

Falcon, Total HelpArt T.H.A. and Czech Television – Brno Television Studio
Presents a film by
Zdeněk Tyc

El Paso

Based on a true story



NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTION:

Menemsha Films

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KEY INFORMATION

Director and Screenwriter	Zdeněk Tyc
Story	Zdeněk Tyc
Cinematography	Patrik Hoznauer
Art Director	Adam Pitra
Costume Design	Andrea Králová
Makeup	Jana Bílková
Music	Vojtěch Lavička
Editing	Vladimír Barák L.C.C.
Sound	Jan Čeněk
Producer	Ondřej Trojan
Co-producer	Czech Television – Brno Television Studio
Production Management	Michaela Kuchynková
Assistant Director	Lukáš Viznar
Production Company	Total HelpArt T.H.A.
In collaboration with	Czech Television – Brno Television Studio
Cast	Irena Horváthová, Linda Rybová, David Prachař, Igor Chmela, Vladimír Javorský, Jana Janěková Jr., Petr Lněnička, Leoš Noha, David Matásek, Marie Ludvíková, Simona Peková, Igor Bareš, Denisa Demeterová, Albert Dudy, Nikola Režanková, Kateřina Poláková, Jan Ištók, Tomáš Fedák, Nelli Dudyová
The film was created with backing from	The Czech State Fund for the Support and Development of Czech Cinematography and the Media Programme of the European Community
Film Partners	ČPP, UPP, Bystrouška, Studio Virtual, HBO, 2nd Hand Koukey, Volvo, Clinique, Baťa
Media Partners	Rádio 1
Distribution	Falcon a.s.
Genre	a drama based on true story
Runtime	98 minutes
Format	classic (1:1.85), Dolby Digital
Schedule	filming: spring block from 18 March 2008 to 19 April 2008, summer block 23-30 June 2008 premiere: 17 March 2009
Target Audience	a film for viewers aged 12 or over
Number of copies	12
Budget	18 500 000

SYNOPSIS



El Paso takes the viewer into a turbulent world of passion and emotion. After the success of *The Brats*, director Zdeněk Tyc has returned to the world of Roma that we so often regard with fear and unease even though we know nothing at all about it. *El Paso* is inspired by the true story of a Roma widow with nine children. In the film the Horváth family has seven children. The story begins with something unexpected – the tragic death of the father. His wife, Věra, is suddenly alone in a fight with the

authorities and is determined to keep her large family together at all costs, but is hopelessly ill-prepared for the task. The welfare department files an application to take her children into care. They are evicted from their home and moved to a one-room flat on the outskirts. The case – Věra versus the city – finds its way to a young, ambitious lawyer. She doesn't know the world of Roma, nor is she particularly interested in it: initially she takes on the case as a springboard for her career. Despite her prejudices, incomprehension and sometimes Věra herself, who at first refuses to let the blonde lawyer into her world, she doesn't abandon the case. Luckily she's not the only one who sides with the family. There's the social worker, Honza Kochta, a bit impractical but all the more committed to his work for that. His attempts to help the Horváths are also motivated by his entirely private interest in the attractive lawyer...

El Paso doesn't have a happy end, but holds out the hope of one. It offers a positive example without seeing the world through rose-tinted spectacles. And also an opportunity to reflect on whether being a Rom really means being guilty.

STATEMENT BY THE FILMMAKER

In 2002 I made *THE BRATS*, which has the subtitle "...about people who don't talk about love, but live it" and that's what the story was about. *El Paso* is also based on a true story: the Horváth family in the film has a real and fascinating, almost unbelievable, counterpart: I personally know the mother "Věra" and her children, and the social worker "Kochta" and the lawyer.

I wasn't seeking to make a documentary. If so the "truth" would have been harsher, excessively black and white.



I want to give hope to Věra and her children and others like them. And I want to offer filmgoers hope – hope that is reasonable and honest, slight but possible. Realistic.

Zdeněk Tyc – Screenwriter and Director



People on the margins of society, people who feel hard done-by, outsiders – that's a great challenge for art, and a great theme. And it's your theme too. Have you ever thought about why you're so interested in it?

People on the margins probably interest me because I feel best in their company. I'm a resolute outsider.

How did you come across the story in *El Paso*?

By accident – although I like to say that there are no accidents. I was ill, lying in bed and too sick to read books. I was leafing through a newspaper and I noticed something about a Roma woman who didn't want her nine children to be taken into care. And that's what the film's all about! The individual against society – it's a subject I've loved since childhood. Overwhelming odds. A challenge. David and Goliath. Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union...

How far does the film differ from the true story?

The film is very different from the real story, but I want the essence, the message, to be the same. The real widow has nine children, which I thought was too many, so I took out two. Seven's quite a lot too, isn't it?

And how did the story of the real Roma woman turn out?

She remarried, but in the film that would have looked a bit corny...

What does *El Paso* mean? Is it a secret? A city? A Spanish dance? Won't the title be misleading?

"*El Paso*" is a vibrant and provocative title. Fitting. *El Paso* is slang for mugging, and we want to mug filmgoers – in a positive way.

