his powers. He tries at least to save the little he has left – his own family.

FICTION

original title: Ostrým nožom

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: May 2018

director: Teodor Kuhn

produced by: Jakub Viktorín – nutprodukcia [SK]

in co-production with: nutprodukcje [CZ]

Erhart

DEBUT

Erhart, a young energetic man in his twenties, returns to his hometown to take care of his unsound mother. With his young friend Bíba, who is secretly in love with him, they join theatre workshop led by a beautiful actress. Erhart tries to face the dark history of his family by staging an autobiographical play, which leads him to finally reconcile with his disdainful father.

FICTION

original title: Erhart

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: March 2018

director: Jan Březina

produced by: Marek Novák – Xova Film [CZ]

For Granny

DEBUT

Granny goes to the hospital for a minor operation – her little toe has to be taken off. We follow one year of her life when more and more is being taken off her. She gradually goes through different phases of reconciliation with death, which is unavoidable. The realistic storyline of the present – the impersonal environment of the hospital is mingling with the poetic storyline – memories of the past and surreal imaginations. Her guides on the last way are her daughter and granddaughter. Granny is pushing the granddaughter to believe in her dreams and to believe in life. She's also giving strength to her daughter not to blame herself for things, which she can't change. All three women are together trying to find forgiveness and catharsis.

FICTION

original title: Babičke

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: February 2019

director: Jana Mícenková

produced by: Veronika Kührová – Analog Vision [CZ]

Fugue

DEBUT

Martin P. is a young Argentinean piano virtuoso and composer, who has been since his breakdown four years ago a patient of El Borda, the largest and the most notable but also controversial psychiatric hospital in Latin America. The child prodigy and the most promising talent of his generation is now trying to find a way how to overcome his mental disease and come back to life outside the walls of the asylum and on the concert stages, while working on his new composition *Enfermaria*. Fugue tells unique, yet universal story about the obsession with perfection and creation, narrating the evolution of a human being who draws his strength from his own fragility.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Fuga
runtime: 90 min
estimated release: May 2018
director: Artemio Benki
produced by: Artemio Benki, Petra Oplatková – ARTCAM (CZ)
in co-production with: Golden Girls Filmproduktion (AT), Petit a petit Production (FR), LOMO CINE (RA)

Jan Palach

Jan Palach's story is a part of Czech modern history and therefore can only offer a little bit of what the mainstream cinematography defines as a story. His journey to the ultimate sacrifice is not bordered by ups and downs, misleading opinions and corrections, trials, clashes with regime forces, unifying and lecturing of the nation or eccentricities and struggles. He was an average nice young man from a slightly persecuted family. One of many happy young faces of the "Golden Sixties", when protests and opposition were a genetic base of the first post-war grown up generation. He does not stand out. But he's the only one who will do it.

FICTION

original title: Jan Palach
runtime: 100 min
estimated release: August 2018
director: Robert Sedláček
produced by: Viktor Schwarzc - Cineart TV Prague (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)

Life Brutality and Fantasy Cynicism of Vratislav Effenberger

Effenberger was captivated by the two opposite realities incorporated in the name of the film. The concept of this documentary will be built on an inference of fiction and reality, mixing staged and documentary parts, poetry and theoretical reflection, exaggeration and intimate confession. At some points, both levels (documentary and fiction) will be present at the same time and will be distinguished only by using focus and sound. This will be a tool to accent or suppress either one. All film locations will directly relate to Vratislav Effenberger or his screenplays and eventually will be proper "hunting grounds" for Effenberger's search method.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Surovost života a cynismus fantazie Vratislava Effenbergera
runtime: 90 min
estimated release: June 2018
director: David Jařab
produced by: Viktor Schwarzc - Cineart TV Prague (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)

Little Man 2

The film wants to show the strength of family ties and highlight the role of selflessness and purity that is a natural part of children's view of the world through the main character Little Man and his adventures. As far as the visual form is concerned, the film will again rely on the unique combination of the natural setting and a strong artistic vision.

