

The uncompromising Painted Bird by Václav Marhoul will fly to Los Angeles to fight for the Oscar nomination

The Czech Film and Television Academy (CFTA), which annually awards the Czech Lions, has chosen *The Painted Bird* written, directed and produced by Václav Marhoul as a candidate for the Oscar in the category of the Best International Feature Film. The academics were choosing from 10 Czech feature films and documentary features that had been submitted by their producers. The other films that got more votes were *On the Roof* and *Golden Sting*. The voting took place from 1st to 13th September 2019.

The film *Painted Bird* was premiered at the film festival in Venice two weeks ago where it got considerable attention of the foreign media and as well as the professionals and its makers got the Students' Jury Prize - Film for UNICEF. The film based on the novel of the same name by Jerzy Kosiński is now getting the opportunity to represent Czech cinematography at the annual 92nd awards of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which will take place on 9th February 2020 in Los Angeles.

The Painted Bird is a deeply dramatic story about the immediate relationship between terror and cruelty on one side and innocence and love on the other. In spite of the fact that the novel itself has always been arousing controversial reactions since its publication in 1965, it got international attention and numerous prestigious literary awards. Marhoul's film adaptation of the book is just so controversial: *"The moment I finished reading the book in 2006 I knew I wanted to make a film based on it. And from 2008 all my efforts went to it,"* says Václav Marhoul, who wrote the screenplay and directed and produced the film and he adds: *"I stand by every second of that movie, there are no compromises. And I am glad that everybody who took part in that film went on that journey with me without missing a beat. From the genius of a director of photography Vladimír Smutný to Harvey Keitel or Stellan Skarsgård."* The shooting of the film *The Painted Bird* took about 16 months at 43 different locations in the Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic. There were 100 filming days during which 263 screenplay pictures consisting of 1520 shots were realized and there were altogether 3531 clapperboards to fulfil them. The main children role was played by Petr Kotlár. In the international cast there are names such as Udo Kier, Michaela Doležalová, Zdeněk Pecha, Lech Dyblik, Jitka Čvančarová, Stellan Skarsgård, Harvey Keitel, Julian Sands, Júlia Valentová, Aleksej Kravčenko, Barry Pepper and others. Crucial for the film is the role the director of photography Vladimír Smutný, who shot the film on 35 millimetre black and white material.

Václav Marhoul (1960, Prague) is a screenwriter, producer and director. His films *Smart Philip* (2003) and namely *Tobruk* (2008) were awarded various domestic as well as international prizes, including the Czech Lions. He took part in the production of *The Prague 5* (1989) and *Smoke* (1990), he produced the film *The Bed* (1998). He graduated from FAMU where he studied production and later worked for the Czech Television or *Krátký film*. In the

film studio AB Barrandov he started working as an assistant producer and later from 1990 to 1997 he was its managing director. In 1997 he founded his own company Silver Screen s.r.o.

The awards of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences are considered to be the most prestigious awards in the area of film production. The nominations for Oscars will be announced on 13th January 2020 and the ceremony will take place on 9th February 2020 in Los Angeles.

So far two Czechoslovak and one Czech film have managed to get the award for the Best International Feature Film. In 1965 it was The Shop on Main Street by Ján Kádár and Elmar Klos, in 1967 the film Closely Watched Trains by Jiří Menzel won the prize and in 1996 it was Kolya by Jan Svěrák. Six more films have been nominated by the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences: The Loves of a Blond by Miloš Forman in 1966 and The Firemen's Ball by the same director two years later. Jiří Menzel fought for the Oscar for the second time with his film My Sweet Little Village in 1986 and on the contrary Jan Svěrák got his first nomination for The Elementary School in 1991. In 2000 Jan Hřebejk with his nominated film Divided We Fall also travelled to Los Angeles and in 2003 the film Želary by Ondřej Trojan got the attention of the academics as well.

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