Who is the film aimed at?

Courageous filmgoers who will trust our advertising campaign – that it's worth going to see *El Paso*.

In your film *The Brats* the Roma children had the most important role. It's obvious you know how to work with them – for *El Paso* you chose a whole Roma family with seven children! How would you characterise Roma?

The Brats had a big influence on me. It left a mark on me, an itch I had to scratch. But I'm no expert on Roma – I'm interested in them; I respect them.



How did you manage to understand the Roma mentality, which is so different, so that you can present it to "gadjos"?

For a number of years I used to go to help out the "real" widow. I used to go to the supermarket with her, for instance. I'd push the trolley, lift heavy things, give her a hand. I enjoyed the terrified reactions of the cashiers and the other shoppers... In the

hostel I didn't refuse the awful coffee (like the coffee the heroine makes for her friends in the film) and I listened to her.

How did you find such an impressive actress for the main role, Irena Horváthová?

The casting agency worked hard to find all the Czech actresses who look like Roma. On the whole they were good, talented, easy to work with – but a cat's a cat and a tiger's a tiger. I kept looking, we held auditions and Irena Horváthová came to one of them. My instincts immediately told me that she was right for the part.

As her opposite number you chose the refined and polished Linda Rybová...

I've been friends with Linda Rybová and David Prachař for years. In my mind I'd already cast them when I began writing the screenplay, and they remained in all the different versions of the screenplay. In reality Linda Rybová isn't such a china doll and she doesn't like that cliché. But she played her part with no fuss – that's what her character required. Linda's good, she spent six weeks filming and was breastfeeding at the time.



Irena Horváthová improvised. How did the actors and crew deal with that?

Irena is very spontaneous. It was very difficult for her to learn her lines and then she kept changing them. Constantly. Almost to the point where you run out of patience and lose your temper. You have to realise that it's at the limits of her abilities, that she's speaking a foreign language, Czech...

...readers should realise that while they themselves can, after reflecting, answer almost any question, if they imagine that all of a sudden they're not seated but hanging upside down and the camera's pointing at them and someone's lighting a fire beneath them... it's not so easy then, is it?

Initially all of the actors were in shock. I remember how Vladimír Javorský – a great actor – was appalled after the first rehearsal, and when they filmed their first scene together Irena would answer differently each time. And she paused in different places than he did... it was like riding a mustang. But it did make sense, and the actors had to think outside the box and react directly.



How well did the actors and crew do?

All the actors and the whole crew deserve my admiration and gratitude – the film works thanks to them.

You get on well with Roma children – but what about the others?

You can't start a fire without a spark. (laughs) It's a stupid saying – but that's how it works.

Which things were difficult?

Filming with children is difficult and with Roma children that applies at least tenfold. They don't have any aspirations, they get tired quickly, make mistakes, they stop enjoying their work and focus on destruction instead – ideally total destruction! The cameramen were closest to the children and they always had the patience of a saint. Patrik and Jirka are heroes. The costume and makeup people too, as the little devils were constantly going off someone, falling down, getting dirty, and over and over again. But everyone believed in *El Paso* so they gritted their teeth and stuck with it.

Was filming fun?

We don't really have any of the usual "amusing incidents from filming", but Míša Kuchynková from the production company managed to put together a team of professional enthusiasts who were able to joke on the brink of an abyss. Brutal, sick jokes – isn't that the essence of humour?

Exactly – improvisation must have resulted in misunderstandings and things no one could have foreseen.

People are most themselves when they do things that are unpredictable, unexpected, when they don't need consent and feel they belong together – that they're a "family". The crew "mafia" is basically MAGIC and whoever experienced it knows what I'm talking about.

Do you think there really is xenophobia towards Roma in this country?

I think there is, and it bothers me... not everyone's a thief, you have to make distinctions. Thinking is the solution.

Don't you worry that people will think you make films about Roma because it's "in", because its fashionable?

I'm not worried about that.

What role did Czech Television's Brno Studio have in making the film?

They helped us and all help is good.

You managed to get Ondřej Trojan as the producer despite that fact that a question mark hangs over the financial returns. What convinced him to take on the film?

Ondřej Trojan knows me from FAMU, from the student revolution. He played a large part in making the film and influenced the end result – how successful that was we'll find out when it opens in cinemas.



What kind of reaction would please you the most?

A pride of Czech Lions.

Ondřej Trojan – producer



You've produced a lot of important and interesting film projects. You haven't been so active as a director – ten years after your debut, Let's All Sing Around, you scored a wonderful hit with Želary, and it's only now, seven years later, that you're directing another film – Identity Card, based on a novel by Petr Šabach. Why were you the producer for El Paso when directing your own film must have taken up all your time?

Well, it wasn't that easy to find the money for El Paso, so filming took two years longer than the original plan. But that's how it goes with films. You work on a number of projects and some get shelved while some are filmed straight away, and others need patience and perseverance. So the interval for preparation and financing is why projects get mixed up. Zdeněk Tyc was one of my fellow students from FAMU who I longed to work with, and El Paso was one of the projects Zdeněk gave me to read.