ANIMATION

original title: Malý pán 2
runtime: 85 min
estimated release: 2019
director: Radek Beran
produced by: Jakub Červenka - Bedna Films (CZ)

Miss Hanoi

Vietnamese girl Hien (14) was murdered 4 years ago by her classmates in a small border town with a strong Vietnamese community. Because the killers were minors, they were placed in a reformatory from where they were released after they reached the age of 18. Now, after their release, one of them is found dead. The other is on the run. At this moment, an experienced criminal investigator captain Kříž comes on the scene. He's a very stereotypical Czech man, who isn't eager to co-operate with a local Vietnamese policewoman Anh and she is also experiencing pressure from the locals who never quite accepted the fact that a Vietnamese girl can work for the police. In addition, Kříž is very suspicious about her connection to the victim's family.

FICTION

original title: Miss Hanoi
runtime: 100 min
estimated release: November 2018
director: Zdeněk Viktora
produced by: Zdeněk Viktora - SCREENPLAY BY (CZ)

FILMS TO COME

IN DEVELOPMENT

My Sunny Maad

Welcome to Kabul: one family, countless secrets. When Herra, a Czech woman, falls in love with Nazir, an Afghan, she has no idea about the life that awaits her in post-Taliban Afghanistan, nor about the family she is about to join. A grandfather who is a feminist, an adopted young boy who astounds with his intellect, and Feshta, who will do anything to run away from her abusive husband. Like the other women in the family, Herra wears a burka and hides in a closet when guests arrive. She soon starts a new job with an American woman, Heidi, who has little understanding of the way women live in Afghanistan, and still less that not everybody wants to be saved by Westerners.

ANIMATION

original title: Frišta / Moje slunce
Maad

runtime: 80 min

estimated release: 2019

director: Michaela Pavlátová
produced by: Kateřina Černá, Petr Oukropec – Negativ (CZ), Ron Dyens – Sacrebleu Productions (FR)

Radio Stalin

The first private radio station in the former Czechoslovakia Radio 1 used to bridge the gap between communism and democracy in the early 90's for the generation of today's 40-year-olds. Radio 1 sensitized their ears to new musical trends from around the world and created a platform for emerging local bands. It was a swell of accumulated energy; it was a break into the ether, frozen for many decades. Generations of young people yearning to modern music and contemporary perception of the world were not keen on tuning Radio Luxemburg like their parents did. The time for the first anarchistic broadcast came. The radio was a landmark that turned into a cultural phenomenon unique in the entire Europe!

FICTION

original title: Radio 1

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: December 2018

director: Benjamin Tuček
produced by: Daniel Tuček – Golden Dawn (CZ)

Restore Point

DEBUT

After stabilizing the first refugee crisis, which was followed by a number of terrorist attacks, all the citizens of the Free European Federation had received a new constitutional law that guarantees "One whole life to live". Due to the new technologies, everyone has the right of recovery in case of an unnatural death. In such a society, an "absolute" murder is nearly impossible. Ambitious detective, Emma Trochinowska (27), is assigned with a murder case of a married couple. The restoration team was able to bring only one of them back to life. Together they attempt to shed a light on the case and find out if the second chance isn't just another easily exploitable instrument that tries to solve the consequences instead of the cause itself.

FICTION

original title: Bod obnovy

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: March 2019

director: Robert Hlož
produced by: Jan Kallista, Karla Stojáková – Film Kolektiv (CZ)

Satanic Girls

The documentary with the working title *Satanic Girls – Women on the Move* is conceived as a situational retrospective road movie, which follows the stories of six women who emigrated from Czechoslovakia. Once members of the local Dixieland orchestra, the band transformed abroad into an all-female pop group with the provocative name Satanic Girls. Looking back, it is clear that the popularity of the group was achieved by the very fact that the band consisted of female musicians, and to no lesser degree thanks to their alluring and intentionally eroticized look. The documentary reflects upon the changing position of the female musician from the late sixties to the present.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Satanic Girls

runtime: 80 min

estimated release: December 2018

director: Bohdan Bláhovec
produced by: Pavla Janoušková Kubečková – nutprodukce (CZ), Anna Herza Tydlitátová (CZ)

Through the Viewfinder of AK 47

According to American Photo Magazine, Antonín Kratochvíl is one of the 100 world's most important photographers. He paid for the success and the glory not only by the hard work in places everybody wanted to leave. He had left home his firstborn son and has only seen him twenty years after emigrating. The different lives on opposite sides of the iron curtain divide them till this day. They look and talk the same, but the difference is remarkable between Antonín, the globetrotter, and his son Michael who prefers to work at home in his atelier. Their mutual efforts to converge are the film's main storyline. Many of unsaid issues could be revealed as they travel together to the biggest refugee camp in Jordan.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: V Hledáčku AK 47

