

58th BERLINALE 2008

International Forum of New Cinema

Citizen Havel

by Pavel Koutecký and Miroslav Janek

A feature-length documentary with never-before-seen footage that provides an intimate look at the first president of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, as he is thrust into the spotlight of international politics and celebrity, trying to maintain a balance between public and personal life, while guiding his nation from its communist past to a free, democratic future.



NEWSLETTER 1/2008

NEW CZECH FILMS

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Newsletter



1 NA VLASTNÍ NEBEZPEČÍ AT YOUR OWN RISK

D: Filip Renč
CZ, RO 2008 | 93 min | 35 mm
Cast: Jiří Langmajer, Filip Blažek, Václav Jiráček, Miroslav Krobot
Domestic release:
January 24, 2008

The owner of a travel agency specializing in extreme sports receives an interesting request – a trip down the dangerous Black River, where a Czech watersports enthusiast once died under mysterious circumstances. For Saša, the client, the trip to this remote area is a chance to learn the truth about an almost forgotten family tragedy. But his fellow travelers have no inkling of his real aim. This thrilling, mysterious tale is also action packed, as a group of travelers take on savage nature, self-appointed law enforcers, and their own limitations in an uneven contest.

2 OBČAN HAVEL CITIZEN HAVEL

D: Pavel Koutecký, Miroslav Janek
CZ, USA 2008 | 120 min | 35 mm
Domestic release:
January 31, 2008
www.citizenvh.cz

After the division of Czechoslovakia in 1992, former political dissident, leader of the Velvet Revolution, playwright, and essayist Václav Havel became the first president of a new country, the Czech Republic – a former enemy of the state given a mandate to transform that state and its institutions. He also permitted his friend, filmmaker Pavel Koutecký, to capture as much of it as possible, whether in the Prague Castle or around the world. The result is Citizen Havel, a feature-length documentary of never-before-seen footage that provides an intimate look at a man who, thrust into the spotlight of international politics and celebrity, tries to maintain a balance between public and personal life.

3 O ŽIVOT LIFE AT STAKE

D: Milan Šteindler
CZ, SK 2008 | 86 min | 35 mm
Cast: Vojtěch Kotek, Dorota Nvotová, Bohumil Klepl
Domestic release:
February 7, 2008
www.ozivot.cz

Michal, accepted to medical school, is leaving his current job, which calls for a celebration. A twist of fate, however, leaves him alone at the cottage outside Prague where the party is to take place with Zita, a woman he's just met. Although she's not his type, extraordinary circumstances result in their spending a passionate night together. But when an accident occurs, what was meant to be a one-night stand becomes an event that threatens to radically change their lives.

4 NEJKRÁSNĚJŠÍ HÁDANKA THE LOVELIEST RIDDLE

D: Zdeněk Troška
CZ 2008 | 100 min | 35 mm
Cast: Jan Dolanský, Taťjana Medvecká, Ladislav Potměšil
Domestic release:
February 21, 2008
www.nejkrasnejsihadanka.cz

Matěj works for a farmer whose daughter, Majdalenka, he loves. When the greedy old man drives him away, Matěj makes his way to the royal castle, where a contest is being held for the hand of the Princess Rozmarýna: solve three riddles and win her hand in marriage. The riddles are a breeze for the clever Matěj, and the king soon grows fond of him, but the general, the lady-in-waiting, and the steward see him as nothing but trouble and resolve to get rid of him. He, however, with the aid of his friend Ondra (who secretly loves the princess) foils all their plans. The princess realizes at last who truly loves her, and Matěj is keen to return to his beloved Majdalenka...

5 O RODIČÍCH A DĚTECH OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

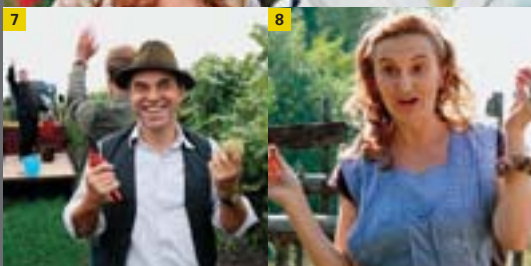
D: Vladimír Michálek
CZ 2008 | 100 min | 35 mm
Cast: Josef Somr, David Novotný, Luboš Kostelný, Zuzana Stívínová,
Domestic release:
March 3, 2008
www.orodicichadetech.com

A seemingly ordinary situation: a son goes for a walk with his father. But the son is in his forties, living his own life, and the father is over 70. The only thing these two seem to have in common is their monthly walks. The brilliant dialogue reveals the 20th century in all its absurdity while sounding the depths of human relationships. The father-son bond has never been shown in such an interesting light: two grown men who respect, hate, and love each other, all at once. There is nothing extreme in this depiction, but it will be intimately familiar to those who, in middle age, have talked to their fathers.