What did you like about the screenplay?

Mainly it was the authenticity. It's based on the true story of a woman with nine children – Zdeněk knows her personally and met with her many times. The story in the film isn't black and white: it shows the weaknesses of an impersonal, bureaucratic approach to people in need, but it also shows situations where the white Czech majority, with a rather different system of values, judges that the way Roma behave makes it impossible for the two communities to live side by side – and sometimes with good reason. Misunderstandings and insufficient courage to look at problems from the other side's point of view result in a lot of personal tragedies and resentment.

What do you appreciate in the film now that it's finished?

I believe we've managed to make a truthful and sensitive film which isn't hopeless and which opens a number of issues for ethnic groups – Roma and "gadjos" – living together when they are so different, as well as issues concerning the way the state bureaucracy operates. I like the way Zdeněk doesn't force his opinions on the viewer. He doesn't preach.

Have you come across instances of xenophobia towards Roma in this country?

Of course, but that's not the film's main subject. El Paso isn't really about racial tolerance but social tolerance.

Why should people be interested in the story of a Roma woman and her problems?

The magic of the film lies in the way the individual characters behave, in their strength to overcome their misfortunes and change their attitudes, their system of values. That can be very valuable, inspirational and emotional for the viewer. After all the same theme was the main motif in Želary. I don't have any illusions that it's easy to take an active interest in something like that in our consumer society – it's much easier to close your eyes or just see a personal tragedy covered in brief on the news and thank God that it's not your problem. But we shouldn't underestimate filmgoers. I think we've made a good film and that's the most important criterion for me. I believe viewers will appreciate El Paso.

It must be a risk for you as the producer. Do you think you'll get back the money you've invested in El Paso?

No comment – we had other reasons for making this film...

INTERVIEWS WITH THE ACTORS**Irena Horváthová – Věra****What can you tell us about your role in El Paso?**

I play a widow, Věra, who's on her own with seven children. All her husband left her was debts, so she has to move into a tiny flat. Insensitive social workers plague her, she has to go to court, her oldest daughter goes off with a man... I really felt for her, as though it was me who was fighting the social workers so they wouldn't take my children away and put them in a home... So I thought it was going to

be a sad film.

But then the ending isn't sad! And there are touching and comic situations as well, aren't there?

You're right. In the end the film is optimistic.

What did the film give you?

It was great experience for me. It was the first time I got to act...

You're a singer in a well-known Roma band, Gulo čar, so cameras and audiences don't shake your composure.

Yes, but I was interested in films, how they're made, because it's a bit different with music. It's true that the director, Zdeněk Tyc, chose me because I'm not camera-shy. But I had no idea what working on a film was like. And it was really interesting. I feel good about that.

In real life you look very young – the makeup artists must have had their work cut out to turn you into the careworn mother of seven children!

They kept redoing the circles under my eyes. But sometimes that wasn't necessary – I was exhausted and I lost weight as I was always travelling from Brno to Prague for the filming, often with my own children. And I had toothache, and they took the tooth out but left the roots there. So my face was swollen and I looked terrible. But Zdeněk and the makeup artists were happy.

What was it like working with Zdeněk?

It was really good. I realised that he's a very kind man, and that's very important for me. I think he knows a lot about Roma issues too, and he's very sensitive in how he approaches people. So I've got a lot of respect for him.



Meeting Czech actors and acting with them – Linda Rybová and her husband David Prachař – that meant a lot to me. And acting with Vladimír Javorský and the other actors was a great honour for me.

Did you have an opportunity to improvise?

If I thought of something I'd say it the way I felt it. Zdeněk liked that.

How old are your own children? You've got seven in the film!

Denis is twelve and Pavlíček is seven; he's started in first grade now. But the seven children in the film were no problem for me; it was fun with them. The children took a real liking to me. And Pavlíček went to the filming with me; he was six then. My mum was going to work. She was working twelve-hour shifts, so she couldn't help me and there was nowhere I could put Pavlíček. And because my husband, Pavel, also works – he takes care of the music for Gulo čar – I took my younger son with me to the filming, and sometimes my older son too. In the end both of my children acted in the film, and also Kaloman Baláž from our band – he plays the boyfriend of my oldest daughter in the film. You can also see Gulo čar rehearsing.

In the film Linda Rybová ends up shouting at you to persuade you to put your deaf and dumb son into care. Would that be necessary in the Roma community in real life?

Sometimes it does work like that: mothers have a strong bond with all their children, even more so if they're handicapped. They worry about them a lot. And if a child like that is going to be placed in care the mother must be really convinced that it's the best for her child.



Do you think El Paso will help the Roma community in any way? That "gadjos" and Roma will become aware of each others' characteristics and will understand one another better?

Definitely. I hope that that viewers will feel a pang when they find out that Roma sometimes really live like that. We Roma are very devout and open; we wear our hearts on our sleeves. And Roma are sure to be proud when they see a film about how Roma live. And I hope they'll be proud of me too!

Do you know what happened to the real Věra?