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: November 2018

director: Karel Koula
produced by: Martin Hůlavec – Punk Film (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)



Ark of Lights and Shadows

They met on Friday, got married secretly on Sunday. They had to run away from home due to their parents' wrath, so they rather spent their honeymoon among the cannibals in the South Seas. They lost there their illusions, the camera and almost their lives. At the moment when many people would have abandoned filming, Martin and Osa Johnson had started building their career, which fascinated Charlie Chaplin, Ernst Hemingway or British Royal family. The story of Martin and Osa is the story of the birth of cinematic wildlife, and of disappearance of its archetype. It is an authentic footprint of an era when filming itself was more dangerous than lions or malaria, when it meant to risk, at best failure, at worst your own life.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Archa světla a stínů

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: September 2017

director: Jan Svatoš

produced by: Ivana Buttry - Art Francesco (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)



Circus Rwanda

Eliséé survived the Rwandan genocide as a child. Today he leads an orphan acrobat group in a country, which heavily relies on foreign aid. He cares for the orphaned children and wants them to be happy, to have some sense in their lives. Rosta Novák built a worldwide-acclaimed circus group in Prague, where he successfully rules with a firm, paternal hand, but has permanently dark bags under his eyes from the workload. The majority of Rwandese thinks that all people in Europe are fairly rich. Many Europeans think that it is necessary to help Africa with everything. What happens, if we merge these two worlds in a film, during the preparation of a joint circus performance? What does it tell us about the Africa-Europe relationship?

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Cirkus Rwanda

runtime: 70 min

estimated release: December 2017

director: Michal Varga

cast: Rostislav Novák, Eliséé Niyonsenga

produced by: Marek Novák - Xova Film (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)



Il Boemo

Il Boemo is the story of Josef Mysliveček, who rejected his comfortable bourgeois destiny as the eldest son of a Prague master miller to pursue his dream of becoming a composer in Italy. It is a tale of ambition, identity and love. While Josef has no qualms about exploiting the passions his music arouses in women to advance his career, he finds the one woman he truly loves beyond his grasp. In the late 18th century, "Il Boemo" as he came to be known, was one of the most popular and prolific composers of Italian opera seria. He was also the friend and mentor of young Mozart.

FICTION

original title: Il Boemo

runtime: 150 min

estimated release: March 2019

director: Petr Vaclav

produced by: Jan Macola - Mimesis Film (CZ)



Lust for Life

The Tap Tap is a unique project. This band of students with physical disabilities has become so well known that it sells out big concerts, has travelled the world and their annual Christmas concert at the State Opera earned a live TV broadcast. And they want more. TTT shows how to beat the odds and, above all, how to have fun in your life. But what lies behind this cheeky exterior and motivates TTT to go this route at all? Is it their inner motivation or pressure from their bandleader? The film tells the intimate story of the band members and offers a peek behind the scenes of building TTT's media image, revealing the positive (and negative) efforts of commercial entities to participate in this project, or just to make themselves visible.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: The Tap Tap -

Postižení muzikou

runtime: 80 min

estimated release: November 2018

director: Radovan Sírbrt

produced by: Radovan Sírbrt, Viktória Hozzová - Pink Productions (CZ)

in co-production with: HBO Europe (CZ)

FILMS TO COME

IN PRODUCTION



Milada

Set against the beautiful and complex landscapes of post-war Czechoslovakia, Milada's true story shook the world and triggered powerful and fervent responses from many nations and renowned individuals across the globe – Churchill, Einstein, and Eleanor Roosevelt, to name a few. Through her life, she moved amid some of the greatest minds of her time and inspired those who met her. *Milada* is both a political thriller and a compelling drama, combining elements of idealism, gentle humour, and tragedy. It's a character-driven film with epic themes and suspenseful plot.