6 VENKOVSKÝ UČITEL A COUNTRY TEACHER

D: Bohdan Sláma
CZ, D, F 2008 | 120 min | 35 mm
Cast: Pavel Liška, Zuzana Bydžovská, Zuzana Kronerová, Miroslav Krobot
Domestic release:
March 20, 2008
www.venkovskycucitel.cz

Although the protagonist of the story is over 30, he has yet to experience true love. He hasn't found it in relationships with women or with men. He imagines he can find fulfillment by running away to the countryside and throwing himself into his work as a teacher. Indeed, he has a gift for opening children's eyes to the mysteries of nature. Yet he soon discovers he cannot rid himself of his desires by escaping into isolation. He falls in love with a 17-year old boy and, at the same time, forms a deep bond of friendship with the boy's mother. She falls in love with the teacher, who is unable to tell her he is gay.



7 BOBULE GRAPES

D: Tomáš Bařina
CZ 2008 | 95 min | 35 mm
Cast: Kryštof Hádek, Lukáš Langmajer, Václav Postránecký
Domestic release:
March 27, 2008
www.bobule.cz

Honza is a likeable, intelligent small-time crook who has decided to make his ailing grandfather's life-long dream – a trip abroad – come true. In so doing, he inadvertently makes his own dream come true too: looking after his grandfather's winery seems like the perfect holiday. A full pantry, wine, Honza even falls for a neighbor, Klara. Moreover, his buddy Jirka comes for a visit and they tour the surrounding wineries. Together, they discover the beautiful scenery of the wine-growing regions, above all Pálava, and find themselves becoming entranced by the inner life of vintners. Plenty of memorable lines and comic situations. A wonderful holiday, an absolute idyll, begins.

8 TAKOVÁ NORMÁLNÍ RODINKA JUST AN ORDINARY FAMILY

D: Patrik Hartl
CZ 2008 | 100 min | 35 mm
Cast: Eva Holubová, Jiří Mádě, Marián Labuda
Domestic release:
April 17, 2008

The 1968 sit-com *Just an Ordinary Family* was originally a one-off show. Due to its popularity with TV audiences, however, Fan Vavřincová wrote seven more episodes, producing one of the most popular Czech TV series of all time. The feature film of the same name, with a screenplay by Patrik Hartl based on Fan Vavřincová's book, transposes the well-known stories and characters into the present day. *Just an Ordinary Family* shows the human foibles and comic situations that confront co-existing generations of a single family, but it is really about the fellowship, tolerance and love that hold families together, even when the going gets tough.

9 KARAMAZOVI THE KARAMAZOV'S

D: Petr Zelenka
CZ, PL 2008 | 100 min | 35 mm
Cast: Ivan Trojan, Igor Chmela, Lenka Krobotová, David Novotný
Domestic release:
April 24, 2008
www.karamazovi.cz

Petr Zelenka's movie *The Karamazov's*, takes place in contemporary Poland. A group of Prague actors arrives in Krakow to present a stage adaptation of Dostoyevski's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* at an alternative festival, being held in a steel mill. As we watch the rehearsal, we also follow the real lives of the cast and the steel mill workers. A maintenance man learns his son, in hospital as a result of an accident at the mill, has died, but the rehearsal continues at the man's request. Suddenly, the real drama is not on the stage, but in the audience...

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Popular director **Jan Hřebejk** has not one, but two films slated for release in Czech cinemas in 2008: the comedy *U mě dobrý*, based on a script by his longtime co-writer Petr Jarchovský (production Total Helpart – T.H.A.) premieres in May, while his next film, *Nestyda*, started shooting in January and is scheduled to premier in October. This second film is a collaboration with best-selling author Michal Viewegh, who wrote the script based on his popular novel, *Stories on Marriage and Sex*. *Nestyda* will be produced by Rudolf Bierman and Tomáš Hoffman (*I Served the King of England*).

Czech movie-goers remained faithful to their homegrown cinema in 2007 – domestic films accounted for **33 percent of the total market**. This ranks the Czech Republic second only to France, where domestic films traditionally enjoy huge popularity.

It's looking like a good year for Czech film – the Czech Film Fund has a budget of **EUR 13 mio for 2008**, four times the amount available in previous years.

A record 32 Czech films are expected to premiere in 2008 including feature films like **Bohdan Sláma's *A Country Teacher*** and **Petr Zelenka's *The Karamazovs***.