They told me it was based on a true story, but I don't know exactly how it turned out. And I don't know the woman, but I hope I get to meet her sometime, seeing that I played her!

Zdeněk Tyc – Screenwriter and Director



The director and screenwriter Zdeněk Tyc was born on 16 April 1956 in Rokycany, near Prague. After finishing secondary school he worked as a zookeeper, a stage hand, a cable puller for Czechoslovak Television and an assistant director at Barrandov, amongst other jobs. From 1983 to 1990 he studied directing at FAMU. His graduation film, which was also his debut feature film, was **VOJTĚCH, CALLED THE ORPHAN** (1989). Filmed in black and white, it is regarded as one of the most noteworthy debuts in recent years and won the Main Prize at the Czech and Slovak Film Festival in Bratislava, and was the Czechoslovak entry for the Oscars. It also won the Jury Grand Prix at a festival of debut films in Angers in France.

After graduating from FAMU he began working for Czechoslovak Television, where he directed the slapstick **THE BALL**, the launch of a record by the Sklep Theatre, a profile of the rock band Vltava and a number of live concerts at the Na Chmelnici Club. In 1991 he filmed the short story **THE JOURNEY** with Tomáš Hanák in the main role as part of the *Fireside Stories* series for the producer Ondřej Trojan's company T.H.A.

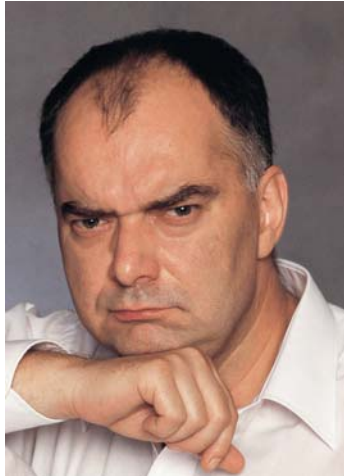
In 1993 he made **RAZOR BLADES** with Filip Topol in the main role; Topol is a cult figure in the Czech underground and the leader of the band Psí vojáci. In France the film won a prestigious award from Fondation GAN Pour le Cinema; it was screened at major festivals in Berlin and Toronto and at a workshop in Gothenburg held by the European Film Academy, where it was chosen by Wim Wenders. In 1995 it was followed by his third feature film **SEIZE THE DAY**.

He took a break from films and worked for Czech Television again, filming the series **POETRY IS A FOREIGN WORD** (1996 – 1999) in collaboration with Jiří Dědeček and the cinematographer Patrik Hoznauer. Since 1996 he and Tereza Brdečková have been filming a series of interviews with the elderly called **I'M STILL HERE**. Another project was the documentary trilogy **YES, MASARYK** in 1997. A year later he made a two-part documentary called **DVOŘÁK IN AMERICA**.

His 2002 feature film **THE BRATS** was a psychological drama with a screenplay by Tereza Boučková. This intimate story of a couple who are raising two adopted Roma boys as well as their own son was screened at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 2002, where it won the Audience Award. It also won a prize for best director at a film festival in Istanbul in 2002.

His other work for Czech Television includes **WE DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF TIME** (2003), the documentary **BON APPÉTIT** (2004), a series of television plays **3+1 WITH MIROSLAV DONUTIL** (2004 – 2006) and a number of episodes in the **13TH CHAMBER** series. With the production company Total HelpArt T.H.A. he directed a series of comedy shows, **STAND UP**, for HBO.

A special chapter in his work as a director is a television recording of a performance of the play **IVÁNEK, MATE, YOU CAN SPEAK; OR GET HIM OUT THEN** (2005) where a couple of actors, Petr Čtvrtníček and Jiří Lábus, reflect on a corruption scandal in Czech football. His fifth feature film **SMALL CELEBRATIONS** (2008) was a Czech, Slovak and Italian coproduction that tells the tale of the relationship between a mother and her daughter, growing up and lost innocence against a backdrop of salsa rhythms.



Ondřej Trojan, film director and producer and actor with the Sklep Theatre was born on New Year's Eve in Prague in 1959. He comes from a family of actors – his father Ladislav and his younger brother Ivan are both actors. He graduated from secondary school with distinction in 1979. He attended at the Faculty of Education, where he spent eight semesters studying maths and chemistry, but he left because he wasn't enjoying it. Since the beginning of the 1980s he has regularly performed with the cult Prague-based Sklep Theatre, where his fellow actors awoke his interest in film. He worked at the Barrandov Film Studios as a prop man for two years and studied for the entrance exams for FAMU in Prague, where he won a place to study film and television directing in 1985.

He made his first short films at FAMU, and his television project **THE WEEK ON SCREEN** and the half-hour film **SEVEN** were well received at festivals and by filmgoers. In 1990, after the revolution, Trojan took a year out from FAMU to film his debut feature film **LET'S ALL SING AROUND**, with a screenplay by his fellow students Petr Jarchovský and Jan Hřebejk (the film was the first time Anna Geislerová had appeared in front of a camera). He graduated from FAMU in 1991.