FICTION

original title: Milada

runtime: 110 min

estimated release: October 2017

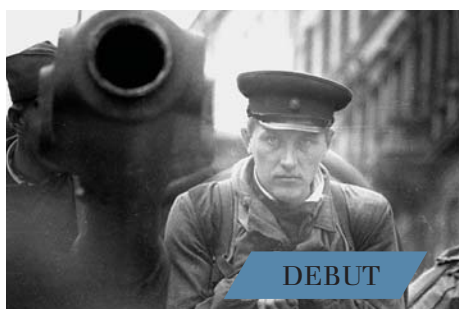
director: David Mrnka

cast: Ayelet Zurer, Robert Gant, Aňa Geislerová

produced by: David Mrnka –

Loaded Vision Entertainment (CZ)

in co-production with: Seznam.cz (CZ)



My Unknown Soldier

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN OCCUPIER?

When in 1968 the armies of Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia, not only Czechoslovak citizens were suffering, but also the occupiers, because often they didn't know the purpose of their mission. Almost after 50 years since the unfortunate moment of the European history, we are discovering the surprising humanity of the occupying soldiers. For the first time we uncover stories of desperate personal sacrifices of those soldiers who committed suicide rather than to live with the guilt from what they caused, even though indirectly, as they were executors of someone else's will. This film isn't about general justice or truth. This is a story about how one becomes unintentionally an "occupier".

EXPERIMENTAL, DOCUMENTARY

original title: Můj neznámý vojín

runtime: 60 min

estimated release: February 2018

director: Anna Kryvenko

produced by: Michal Kráčmer – Analog Vision (CZ)

in co-production with: Baltic Pine Films (LV)



On Short Leash

On Short Leash is a coming-of-age story about young Jakub. When he finds out that his entire life was a lie, he has no choice but to immediately grow up and deal with a loss of his illusions. Or things will take a wrong turn. Nobody can help him. Not his mother, who told him that his father sails the seas and thus can't be with him. Neither his father, who in fact had not shown any interest in him at all. At this point, he gets in touch, but only because his legitimate son does not care about him anymore. No matter what, he is no Captain for sure. In addition, his sister Pavlína at the age of 16 finds out as well that her life is not what she imagined and that breaks her heart.

FICTION

original title: Na krátko

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: January 2018

director: Jakub Šmíd

cast: Petra Špalková – Tichá, Marta Vančurová, Martin Finger

produced by: Víktor Schwarcz – Cineart TV Prague (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)



The Cellar

The marriage of Milan and Táňa Labát is going through a crisis. Discontent and vigorous Táňa considers her husband, who avoids resolving any problems, a coward. Their 16 years old daughter Lenka takes their alienation very hard. But one night during the summer holidays, their lives change. Milan leaves to play a concert with his band in a district town while Lenka is celebrating birthday with her friends in a nearby village. However, Lenka does not return home...

FICTION

original title: Pivnica

runtime: 100 min

estimated release: December 2017

director: Igor Voloshin

produced by: Livia Filusová – Furia Film (SK)

in co-production with: Gate Film (RU), 8Heads Productions (CZ)



Touch Me Not

Laura works for years in the mannequin factory. She peeps at other people's intimate lives while hers doesn't seem to function. She pays to be touched, hiring young boys to create an illusion of intimacy. Tudor, an actor who earns his living as a masseur, wants a woman, who rejects his attempts at making contact. Paul, also an actor, is caught in a dysfunctional relationship with an older man. One day Laura witnesses an interactive show by Tudor & Paul, which deeply touches her. She gradually becomes a silent witness of their lives, their solitary longing resonating with her own. In this mirroring process the walls, she so skilfully built around her, collapse under the flow of her repressed feelings.

FICTION
original title: Nu mă-atinge-mă
runtime: 120 min
estimated release: August 2017
director: Adina Pintilie
cast: Laura Benson, Tomas Lemarquis, Dirk Lange
produced by: Adina Pintilie - Manekino Film (RO)
in co-production with: Rohfilm (DE), Les Films De L'Entranger (FR), Agitprop (BG), 4Proof Film (RO), Pink Productions (CZ)



Warrior of God

The story takes place in the Kingdom of Bohemia at the dawn of the 15th century. It is loosely inspired by the life of Jan Žižka of Trocnov, before he became one of seven generals in history to never lose a battle – and always for the rights of his common man. This film tells the story of the brutal and merciless mercenary before all that – who fought for pay instead.