Jan Maliř (DOP),
Jan Hřebejk,
Jiří Macháček (main role)



Bohdan Sláma



Petr Zelenka



Q&A with Miroslav Janek, who completed the feature-length documentary on former Czech president Václav Havel after director Pavel Koutecký died tragically in 2006. Janek started as a film editor – *Naqoyqatsi* (2002), directed by Godfrey Reggio – before going on to become a well-known documentary filmmaker in his own right – *The Unseen* (1996), *Vierka* (2006). With *Citizen Havel*, Janek found himself with 100 hours of material shot over 13 years. *Citizen Havel* will have its international premiere at the 58th Berlinale in 2008.

What interested you most about this project?

The secret of all the footage that had been shot, the personage of President Havel, the possibility of returning to the sociopolitical atmosphere of a particular period, and the opportunity to seize on an editing assignment after such a long time.

Were you given a screenplay? How did the film come to turn out as it did?

There was no screenplay for this film nor could there have been. Pavel Koutecký chose the "observer" method, which means he recorded the scene as it was taking place without interfering at all. Naturally, I searched for and followed up on his editing notes, and I questioned his co-workers in depth. Based on all that, it was apparent that Pavel was just preparing to go into the cutting room, that he still didn't have a clearly defined plan. So we had to trust that the footage would speak for itself.

Have you got any favorite scenes?

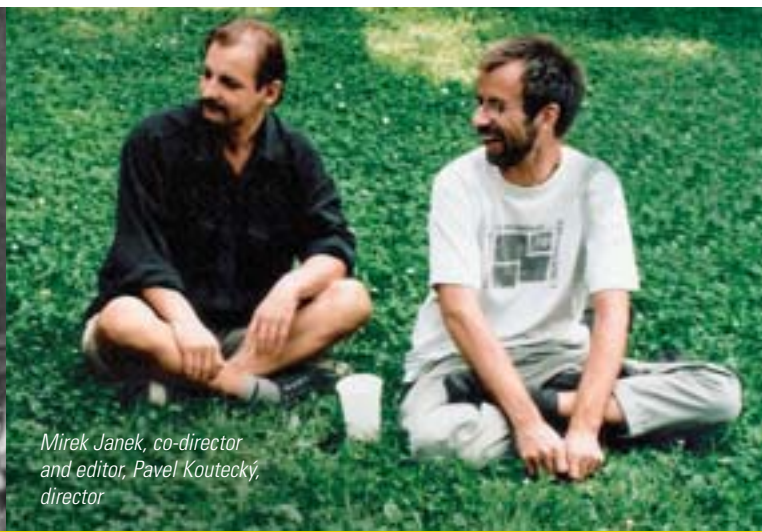
Yes. I have 35 favorite scenes. And maybe twice that many that are not in the film.

What do you consider the most interesting aspect for the audience?

The possibility of getting to know a Václav Havel other than the one they know from television news or the daily press, the possibility of returning to a certain period of our modern history, and the possibility of getting a glimpse behind the scenes of the presidential post. The film offers a singular view of the Czech political scene.



Director Pavel Koutecký
and his cameraman
Stano Slušný at work



Mirek Janek, co-director
and editor, Pavel Koutecký,
director

European Film Commissions Network elect its first board in Prague

In the fall of 2007, the Czech Film Center hosted the General Assembly of the newly established European Film Commissions Network (EuFCN).

"The audiovisual industry worldwide is expected to grow to EUR 71 billion over the next three years, according to a recent PWC report. The EuFCN will work to ensure that Europe competes for a share of this global industry," said President Bohrer.



Fifty-five commissioners representing 18 European countries met in Prague to choose a president – Arie Bohrer of Location Austria – and elect the first board of directors.

The board members are Patrick Lamassoure of Film France, Marianne Gassner of the Stuttgart Region Film Commission, Andrea Rocco of the Genova Set Film Commission, Giorgio Fossati of the Film Commission Torino Piemonte, Piluca Querol of the Andalusia Film Commission, and Ludmila Claussova of the Czech Film Center-Film Commission.

Film commissions have become an important part of the international film industry, generating significant income for their countries or regions. Moreover, the promotional activities surrounding a film can raise a country's international profile. Over the past few years, the number of European film commissions, particularly regional commissions, has increased. Worldwide, there are now more than 300 film commissions reporting convincing results and impressive bottom lines.

Festival International Competitive Sections:

International Competition of Feature Films for Children and Youth / International Competition of Animated Films for Children and Youth / European Debuts Competition / Competition of Films from Visegrad Countries / Zlin Dog – International Student Film Competition / The Rainbow Marble – International Children's Advertising Awards

Festival Non-Competitive Sections:

Days of British Cinema, New Czech Films and TV Production, Documentary, Panorama, Night Horizons



48.

ZLÍN 2008

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www.zlinfest.cz