In 1992 he made a two-part film for Czech Television, **B&B**, which mapped the Sklep Theatre's best sketches and songs from the turn of the 1980s and 90s. In the same year he and two friends from Sklep, Tomáš Hanák and Jiří Burda, founded Total HelpArt T.H.A., a film and television production company that produces feature films and audiovisual works and provides management work for Sklep. A year later he directed a Total HelpArt production of a very successful adaptation of the play **MILLS**, written by Sklep and Václav Havel.

Total HelpArt T.H.A. is currently one of the most successful production companies. It has worked on all of Jan Hřebejk's films other than Big Beat and Shameless, and can boast of a nomination for an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film (**DIVIDED WE FALL**) and a number of Czech Lions. The historical drama **ŽELARY**, based on two books by Květa Legátová, *Želary* and *Joza's Hana*, and directed by Ondřej Trojan himself, was also nominated for a prestigious Academy Award. With that film Trojan proved that he is not only a capable producer with a feel for a powerful story but also a very able director.

Ondřej Trojan has produced:

TV films for Czech Television:

B&B (1992)

CAMELS IN THE MYSTERIOUS NIGHT (1993)

FIRESIDE STORIES (a series of eight short films directed by Ondřej Trojan, Tomáš Vorel, Zdeněk Tyc, Václav Koubek..., 1994, 1995)

SKLEP: MILLS (1994)

A GALE OF FOREST WISDOM (1997)

MULTICAR MOVIE SHOW (1998)

WARTBURG MOVIE SHOW (1999)

TV shows:

STAND UP (directed by Zdeněk Tyc, 2004 -)

Documentary films for Czech Television:

KRYŠTOF TROBÁČEK'S TOTAL CAMEL (a documentary about the life and work of the Prague artist, directed by Ondřej Trojan, 1992)

THE PRAGUE 5 FROM VIENNA TO AKROPOLIS (a documentary about the theatre, art and music collective The Prague 5, directed by Petr Nikolajev, 1995)

Feature documentaries:

AFOŇKA DOESN'T WANT TO HERD REINDEER ANYMORE (directed by Martin Ryšavý, 2004)

FORGOTTEN TRANSPORTS (directed by Lukáš Příbyl, 2007)

Feature films – director:

LET'S ALL SING AROUND (1990)

ŽELARY (2003)

Feature films – producer:

COSY DENS (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 1998)

DIVIDED WE FALL (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2000)

OUT OF THE CITY (directed by Tomáš Vorel, 2000)

CRUEL JOYS (directed by Juraj Nvota, 2002)

PUPENDO (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2003)

ŽELARY (directed by Ondřej Trojan, 2003)

UP AND DOWN (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2004)

BEAUTY IN TROUBLE (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2006)

TEDDY BEAR (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2007)

I'M ALL GOOD (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2008)

Actor:

SKLEP: MILLS (directed by Ondřej Trojan, 1994) (TV)

A GALE OF FOREST WISDOM (directed by Ondřej Trojan, 1997) (TV)

MULTICAR MOVIE SHOW (directed by Ondřej Trojan, 1998) (TV)

WARTBURG MOVIE SHOW (directed by Ondřej Trojan, 1999) (TV)

OUT OF THE CITY (directed by Tomáš Vorel, 2000)

THE FARM KEEPER (directed by Martin Duba, 2003)

THE IMP (directed by Tomáš Vorel, 2005)

THE CAN (directed by Tomáš Vorel, 2007)

Patrik Hoznauer - Cinematographer



Patrik Hoznauer (*1968) began working for Czech Television in Ostrava as an assistant cameraman and since 1996 he has been an independent cinematographer. His CV includes a number of television documentaries such as **ALMOST A DETECTIVE STORY**, **SUMMER BY THE BLACK SEA** and **THE RISE AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF THE SHOEMAKERS**. He and Zdeněk Tyc have worked together for many years.

Feature films:

THE BRATS – 2002, directed by Zdeněk Tyc

3+1 WITH MIROSLAV DONUTIL - 2004, directed by Zdeněk Tyc

THE KINGDOM OF THE STREAMS - 2005, directed by Pavel Jandourek

WONDERFUL LITTLE THINGS: JUBILEE – 2006, directed by Zdeněk Tyc

HYPERMARKET - 2007, directed by Janusz Klimsza

NAME - 2007, directed by Ján Novák

EI PASO - 2008, directed by Zdeněk Tyc

ASKEW – 2009, directed by Zdeněk Tyc

Documentaries:

ALMOST A DETECTIVE STORY – 2002, directed by Pavel Jandourek
SUMMER BY THE BLACK SEA – 2003, directed by Pavel Jandourek
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF THE SHOEMAKERS – 2004, directed by Pavel Jandourek
JAROSLAV HUTKA'S 13TH CHAMBER - 2005, directed by Zdeněk Tyc
EVA HOLUBOVÁ'S 13TH CHAMBER - 2005, directed by Zdeněk Tyc

Jiří Berka – Assistant Camera

Jirka Berka (*1974) studied microelectronics at secondary school. He has worked as a camera assistant on the television films **ASKEW, HYPERMARKET, A CARNIVAL EVERY DAY, BOATMEN, GUARDIAN OF SOULS** and the serial **KOBA'S GARAGE**.