FICTION
original title: Jan Žižka
runtime: 120 min
estimated release: spring 2019
director: Petr Ják
produced by: Petr Ják - J.B.J. Film (CZ)
in co-production with: MAP Global Holdings Limited (USA)

IN POST-PRODUCTION



Barefoot on Stalks

Eight-year-old Eda is a long-desired and anxiously protected child of parents who had lost one baby before. Eda therefore is a backup child; he even has the same name. After his father rejects to affiliate with Nazi invaders of Czechoslovakia in 1939, the family is forced to leave Prague and spend the war time living with relatives in the countryside. The war provides the mysterious adventures to Eda whose childish eyes cannot perceive the danger of those difficult times. To him life feels strange but beautiful now – a city boy lives in a tiny town, joins local boyish crew to spend days walking barefoot, notices beauty of girls for the first time and discovers both deep family secrets and his own bravery.

FICTION
original title: Po strništi bos
runtime: 95 min
estimated release: August 2017
director: Jan Svěrák
cast: Tereza Voříšková, Ondřej Vetchý, Jan Tříska
produced by: Jan Svěrák - Biograf Jan Svěrák (CZ)
in co-production with: Phoenix Film (DK), Novinski (SK), Czech Television (CZ)
international sales: Portobello Film Sales



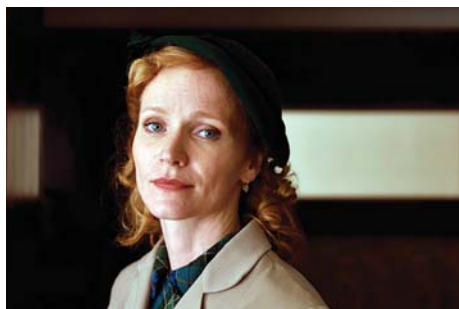
Death Over Gold

Ondrej Jajcaj has been obsessed with death since childhood. Starting as a tomb raider, he became self proclaimed scientist/philosopher, focused on the dental remnants of the dead. Jajcaj's goal is to liberate society from fear of death. To accomplish this, Jajcaj and his few followers set on a journey with his mobile caravan of death, moving from village to village and confronting people with the phenomenon of death. The journey eventually turns to Vienna, where Jajcaj returns the dental remnants of Johann Strauss and Johannes Brahms, which he took from their graves himself. Majorettes juggle with femur bones and Jajcaj's caravan moves to another village. The journey doesn't end, but loops into infinity.

DOCUMENTARY, EXPERIMENTAL
original title: Smrt nad zlato
runtime: 70 min
estimated release: April 2017
director: Petr Šprinc
cast: Ondrej Jajcaj, Jan Kovář, Tomáš Motal
produced by: Marek Novák - Xova Film (CZ)

FILMS TO COME

IN POST-PRODUCTION



Gardenstore

The *Gardenstore* film trilogy consists of three separate movies *Family Friend*, *Deserter* and *Suitor* taking place in the background of the most dramatic periods of the past century. It tells the story of three families: the family of an air radio operator, the family of the owner of a hair salon and the family of the owner of a garden store. The trilogy encompasses twenty post-war years of the lives of the characters, who had to go through the best years of their lives in the dark time of Czech modern history.

FICTION

original title: Zahradnictví
runtime: 300 min
estimated release: April 2017, September 2017, November 2017
director: Jan Hřebejk
cast: Aňa Geislerová, Klára Melišková, Gabriela Míčová, Ondřej Sokol, Martin Finger, David Novotný, Lenka Krobotová, Jiří Macháček
produced by: Viktor Tauš – Fog'n'Desire Films (CZ)
in co-production with: Sokol Kollár (SK), MD4 (PL)



(Non) Parent

The director reflects different forms of parenting through her own life story, the stories of her friends and the influence of society, customs and norms of the decision to become a parent. Since raising a child is not only a matter of two different sexes or just two people.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Nerodič
runtime: 85 min
estimated release: April 2017
director: Jana Počtová
cast: Joachim Dvořák, Tobiáš Jirous, Veronika Dvořáková
produced by: Daniel Tuček – Golden Dawn (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)



Nothing Like Before

Nothing Like Before is a documentary stylized view into the life of the present day teenagers living on Czech-German border – geographic and social periphery in the middle of Europe. The film portrays daily lives of three youngsters, brought together in one particular high school, and witnesses their transformation into mature individuals. To what extent are they prisoners of their surrounding environment, family prototypes and the educational system and to what extent are they capable of becoming autonomous creators of their own fates?

