



Velvyslanectví České Republiky  
Embassy of the Czech Republic  
Abuja

Gnassingbe Eyadema Str. No. 5  
Asokoro, Abuja  
tel.: (00234) 70 3757 1096  
email: [abuja@embassy.mzv.cz](mailto:abuja@embassy.mzv.cz)  
[www.mzv.cz/abuja](http://www.mzv.cz/abuja)  
[www.facebook.com/CzechEmbassyinAbuja](https://www.facebook.com/CzechEmbassyinAbuja)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Abuja, 21 November, 2012

## PRESS RELEASE

### „CZECH NEW WAVE“ - FILM FESTIVAL IN JOS

The Embassy of the Czech Republic and National Film Institute in Jos jointly present the first Czech Film Festival in Jos. The two-day festival begins on 5 December 2012 at 2 pm in the Auditorium of National Film Institute by a welcome speech. On Wednesday 5 December and on Thursday 6 December 2012, two films will be shown every day – first starts at 2:30 and second at 4:30 pm.

Some of the best films of Czech cinematography from a 1960's film movement called „Czech New Wave“ will be screened during the festival: The Firemen's Ball, The Cremator, The Witches' Hammer and Closely Watched Trains. The latter received Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1967.

The event is dedicated to all students of National Film Institute in Jos, but the general public is mostly welcomed to attend as well. The admission to the film shows is free. All films are for adults (18+) only. Each title will be screened in its original version with English subtitles.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Nigeria believes that movies speak a universal language, as they capture the defining features of our shared humanity, and thus can improve our mutual understanding and serve as bridges between our countries.

*„Forget the French New Wave. If anybody wants to see what truly vibrant, brilliant, political (and personal) filmmaking is all about, they should take a look at the Czech New Wave.“*

Jennifer Baldwin, Libertas

*„Of all the cinematic New Waves that broke over the world in the 1960s, the one in Czechoslovakia was among the most fruitful and fascinating.“*

Criterion Collection

#### DETAILS OF THE CZECH FILM FESTIVAL IN JOS:

##### Venue:

Auditorium of National Film Institute, 7 Gbadamosi Close, off Bukuru Road, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

**Time schedule:**5th December 2012

2 pm – registration

2:15 pm – opening speech

2:30 pm - The Firemen's Ball

4:30 pm - The Cremator

6th December 2012

2:30 pm - The Witches' Hammer

4:30 pm - Closely Watched Trains

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE CZECH NEW WAVE:**

There are many so-called "new waves" in film history. One of the most unusual of these "waves" rolled through Czechoslovakia, beginning around 1963 and continuing until the end of 1960's. At this time, Czech and Slovak filmmakers, often graduates of the Czech National Film Academy in Prague, FAMU, enjoyed the most unprecedented degree of freedom.

To understand the significance of the Czech New Wave, it is important to understand its political context. In 1948 the Communists supported by the Soviet Union took power in Czechoslovakia. After the World War II, the film industry was nationalised and later put under the control of the ruling Communist party. In 1950's the films were mainly designated to promote the State propaganda and creative innovation or criticism was not possible.

However, once the government's ideological restrictions started to be less severely imposed in early 1960's, the new generation of filmmakers began to use film to speak out about the hypocrisy and absurdity of the Communist state. The realities of living in Czechoslovakia at this time gave the films a bitter humour, seriousness, and urgency that could be lacking in the Western film waves.

In this short period of time about 25 filmmakers, including Miloš Forman, Jiří Menzel, Věra Chytilová, Jaromír Jireš and Ivan Passer, made their debuts. The group was never a formal one and never had a written manifesto and this explains why every film is a little bit different.

Despite of their youth, the Czech New Wave filmmakers produced internationally acclaimed work through the decade. The Shop on Main Street and Closely Watched Trains received Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film in 1965 and 1967.

The arrival of Soviet tanks in August 1968 brought a sudden end to political liberalization in Czechoslovakia and established the strong Communist rule again. Some of the authors emigrated to the US, some stayed at home and faced the censorship of their work. The country could return again to democracy only in 1989.



Photo: Young film directors of the Czech New Wave, who made their debuts in 1960' and became famous worldwide: Miloš Forman, Věra Chytilová, Jiří Menzel and others.

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For further information, please contact:

Ms. Eliška Kolářová, cultural attaché of the Embassy: 0813 060 8986,  
[eliska\\_kolarova@mzv.cz](mailto:eliska_kolarova@mzv.cz)

More information (reviews, information about the Czech New Wave phenomenon and brochure of the festival) can be found on the Facebook page of the Embassy:  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/379031368844573/>

An interview with Ambassador of the Czech Republic can be arranged as well.