Feature films:

THE BRATS - 2002, directed by Zdeněk Tyc
IT'S HELL WITH THE PRINCESS - 2008, Miloslav Šmídmajer



Documentaries:

A CRIME CALLED KATYN – 2006, directed by Patra Všelichová
LETTERS FROM THE DEATH CELL – 2008, Marcel Petrov
STORIES FROM THE IRON CURTAIN (series) – 2005, directed by Ján Novák

Adam Pitra – Art Director



Adam Pitra (*1971) studied stage design at AMU and DAMU and graphic design and posters as a postgraduate at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design.

He works mainly as a stage and costume designer for the theatre, and also as an assistant art director on films.

Adam Pitra also designs and illustrates books. Under the pseudonym Adam Ostas he wrote and drew a comic strip, **The Magic Girl**, for the children's magazine Čtyřlístek. He is a member of the Walkers art group. El Paso is his first feature film.

In 2003 he finished second in the stage design category of the Alfréd Radok Awards for a production of **HEART OF A DOG**, directed by Sergej Fedotov.

Plays and films he has worked on include:

LIFE IS A DOG (LOVE) – 2002, Bez zábradlí Theatre, directed by Alice Nellis
ŽELARY - 2002, directed by Ondřej Trojan
UP AND DOWN – 2003, directed by Jan Hřebejk
CHAMPIONS – 2003, directed by Marek Najbrt
THE PETTY DEMON – 2003, National Theatre, directed by Sergej Fedotov
SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE – 2003, Dejvice Theatre, directed by Ondřej Zajíc
THE CHERRY ORCHARD – 2005, Pod Palmovkou Theatre, directed by Ondřej Sokol
THE PILLOWMAN – 2005, Činoherní klub, directed by Ondřej Sokol
THE PRINCE AND ME II – 2005, North American Pictures
BEAUTY IN TROUBLE - 2005, directed by Jan Hřebejk

I SERVED THE KING OF ENGLAND – 2006, directed by Jiří Menzel
A PLACE IN LIFE II – 2006, directed by Jiří Chlumský
I'M ALL GOOD – 2008, directed by Jan Hřebejk

Jan Čeněk - Sound



Jan Čeněk (*1969) is a graduate of FAMU. From 1987 to 1999 he worked for Czechoslovak Radio as a technician and tonmeister in a music studio.

Since 1996 he has worked in the **Bystrouška** sound studio, where Aurel Klimt's animated film **BLOODTHIRSTY HUGO** (1997) was made and the final editing of the film **WHISPER** took place.

Feature films:

INDIAN SUMMER - 1995, directed by Saša Gedeon

MARIAN - 1996, directed by Petr Václav

WHISPER - 1996, directed by David Ondříček

THE IDIOT RETURNS - 1999, directed by Saša Gedeon

IN THE RYE – 1999, directed by Roman Vávra

OUT OF THE CITY - 2000, directed by David Vorel

THE WILD BEES - 2001, directed by Bohdan Sláma

THE BRATS - 2002, directed by Zdeněk Tyc

THE CZECH WATERLOO - 2002, Vít Olmer

ŽELARY - 2003, directed by Ondřej Trojan

SENTIMENT - 2003, directed by Tomáš Hejtmánek

SHARK IN THE HEAD - 2004, directed by Mária Procházková

SOMETHING LIKE HAPPINESS - 2005, directed by Bohdan Sláma

THE COUNTRY TEACHER - 2008, directed by Bohdan Sláma

I'M ALL GOOD - 2008, directed by Jan Hřebejk

Vladimír Barák - Editor



Vladimír Barák (*1964) is a graduate of FAMU. He has worked as an editor on many short films, and for instance on the documentary **IVAN KRAL DANCING BAREFOOT**, the TV films **MULTICAR MOVIE SHOW**, **WARTBURG MOVIE SHOW** and **MILAN'S COMING**. He also edited Petr Zelenka's short film **POWERS** and Igor Chaun's **RED CARD**.

He has regularly worked on programmes for Czech Television: he is one of the main creators of the series *Big Beat* and *Czech Soda*, and you can find his name in the credits for *Sixty* and *Trip*. He has edited profiles of Dominik Hašek and Vladimír Mišík and many music videos and TV commercials.

He was nominated for a Czech Lion for his work on **ŽELARY**.