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Nic jako dřív
runtime: 90 min
estimated release: January 2018
director: Lukáš Kokeš, Klára Tasovská
produced by: Pavla Janoušková Kubečková, Tomáš Hrubý – nutprodukce (CZ)
in co-production with: HBO Europe (CZ)



Wilder Than Wilderness

Near us, in the former mines, on mountain tops, on housing estates and at railway stations nature takes back what man has stolen. Within the environment of open cast brown coalmines and spoil tips which are the reminder of a lunar landscape, one finds paradoxically a true tale of an impregnable wild countryside. For most people it is a symbol of an ecological catastrophe, same as the abandoned industrial complexes, former army training ranges or dense woods gobbled up by the bark beetle. But for nature they are untamed spots which bring with them a process of recuperation. Just beyond our backyard we see everyday dramas of animals and plants which tend to fascinate us in films that come from the far reaches of our planet.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Planeta Česko
runtime: 82 min
estimated release: spring 2017
director: Marián Polák
produced by: Radim Procházka – PRODUKCE RADIM PROCHÁZKA (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), i/o post (CZ)



Quartette

Have you ever played in a band? It is like your second family, with all of its history, and with whose members you strive for happiness and get through various experiences. Like a family which comes together in the evening around one table, in spite of everything good and bad, the members of our quartet of so called contemporary classical music get together at another concert. This somewhat incongruous foursome, led by Robert, who is heavily dependent on his mother; the attractive and chaotic cello player Simona; the young musician Tomáš, who likes to show off; and an ageing history expert, the withdrawn "Funés", experience many funny situations, as well as misunderstandings, on their way to find their most free composition.

FICTION

original title: Kvarteto
runtime: 92 min
estimated release: October 2017
director: Miroslav Krobot
cast: Jaroslav Plesl, Lukáš Melník, Barbora Poláková
produced by: Ondřej Zima – Evolution Films (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), innogy (CZ), Soundsquare (CZ)



DEBUT

Snowing!

After her father's second wedding, Tereza (30) and her sister Petra (29) return home to their mother's place. Their mother Ester (52) lives with Granny (81) in a rundown family house in which Tereza decides to outlast the split with her boyfriend František (36). Tereza tries to deal with the rules of the house but some things such as mental health condition of Granny cannot be changed. *Snowing!* is a film about attaining knowledge about the order that rules our world.

FICTION

original title: Sněží!
runtime: 70 min
estimated release: November 2017
director: Kristina Nedvědová
cast: Petra Nesvačilová, Hana Vagnerová, Vanda Hybnerová
produced by: Jitka Kotrlová – Frame films (CZ)
in co-production with: Barrandov Studio (CZ), Frame100r (CZ)



DEBUT

The Absence of Closeness

The film tells a story of a single mother Hedvika and her newborn Adélka. Hedvika is struggling with the lack of maternal affection towards her daughter. When she one night finds the diaries of her late father from the time of her own childhood, she decides to try to overcome the absence of closeness by reading them and by visiting the places she used to know as a child. She tries to uncover the whole painful family history despite her mother's strong disapproval in order to reconcile with her own past and to move towards the future. *The Absence of Closeness* is an intimate psychological drama taking place at the end of one hot summer.

FICTION

original title: Absence blízkosti
runtime: 72 min
estimated release: July 2017
director: Josef Tuka
cast: Jana Plodková, Anna Cónová, Pavla Beretová
produced by: Asmara Beraki – Cinema Belongs To Us (CZ)
in co-production with: MagicLab (CZ)



With Mom on the Outside

The stories of three women, the film is observing, begin in the prison in Světlá nad Sázavou. The management of this women's prison has started an unusual social experiment – they created a specialized ward for mothers with their children. The film starts with everyday prison life situations where we witness the way our three protagonists cope with the environment. We have been following them since 2010 capturing their imprisonment as well as their preparations for leaving the prison, their release, and the way they handle life outside the prison. We wish to verify and expose to the viewers if and how this prison concept works in the long term.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: S mámou na svobodě
runtime: 80 min
estimated release: June 2017
director: Veronika Jonášová
produced by: Pavla Janoušková Kubečková – nutprodukce (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)

