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In Celebration of Prague Days in Chicago 2007:

# ▶ CZECH FILM DAYS:

## THE REVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED

JUNE 15-21, 2007

A retrospective of some of the most remarkable—and rarely shown—feature films from the new Czech filmmaking generation. The festival is proudly supported by:



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PUPENDO

## OPENING NIGHT FILM!

## PUPENDO

FILMMAKER JAN HREBEJK IN PERSON!

Fri., Jun. 15 at 7 p.m. and Sun., Jun. 17 at 7 p.m.

"Pupendo" is a child's game in which a prankster promises something mystical and pleasurable to his victim then delivers a sharp slap. Part dark comedy, part biting drama, Filmmaker Jan Hrebejk (*Divided We Fall*) navigates the grey area between complicity and compliance that pervaded society in the former Soviet Bloc countries leading up to the fall of socialism. It is 1984. Mára is a highly talented sculptor who has fallen from his former prestigious position at the Academy of Art, and now, he barely makes ends meet. Mára's former student, the socially ambitious Magda, has made a much more practical marriage to high-school principal Mila. This couple operates as deeply within the Communist system as Mára and his wife Alena live outside it. Soon, circumstances reunite the former teacher and student, providing a forum for combative conflicts of artistic temperament. Directed by Jan Hrebejk, Czech Republic, 2003, 35mm, 122 mins., In Czech with English subtitles. **Jan Hrebejk will be here for a Q&A following the screening. This screening will also be preceded by Opening Night reception. (6-7 p.m.)**

## CZECH TOON TALES

Sat., Jun. 16 at 1 p.m.

This selection of 7 animated short films, each a magical fairy tale, is from the popular evening series that was broadcast for children every night before bedtime. Each fairy tale is 12 minutes, and will be shown in an English-language adaptation. Included are such popular tales as *Bob and Bobbie—Rabbits from the Hat*, *How Do Hippos Do It?*, *The Magical Chimney Sweep*, *Kate and Mr. Potato Head*, and *Superdog Fik*. 35mm prints. Total Running Time: 84 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## AN ANGEL OF THE LORD (ANDEL PANE)

Sat., Jun. 16 at 3 p.m.

Angel Petronel is a charming fellow, but everything that he touches is ruined, including his new job as the Guardian of the Heavenly Gate. By way of punishment, God sends him down to Earth, so that he will learn how hard it is to live a blameless life. But he has a difficult time convincing convince people that he is God's messenger! Directed by Jirí Strach, Czech Republic, 2005, 35mm, 90 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

WOMEN AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM/  
TRAPPED (ZENY NA PRELOMU TISICILETI/ V PASTI)

Sat., Jun. 16 at 5:30 p.m.

*Women at the Turn of the Millennium* is a compilation documentary which begins in a rural drug treatment center. We meet Katka a remarkable young woman who has a new boyfriend and they live together in Prague. They are both in love and on heroin, and we see how their carefree life gradually comes to an end. The crimes they commit in the name of drugs get more and more difficult for them, and when they finally split up, the focal point of her existence is how to get money for heroin. Trestikova is a foremost social documentarian (she's made over 30 films), whose films are both incisive social studies and humanistic, poetic documents which celebrate the lives of ordinary people, and that her films often take years to complete because she spends so much time with her subjects. Directed by Helena Trestikova, Czech Republic, 2001, 35mm, 56 mins. In Czech with English subtitles. Special Admission Price: \$5.00

## SKRITEK (SKRIT)

Sat., Jun. 16 at 7 p.m. and Thurs., Jun. 21 at 7 p.m.

The lives of a Czech family are turned upside down when they pull up stakes and head for the big city in this comedy without dialogue from writer/director Tomas Vorel. A father (Bolek Polivka) moves his family from the country into the city, where he lands a job as a butcher at a slaughterhouse. His wife (Eva Holubova) gets work at a grocery store, though she would prefer to spend more time with her husband, who seems to have developed an uncontrollable lust for a buxom blonde (Barbora Munzarova), who is his co-worker! As the parents deal with their own problems,

their teenage son (Tomas Vorel Jr.), a skateboarding, pot-smoking, vegetarian anarchist, devotes his spare time to vandalizing the butchering plant, while his sister (Anicka Marhoulova) struggles to keep up with her schoolwork. As everyone tries to adapt to their new surroundings, a pixie (Skritek, it means "the imp"), with a vicious sense of humor makes their lives all the more unpredictable. If you can imagine an amazing film that has references that range from silent film and *I Love Lucy* to Czech traditional theatre styles and then recruit the Czech Republic's finest actors, you will be astonished at what Vorel has accomplished in *Skritek*, which is quite simply, an imaginative triumph. Directed by Tomas Vorel, Czech Republic, 2005, 35mm, 87 mins.

## BUTTONERS (KNOFLÍKÁRI)

Sat., Jun. 16 at 9 p.m. and Wed., Jun. 20 at 7 p.m.

Reminiscent of Buñuel, Petr Zelenka's wicked black comedy cleverly interweaves six episodes that explore the balance between chance and destiny. The first takes place on August 6, 1943 in Kokura, Japan, the island that would have received the first atomic bomb if weather conditions had been better. From here we travel to present-day Prague, visiting a selection of its alternately hilarious and bizarre inhabitants whose lives are connected in ways they scarcely imagine. The film's title refers to an astonishing and erotic method of removing upholstery buttons! Directed by Petr Zelenka, Czech Republic, 1997, 35mm, 102 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## FREE ADMISSION! TWO X AUREL KLIMT!

Sun., Jun. 17 at 12:00 p.m.