Feature films:

COSY DENS – 1999, directed by Jan Hřebejk

THE MAGNIFICENT SIX (*the short story Tomík*) – 1999, directed by Vojtěch Mašek

DIVIDED WE FALL – 2000, directed by Jan Hřebejk

OUT OF THE CITY – 2001, directed by Tomáš Vorel
A WAY OUT OF THE CITY – 2002, directed by Tomáš Vorel
PUPENDO – 2003, directed by Jan Hřebejk
ŽELARY – 2003, directed by Ondřej Trojan
UP AND DOWN – 2004, directed by Jan Hřebejk
BEAUTY IN TROUBLE – 2006, directed by Jan Hřebejk
TEDDY BEAR – 2007, directed by Jan Hřebejk
THE KARAMAZOVS – 2008, directed by Petr Zelenka
I'M ALL GOOD – 2008, directed by Jan Hřebejk

CZECH TELEVISION – BRNO TELEVISION STUDIO



ČESKÁ TELEVIZE

The Brno Studio opened in June 1961 as Czechoslovak Television's fourth studio. Over the last five decades it has become an important television producer. In addition to news and sport it produces entertainment, documentary, current affairs and music programmes and magazines. It devotes a lot of attention to programmes for children and young people and programmes on religious topics. Its dramas include many successful films, serials and fairytales – one of films it coproduced, **YEAR OF THE DEVIL**, won six Czech Lions and the Crystal Globe at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. The serial **POLICE HUMORESQUES**, set in the First Republic, won a Týtý Award and dozens of other programmes have also won prizes at festivals. It is currently working on a new serial by Karel Smyczek **POSTE RESTANTE**, a historical film by Jiří Svoboda **THE FOREST OF THE DEAD**, a comedy by Robert Sedláček **MEN IN HEAT** and a film set in World War II **FAREWELL**, written by Milan Uhde and directed by Juraj Nvota. The Chief Producer of the Drama Section at Czech Television's Brno Studio is Darina Levová, and Miloš Fedaš is the Chief Dramaturge.

ACTORS

Irena Horváthová – Věra



Irena Horváthová was born on 9 January 1979 in Brno. Her mother is an opera singer and her father is a guitarist. By the age of seven she was performing cimbalom music. She has loved funk since she was a child, which proved the best preparation for her role as frontwoman in a contemporary Roma band. When she was fifteen she began singing with the band Synergy. After the band broke up in 1997 it became Gulo čar, which includes Irena and her husband, Pavel Dirda.

Linda Rybová – Lawyer



Linda Rybová was born on 15 October 1975 in Prague. At the Prague Conservatory she studied acting and ballet. After completing her studies she began acting in Prague, starting at the Comedy Theatre. She soon moved to the Pod Palmovkou Theatre and appeared as a guest at the Řeznická Theatre. She is also well known on television. At the age of 15 she played the princess in a film coproduction of **THE FROG PRINCE** (directed by Juraj Herz) and a year later in the television fairytale **GOLDILOCKS' HAIR** (directed by Adam Rezek). As well as fairytales for television she also appeared in the musical **BIG BEAT** (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 1993). She became well known in 2000 when she appeared in the films **DARK BLUE WORLD** (directed by Jan Svěrák) and **WILD FLOWERS** (directed by F. A. Brabec). A year later she had a small part in the German horror movie **THE POOL** (directed by Boris von Sychowski). Her popularity increased with her role as a nurse in the television serials **THE ROSE GARDEN CLINIC** and **AIRPORT**. Linda Rybová lives with the actor David Prachař and they have three children.

David Prachař – Honza Kochta



David Prachař was born on 15 January 1959. He comes from a family of actors. He graduated from DAMU in Prague in 1982 and is a talented actor, musician and dancer. His destiny was shaped by his work with the directors Jan Grossman, Jan Nebeský and Michal Dočkal. He performed at the S. K. Neumann Theatre (now the Pod Palmovkou Theatre), the E. F. Burian Theatre and Činoherní klub. He also performed at the Comedy Theatre, where he won an award for the title role in **Hamlet**. He also put in a powerful performance in Boris Rösner's production of **Macbeth** at the Summer Shakespeare Festival. Since 2002 he has been a member of the National Theatre, where for several years he has shone in the title role of **Cyrano de Bergerac**. We can currently see him there in **Our**

Swaggerers, Richard III, A Little Night Music, a Benefit for Vlasta Chramostová – Three Lives and An Enemy of the People. His television films include **ISABELLA, DUCHESS OF BOURBON, JÁNOŠ'S MAGIC FLUTE, THE DAY THE SUN DIDN'T RISE** and **SHUT THAT HORSE UP!** He has acted in the serials **THE ROSE GARDEN CLINIC, 3+1 WITH MIROSLAV DONUTIL, THE PUB, BOYS AND MEN** and **BEFORE DAD GETS BACK**. His feature films include **ENCOUNTER WITH THE SHADOWS** (directed by Jiří Svoboda, 1982), **THE DIRECTOR Z.K.'S BIRTHDAY** (directed by Jaroslav Balík, 1987), **NEXUS 2.431** (directed by José María Forqué, 1994) and **AGATHA** (1999).

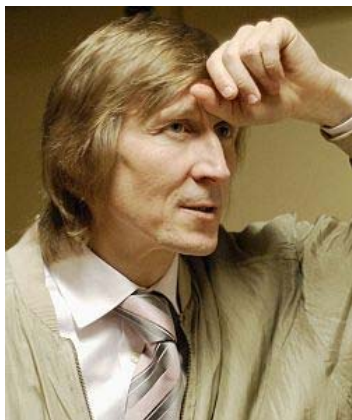
In 1994 he won an award in a critics' poll for the role of **Hamlet** and in 2001 an Alfréd Radok Award for the title role in Marlowe's **Doctor Faustus**. He also won a Thálie Award in 2006 for **Novecento** at the Viola Theatre. He has received two more nominations for a Thálie: for the title role in **Coriolano** and for his role in a production of **The Vast Domain**. He also holds František Filipovský Award for dubbing for the film **Life Is Beautiful**.