FILMS TO COME

NEW RELEASES

NEW RELEASES



A Marriage Story

In 35 years of one couple's shared life, a lot of things happen: from the moments of the absolute harmony to the dramatic falls. For most of the time, the couple cares for common daily life issues and joys that come together with raising the children, running the household or running a business. And this is exactly the life of furniture shop owners Ivana and Václav Strnadovi, two characters that a director Helena Třeštíková follows with her camera as of the year 1980 within a project *The Marriage Story*. Her new feature documentary about Strnad family is linked to TV films from this cycle, but most importantly it shows further shocking twists, that life brought to the couple and their children.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Strnadovi

runtime: 102 min

Czech release: 19 January, 2017

director: Helena Třeštíková

produced by: Kateřina Černá, Pavel Strnad – Negativ (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)



A Prominent Patient

Winter 1939. Flamboyant Czech diplomat Jan Masaryk has fled to America to escape his recent past. Germany has invaded Czechoslovakia and Masaryk is now a man without a nation. In America, he tries to forget the personal and political betrayals he and his country have suffered – but these events shadow his every step. Having served as the Czechoslovak ambassador in London, Masaryk had failed to win the support of the British and could not avert the ruination of his country. With the help of Dr. Stein, a German immigrant and psychiatrist, and the beautiful writer Marcia Davenport, Masaryk tries to overcome his demons and relives the dramatic events leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War.

FICTION

original title: Masaryk

runtime: 114 min

Czech release: 9 March, 2017

director: Julius Ševčík

cast: Karel Roden, Oldřich Kaiser, Hanns Zischler

produced by: Rudolf Biermann – In Film Praha (CZ), Rudolf Biermann (SK), Julius Ševčík (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), RTVS (SK)

international sales: Beta Cinema



Epidemic of Freedom

This creative documentary explores the controversial and complex topic of vaccinating young children, and its possible side effects. The film looks at the issue from a very personal perspective – the directors themselves have a daughter, and so they try to find a clear and well-founded answer to the entire problem. And that is not exactly easy.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Epidemie svobody

runtime: 67 min

Czech release: 1 March, 2017

director: Tereza Reichová, Hynek Reich Štětka

cast: Zbyněk Mucha, Zuzana Candigliota, Jana Reichová

produced by: Alice Tabery – Cinepoint (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), FAMU (CZ)



Ice Mother

67-year-old Hana is the good soul of her family. Every week her sons come over with their wives and children for their family dinner. Selfless Hana takes care of little Ivánek, her grandson, who is not really cherishing his grandma's help. One day while Hana is searching for Ivánek who sneaked out of the garden centre, she finds a man (Bronia, 56) floating at the riverside, unable to move in the cold water. She helps him to get out from the icy water. Swimming in the freezing river – just for fun? Hana can't believe it. In a series of events Hana starts to change her life. But when she discovers that straightforward Bronia has a dark secret as well, she is once again forced to decide what she really wants in life.

FICTION

original title: Bába z ledu

runtime: 106 min

Czech release: 23 February, 2017

director: Bohdan Sláma

cast: Zuzana Kronerová, Pavel Nový, Václav Neužil

produced by: Pavel Strnad, Petr Oukropec – Negativ (CZ)

in co-production with: Artileria (SK), Why Not Productions (FR)

international sales: The Match Factory



Filthy

Filthy is the coming-of-age story of seventeen-year old Lena. In love with a boy for the first time, Lena longs for freedom and adventure. Her magic world is shattered instantly when her teacher, whom all her classmates have a crush on, rapes her in her own home. Instead of sharing her trauma, Lena keeps it a secret, even from her best friend. Her pent up feelings drive her to attempt suicide. Her family in shock, Lena ends up in a psychiatric ward. In the middle of wild and similarly misunderstood kids, she discovers she is not alone in her experience. After her release, she decides to break the silence and take the action. The anger she feels is no longer directed against herself.

FICTION

original title: Špína

runtime: 87 min

festival release: January 2017

director: Tereza Nvotová

cast: Dominika Morávková, Anna Rakovská, Robert Jakab

produced by: Miloš Lochman – moloko film (CZ)

in co-production with: Peter Badač – BFILM (SK)



Let Misik Sing!

