



Czech Republic Eva Zaoralová

Although the film industry in the Czech Republic is in the hands of private production companies and can rely only on limited support from public funding, the number of feature films increased to 29 titles in 2006. A further 23 full-length films, largely features, were in production in 2007.

At the beginning of 2007, the amendment to the law on cinematography finally came into effect. The State Fund of the Czech Republic for the Support and Development of Czech Cinematography, which had relied hitherto solely on funds supplied by distributors and acquired through the sale of older films, received a further CZK100 million (€3.4 million) out of the state budget. In February 2007, the fund divided CZK220 million (€7.5 million) among more than sixty projects at various stages of production.



Jiří Vejdělek's **Holiday Makers**

Czech films have performed quite well domestically. In 2006, two Czech films held the top position at the box office: Jiří Vejdělek's **Holiday Makers** (Účastníci zájezdu) and Karel Janák's **The Rafters** (Raffáci). Another two were placed fourth and eighth. The audience figures for *Holiday Makers* reached almost 800,000 (a little less than 10% of the total



Jiří Menzel's **I Served the King of England**

population). Czech films have also performed well at international festivals in recent years, though less so in distribution. **I Served the King of England** (Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále) is an exception, having been sold to a number of countries, following its huge success at home. With Jiří Menzel directing, and based on the novel by Closely Observed Trains author Bohumil Hrabal, the film played at the 2007 Berlin Film Festival, where it won the FIPRESCI Award. The story of a waiter who longs to become a millionaire and whose destiny takes an unexpected turn when his dream comes true, it is set against a backdrop of modern Czechoslovak history, from the 1930s, through World War II and Nazi occupation, to the 1960s when the unscrupulous, but now wiser, hero is released from a Communist-run prison after almost 15 years. Menzel's film won the top of them Czech Lion awards and was nominated by the Czech Film and Television Academy to represent the Czech Republic at the Academy Awards.

Holiday Makers also performed well on the festival circuit, following a successful screening at the Tribeca Film Festival. The feature debut of Vejdělek and an adaptation

of the highly successful novel by best-selling Czech author Michal Viewegh, the film captures the comic antics of a group of typical Czech tourists as they make their way to Italy. Vejdělek followed this success with another road-trip comedy, **Roming**, about a man's journey to meet his gypsy bride. Of the films which competed for the 2006 Czech Lion awards, special mention should be made of **Beauty in Trouble** (*Kráska v nesnázích*) by the prolific and successful director Jan Hřebejk. Featuring excellent performances, Hřebejk's tragi-comedy deals with the complexity of human relationships. Though not as successful as his previous film, *Up and Down*, Hřebejk re-teamed with regular writer, Petr Jarchovský, for **Teddy Bear** (*Medvídek*), again dissecting personal relationships within contemporary society.



Jan Hřebejk's **Beauty in Trouble**

David Ondříček's fourth feature, **Grandhotel**, about the relationship between four young people and featuring a futuristic mountaintop hotel in northern Bohemia, did not win over either critics or audiences in the same way his earlier *Loners* had done. Conversely, a member of the older generation of Czech filmmakers and one of the leading figures of the New Wave of Czechoslovak film during the 1960s, Věra Chytilová, enjoyed considerable acclaim for **Pleasant Moments** (*Hezké chvíle bez záruky*), a morality piece about the disintegration of strong inter-personal bonds.



Věra Chytilová's **Pleasant Moments**

2006 saw the appearance of three accomplished debut films. **The Indian and the Nurse** (*Indián a sestřička*), portraying a clash between the representatives of minority groups and established societal conventions, was directed by Dan Włodarczyk. Experienced documentary filmmaker Robert Sedláček's **Rules of Lying** (*Pravidla lži*) was a psychological drama set in a drug rehabilitation centre. And Marta Nováková saw the release of **Marta**, her graduation film from FAMU (the Prague Film School), a drama about three characters situated outside time and space.



Marta Nováková's FAMU graduation film, **Marta**

2006 also saw the release of the animated feature **Fimfárum 2** (*Fimfárum 1* was made in 2002), with filmmakers Jan Balej, Aurel Klimt, Břetislav Pojar and Vlasta Pospíšilová returning to the fairytales of Jan Werich, and Karel Vachek's film essay **Záviš, the Prince of Pomofilm under the Influence of Griffith's Intolerance and Tati's Monsieur Hulot's Holiday, or the Foundation and the Doom of Czechoslovakia (1918 – 1992)** (*Záviš, kniže pornofilmu pod vlivem Griffithovy Intolerance a*



BRINGING CZECH FILMS TO THE WORLD

■ czech
■ film
■ center

Národní 28
CZ-110 00
Prague 1
Czech Republic

Tel.: +420 221 105 321
Fax: +420 221 105 303
E-mail: info@filmcenter.cz
www.filmcenter.cz

Tatiho Prázdnin pana Hulota, aneb vznik a zánik Československa (1918 – 1992)), in which the director expounds his idiosyncratic reflections on society and the state, with his own special kind of humour.