Igor Chmela – Erik



Igor Chmela was born on 2 January 1971 in Ostrava. He studied at DAMU in Prague and was then a member of the National Theatre, followed by the Dejvice Theatre. Since 2002 he has worked at the Na zábradlí Theatre in Prague. His debut film was a comedy directed by Pavel Göbl and Roman Švejda **RAIL YARD BLUES**. He has also appeared in Robert Sedláček's **RULES OF LIES**, David Ondříček's comedy **GRANDHOTEL**, Alice Nellis's tragicomic **LITTLE GIRL BLUE** and Petr Zelenka's **THE KARAMAZOVs**. He also appears in the television serial **THE ROSE GARDEN CLINIC**.

Vladimír Javorský – Mr Hloušek



The well-known and versatile actor and musician Vladimír Javorský was born in Ostrava on 2 May 1962. While still at secondary school he acted at the amateur Na žíněnkách Theatre. He studied at JAMU in Brno and immediately afterwards found work at the Na Provázku Theatre in Brno. He then joined Činoherní klub in Prague and in 1992-93 he appeared in France with Compagnie du Hasard. Since 1999 he has been one of the key actors at the National Theatre in Prague (Hamlet, Hadrian of Římsy, The Idiot, etc.). He regularly appears as a guest at other theatres and in the Forman brother's international project Obludárium.

He played the main role in the short Czech-American film **THE BRIDGE** (directed by Bobby Garabedian, 2000), which was nominated for an Oscar. He was nominated for a Czech Lion for his role in the film **THE WONDERFUL YEARS THAT SUCKED** (directed by Petr Nikolaev, 1997).

He first appeared on television while he was still a student, in the serial **BLACK COUNTRY**. More television roles followed – Private Kyslík in the serial **BOYS AND MEN** (directed by Evžen Sokolovský, 1988), the evil Sepp in **THE TRAIN OF CHILDHOOD AND EXPECTATION** (directed by Karel Kachyňa, 1989), **THERE WERE FIVE OF US** (1994) directed by Karel Smyczek, and his most important opportunity came in the coproduction serial **THE GREATEST PIERROT** (directed by Ivan Balada, 1990), where Javorský played the world famous mime Jean-Gaspard Debureau to perfection – perhaps because he had previously worked in pantomime and in France spent some time in an ensemble of travelling performers.

He has appeared in many feature films, including **THE BLACK BARONS** (directed by Zdeněk Sirový, 1992), **AN AMBIGUOUS REPORT ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD** (directed by Juraj Jakubisko, 1997), **RUFFIANO AND SWEETEETH** (directed by Karel Smyczek, 1997), **EENY MEENY** (directed by Alice Nellis, 2000), **A PIECE OF HEAVEN** (directed by Petr Nikolaev, 2005), **VIRGINITY SUCKS** (directed by Ivo Macharáček, 2005), **CATCH THE DOCTOR!** (directed by Martin Dolenský, 2007), **ROMING** (directed by Jiří Vejdělek, 2007) and **I'M ALL GOOD** (directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2007).

Vladimír Javorský's abilities are not confined to the theatre and film. He sings and plays the saxophone and speaks five foreign languages – English, German, Russian, Polish and French.

Petr Lněnička – Mr Dosoudil



Petr Lněnička was born on 20 July 1979 in Litomyšl. He studied acting at DAMU. He currently works mainly at the Kašpar Theatre, where he played **Hamlet**, and he appears as a guest at the Dejvice Theatre. He has appeared in episodes of the television serials **NEWSPAPER**, **THE FINAL SEASON**, **AIRPORT** and **WHY NOT DROWN?**, and in the television films **SUCH A DECENT MAN** and **SWINGTIME**. He also works in dubbing. He has appeared in the films **THE INDIAN AND THE NURSE** (directed by Dan Włodarczyk, 2006) and in Václav Marhoul's war movie **TOBRUK** (2008).

Jana Janěková Jr. – Eva



Jana Janěková was born in 1978 in Zlín and comes from a family of actors. In 2000 she graduated from JAMU in Brno. From 2001 to 2004 she was a guest at the National Theatre in Brno in the play *Closer* and at theatres in Prague, including the Na zábradlí Theatre, the Radek Brzobohatý Theatre and Rubín Theatre. Since 2000 she has been a member of the National Theatre in Prague. She also acts at the Palace Theatre in Prague. She has appeared on television in **3+1 WITH MIROSLAV DONUTIL** and **DEATH OF A PAEDOPHILE**. The last time she appeared in a film was in Robert Sedláček's **RULES OF LIES** (2006), where she met her husband, the actor Igor Chmela, with whom she has a three-year-old daughter Anička.

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ČESKÁ TELEVIZE

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