The documentary feature film about legendary Czech musician Vladimír Mišík. Listening to Mišík's music was an expression of an anti-government attitude during the communist era. People made Mišík a legend of the anti-communist movement despite the fact he had not sing protest songs, nor was he an "underground" singer. The movie is about a search for words, things, people and memories consisting of staged scenes, archive materials and Mišík's music. It takes place on imaginary planet Mišík, 5 kilometres in diameter, situated on the edge of a Solar System. It is an adventurous search in singer's past, poetical and funny at the same time.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Nechte zpívat Mišíka

runtime: 100 min

Czech release: 8 March, 2017

director: Jitka Němcová

cast: Vladimír Mišík, Radim Hladík, Adam Mišík

produced by: Viktor Schwarcz – Cineart TV Prague (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), innogy (CZ)



Little Harbour

A story inspired by true events about two children whose innocent play will change their lives forever. Ten years-old and living with a mother, who is not yet ready to be a mum, Jarka is pushed by her desire to love and form a family to the point where she finds herself giving shelter to two abandoned twin babies.

FICTION

original title: Piata loď

runtime: 85 min

Czech release: 6 April, 2017

director: Iveta Grófová

cast: Vanessa Szamuhelová, Matúš Bačišín, Johanna Tesařová

produced by: Katarína Krnáčová, Iveta Grófová – Hulapa film (SK), Jiří Konečný – endorfilm (CZ)

in co-production with: Katapult Film (HU), RTVS (SK), Silverart (SK)

international sales: LOCO Films



Spoor

Duszejko, an eccentric retired construction engineer, an astrologist and a vegetarian, lives in a small mountain village on the Czech-Polish border. One day her beloved dogs disappear. They cannot be found anywhere. A few months later she discovers a dead body of her neighbour, a poacher. The only traces leading to the mysterious death are those of roe deer hooves around the house. As time goes by, more grisly killings are discovered. The victims, all hunters, belonged to the local elite. The police investigation proves ineffective. Duszejko has her own theory: all murders were committed by wild animals...

FICTION

original title: Pokot

runtime: 128 min

Czech release: 21 April, 2017

director: Agnieszka Holland

cast: Wiktor Zborowski, Agnieszka Mandat, Miroslav Krobot

produced by: Krzysztof Zanussi, Janusz Wachala – TOR Film Production (PL)

in co-production with: nutprodukce (CZ), Heimatfilm (DE), Chimney (SE), Nutprodukcja (SK), HBO Europe, ZDF/ARTE (DE), Česká televize (CZ)

international sales: Beta Cinema

CREATIVE EUROPE MEDIA SUB-PROGRAMME

CZECH PROJECTS SUPPORTED IN 2016 excluding Distribution scheme

Company	Project	Amount [EUR]
DEVELOPMENT – SINGLE PROJECTS		
MasterFilm	Understanding of Context	25,000
KLUCIvespolec	Gargoyle's UNESCO Tales	60,000
endorfilm	Every Single Minute	25,000
Duracfilm	Testosterone Story	25,000
DEVELOPMENT – SLATE FUNDING		
Bionaut	Felix, Sara, Hungry Bear Tales	138,000
VIDEOGAMES		
CBE Software	Someday You'll Return	150,000
FESTIVALS		
Doc.Dream	Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival	63,000
Filmfest	ZLIN FILM FESTIVAL – The International Film Festival for Children and Youth	63,000
Febiofest	Prague International Film Festival – Febiofest	55,000
Člověk v tísni	One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival	41,000
MARKET ACCESS		
Institut dokumentárního filmu	East European Promotional Program for Support of Documentary Film	216,000
Asociace animovaného filmu	Visegrad Animation Forum	52,000
TRAINING		
Institut dokumentárního filmu	Ex Oriente Film	128,749
Dokincubator	DOK.Incubator	120,000
Akademie múzických umění v Praze	MIDPOINT TV Launch	77,000
AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT		
Institut dokumentárního filmu	KineDok	150,000
ONLINE DISTRIBUTION		
Doc Air	Doc Alliance Films	54,443

www.kreativnievropa.cz
www.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe



Creative
Europe
MEDIA

CZECH FILM / Spring 2017

Issued by Czech Film Center / State Cinematography Fund
Editors Markéta Šantrochová, Barbora Ligasová
Copy editor Alex Zucker
Graphic design Cellula s.r.o.
Cover photo A Prominent Patient by In Film Praha
Printed by Uniprint
Print run 600
Not for sale

Czech Film Center

Národní 28
Prague 1, 110 00
Czech Republic
info@filmcenter.cz
www.filmcenter.cz

The Czech Film Center is a division of

state cinematography fund
czech republic