## THE ENCHANTED BELL (O KOUZELNÉM ZVONU)

As a gift from Tibet, a small village is given an enchanted bell, the harmonic sound of which makes them unusually kind. But when soldiers steal the bell and recast it into a cannon, taking it into battle. Little Suzy and her medium-sized elephant decide to go and find the stolen bell! Directed by Aurel Klimt, Czech Republic, 1998, 35mm, 15 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## THE FALL (PÁD)

One day in Moscow, between two World Wars, where people's behavior is as absurd as the times are directed by Aurel Klimt, Czech Republic, 1999, 35mm, 15 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## DOUBLE FEATURE: TWO X MIROSLAV JANEK

Sun., Jun. 17 at 1 p.m.

## THE UNSEEN (NESPATRENÉ)

In this documentary we can see spontaneous (as well as unexpected interest) of blind children who explore the world of photography, the way they take pictures, as well as the results of their work. Above all, the film shows the importance of this activity for these children, by showing us their school life, contact with nature, many interviews and other interaction with the world around them. The Unseen gives us the singular opportunity to share their intensive, rich and fulfilled lives and even though it is difficult and demanding, they bear their fate quietly and often much better than we do. Directed by Miroslav Janek, Czech Republic, 1996, 35mm, 53 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## HAMSA, I AM (HAMSA, JÁ JSEM)

To be blind is a handicap, but to be a talented musician is a gift. Miroslav Janek, director of the internationally successful documentary *The Unseen*, has created in *Hamsa, I Am*, an intimate dialogue with several strong personalities through which (in a series of daily encounters) he succeeds in showing a vivid picture of life in a community of blind conservatory students. The film is surprising for its humorous and non-sentimental rendering of people most of us approach with shyness. Its gentle pace makes it a pleasure to watch and share their aspirations and dreams. Directed by Miroslav Janek, Czech Republic, 1998, 35mm, 59 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## FOREST WALKERS (LESNÍ CHODCI)

Sun., Jun. 17 at 3:30 p.m.

Two generations of two different Czech families stop to ponder their changing values and points-of-view in this philosophical feature from documentarian Ivan Vojnar.

Tethered by little in the way of narrative, Vojnar and his improvisational cast allow *Forest Walkers* to become a treatise on the hopes and fears of young people growing up in the shadow of the former Czechoslovakia. As the characters wander through landscapes and cityscapes past and present, their opinions are juxtaposed with those of their elders and their contemporaries. Directed by Ivan Vojnar, Czech Republic/Slovakia/France, 2003, 35mm, 95 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## WONDERFUL YEARS THAT SUCKED

(BAJECNA LETA POD PSA)

Sun., Jun. 17 at 5 p.m. and Mon., Jun. 18 at 9 p.m.

This film traces the life of a Prague family starting in the dark years of communism (late 60s) through to the velvet revolution in 1989. The father (Ondrej Vetchý), was an economic reformist who had to banish himself and whole family to the countryside in fear of persecution by the communist regime. Wonderful performances by Libuse Safránková as the mother and Jakub Wehrenberg as son Kvido make this film a great insight into life in Eastern Europe during the era when streets were often filled by Russian tanks and soldiers. Directed by Petr Nikolaev, Czech Republic, 1997, 35mm, 109 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## THE PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE

Mon., Jun. 18 at 7 p.m. and Thurs., Jun. 21 at 9 p.m.

Formed in 1968, following the Soviet invasion of their beloved Czechoslovakia, the rock band, 'The Plastic People of the Universe' were inspired by American music banned by the Communist dictators including The Velvet Underground, Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart and The Doors. The documentary film traces different stages in the band's history that spans over more than 30 years and is tightly connected with the political developments in our country. The film is a chronological look at the history of the band, featuring unique archive footage, photographs, musical excerpts, period press material and interviews of the musicians and their friends, including Václav Havel and Lou Reed. Directed by Jana Chytilova, Czech Republic, 2001, 35mm, 71 mins. In English and Czech with English subtitles.

## ENE BENE

Tues., Jun. 19 at 9 p.m.

Set in a small Bohemian town in the middle of local election "fever," *Ene Bene* focuses on two retired school teachers, trying to cope with the recent stroke of the husband, Jan, played by Leoš Sucharipa, a veteran of the Czech film scene and most famous for his role in Vera Chytilová's film *Very Late Afternoon of a Faun*. Taking care of Jan is the much-suffering Helena, played by Iva Janžurová—another highly respected actress, who silently puts up with his childish petulance. The return of their clearly troubled daughter from her studies in Prague, Jana, further strains the already fragile family. Directed by Alice Nellis, Czech Republic, 2000, 35mm, 104 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.

## BORED IN BRNO (NUDA V BRNE)

Tues., Jun. 19 at 7 p.m. and Wed., Jun. 20 at 9 p.m.

Standa (Jan Budar, who also co-wrote the screenplay) has plans to travel to Brno (the second largest city in the Czech Republic) so that he can spend his first night with Olinka (Katerina Holánová), the girl of his dreams. They are both shy and so while Olinka gets advice from the supportive single women who live in her building, Standa relies on the encouragement of his slightly more experienced older brother, Janda (Martin Pechlát). The brothers stop beforehand in a local pub, where Janda tries to bolster Standa's courage. The pub is also visited by Mirek (Miroslav Donutil of *Zelary*), a frustrated actor who stars on a popular regional sitcom about a taxi driver. Though married, Mirek takes the opportunity to talk his way into the apartment of Vlasta (Pavla Tomicova), a lonely women's studies professor who lives in Olinka's building. Meanwhile, Olinka deals with the unexpected return home of her overprotective mother (Jaroslava Pokorná) by drugging her unconscious and hiding her in the pantry. She plans to lose her virginity to Standa, but his extreme nervousness threatens to frustrate their romantic plans. Directed by Vladimír Moravěk, Czech Republic, 2003, 35mm, 103 mins. In Czech with English subtitles.