Empties, directed by Jan Svěrák

Of the films produced in 2007, Jan Svěrák's comedy **Empties** (*Vratné lahve*), co-produced with the UK, attracted an audience of over one million. The Academy Award-winning director based his film on a screenplay written by his father, Zdeněk Svěrák, who plays a man refusing to grow old gracefully. The third film by the talented Alice Nellis, **Little Girl Blue** (*Tajnosti*), is an intimate portrait of a woman who, during a single day, discovers that her seemingly happy life is in tatters. It was hailed by critics as Nellis's most successful work to date. Writer and director Petr Nikolaev approached Jan Pelc's cult work **...It's Gonna Get Worse** (*...a bude hůř*) in a quasi-documentary style. The film describes the colourful destinies of a group of young people following the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968. The lead-up to November 1989, and the years that followed, are captured in **Marcela**, a hard-hitting documentary by Helena Třeštíková. The director spent several years following the eponymous character whose life is shattered by the mysterious death of her daughter.

The successful debut by Karin Babinská, **Dolls** (*Pusinky*), was filmed in a documentary style. The story of three girls travelling together during the summer holidays, it sensitively

introduced the theme of lesbian love for the first time in Czech film history. The romantic relationships are more conventional in Irena Pavlásková's **The Bitch's Diary** (*Bestiář*), which opts for an appealing story set against the backdrop of tourist destinations. The experienced but always experimental Tomáš Vorel combined traditional teen comedy with the 'aerosol art' graffiti phenomenon for his adolescent drama, **High School** (*Gymp*). After several controversial films, Vorel succeeded in creating a work that delighted both critics and audiences.

A few recent productions have yet to be released. Jiří Vejdělek's third film in as many years, **Václav**, sees him adopt a more serious tone, with the study of a mentally disabled man. Vladimír Michálek reflects upon the relationships formed between two generations in **Parents and Children** (*O rodičích a dětech*). Petr Zelenka's **Karamazovs** (*Bratři Karamazovi*) brings together preparations for the staging of the well-known novel by Dostoyevsky with the real lives of the performers.



Helena Třeštíková's **Marcela**

Acclaimed cinematographer, František A. Brabec, returns to directing with an adaptation of **May** (Máj), the epic poem by Romantic author Karel Hynek Mácha, while Václav Marhoul chose a decisive battle from World War II for his psychological drama about courage and cowardice, **Tobruk**.

Bathory is the new film by one of the leading directors of the Czechoslovak New Wave, Juraj Jakubisko. Based on a seventeenth-century legend in which a noblewoman is supposed to have found eternal youth by bathing in the blood of virgins, Jakubisko sees his central character as an uncharacteristically emancipated and energetic woman who unsettled those around her and thus became the victim of slander. The film's significant budget has seen several production companies invest in the director's highly ambitious project.



**43rd KARLOVY VARY
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

JULY 4 – 12, 2008
Call for Entries – Deadline April 18, 2008

CONTACT ADDRESS
Film Servis Festival Karlovy Vary
Panská 1, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic
Tel: + 420 221 411 011, Fax: + 420 221 411 033
E-mail: program@kviff.com, www.kviff.com

The year's best films

I Served the King of England (Jiří Menzel)

Empties (Jan Svěrák)

Rules of Lying (Robert Sedláček)

Little Girl Blue (Alice Nellis)

The Indian and the Nurse (Dan Włodarczyk)

Grandhotel (David Ondříček)

Quote of the year

'Even without a formalised financial incentive, Prague's infrastructure, locations and professionalism remain appealing, especially to A-list projects. Walden Media's *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* and Universal Pictures' *Wanted* are both shooting in the Czech capital. However Prague is no longer the bargain it once was.' THEODORE SCHWINKE in *Screen International*

Directory

All Tel/Fax numbers begin (+420)

Association of Czech Filmmakers (FITES), Pod Nuselskými Schody 3, 120 00 Prague 2. Tel: (2) 691 0310. Fax: (2) 691 1375.

Association of Producers, Národní 28, 110 00 Prague 1. Tel: (2) 2110 5321. Fax: (2) 2110 5303. www.apa.iol.cz.

Czech Film & Television Academy, Na ělertvách 40, 180 00 Prague 8. Tel: (2) 8482 1356. Fax: (2) 8482 1341.

Czech Film Centre, Národní 28, 110 00 Prague 1. Tel: (2) 2110 5302. Fax: (2) 2110 5303. www.filmcenter.cz.

FAMU, Film & Television Faculty, Academy of Performing Arts, Smetanovo 2, 116 65 Prague 1. Tel: (2) 2422 9176. Fax: (2) 2423 0285. kamera@famu.cz. Dean: Karel Kochman.

Ministry of Culture, Audiovisual Dept, Milady Horákové 139, 160 00 Prague 6. Tel: (2) 5708 5310. Fax: (2) 2431 8155.

National Film Archive, Malesická 12, 130 00 Prague 3. Tel: (2) 7177 0509. Fax: (2) 7177 0501. nfa@nfa.cz. www.nfa.cz.

EVA ZAORALOVÁ is Artistic Director of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, editor of *Film a doba* magazine and author of books on Czech, French and Italian cinema.