

The film *Charlatan* directed by Agnieszka Holland is taking off to fight for an Oscar

The Czech Film and Television Academy (CFTA), which presents the Czech Lion awards, also nominates the Czech Republic's candidate for the Oscar every year. This year, it is sending the drama *Charlatan* directed by Agnieszka Holland to fight for the most prestigious film award. Agnieszka Holland's latest film is inspired by the real life of the healer Jan Mikolášek and the script was written by Marek Epstein. Ivan Trojan and his son Josef Trojan starred in the leading roles. The film was premiered at the 70th Berlinale International Film Festival this year.

The ceremonial gala evening of the 93rd awards of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will take place on 25th April 2021 in Los Angeles. The academics were choosing from 10 Czech feature films and documentary features that had been submitted by their producers. The voting took place from 1st to 11th October 2020.

The film *Charlatan* was created within the framework of a Czech-Irish-Polish-Slovak co-production and it presents a stirring biographical drama of an exceptional man gifted with unique healing powers against the background of historical events. The plot is inspired by real fortunes of the healer Jan Mikolášek who throughout his career answered the pleas of thousands of people from all the social classes and also some of the most prominent figures of the political and cultural milieu. Mikolášek is a person without official medical education who possesses the unique as well as unfathomable talent to diagnose illnesses and heal people by herbs even when the doctors are at a loss. However, his exceptional skills are paid for by the fight with his own demons. His healing practice is his inner redemption and protects him against himself. "I was pleased and at the same time honoured that after shooting the *Burning Bush* I could again work in the Czech Republic that is so close to my heart," says the director Agnieszka Holland. Apart from Ivan Trojan and his son Josef she also cast the actors Juraj Loj, Jaroslava Pokorná, Martin Myšička, Miroslav Hanuš, Jiří Černý, Tomáš Jeřábek or Jan Budař. The film has got the thumbprints of the director of photography Martin Štrba and the costume designer Katarína Štrbová-Bieliková.

The prominent Polish director and screenwriter **Agnieszka Holland** graduated from FAMU in Prague. In 2017 she obtained the Silver Bear at Berlinale for her film *Spoor* and in 2019 she was nominated for the Silver Bear for the best film with her film *Mr Jones*. She was awarded the Czech Lion for the drama *Burning Bush* and she has also been nominated for the Oscar three times. As an assistant of the director she cooperated with the legends of Polish cinematography Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Zanussi at the beginning of her career. Her debut film was a psychological drama *Provincial Actors* (1980), which was a metaphor of the then political situation in Poland and won the Award of International Critics at the Cannes festival. From her rich filmography, which she shoots in the USA, Poland and also here, we should not omit the biographical drama *Total Eclipse* with excellent Leonardo DiCaprio (1995) and *Copying Beethoven* (2006) or the successful television miniseries *Burning Bush* (2013).

The awards of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which have been presented since 1929, are considered to be the most prestigious awards in the area of film production. The shortlisted films will be published on 9th February 2021 and the nominations for Oscars will be announced on 15th March 2021. The ceremony will take place on 25th April 2021 in Los Angeles.

Last year it was the film called *The Painted Bird* directed by Václav Marhoul which went to fight for the Oscar and it got among the best ten films. So far two Czechoslovak and one Czech film have managed to get the award for the Best International Feature Film during the almost one-hundred-year-long history of "Oscars". In 1965 it was *The Shop on Main Street* by Ján Kádár and Elmar Klos. Two years later 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.

About the Czech Film and Television Academy:

The Czech Film and Television Academy was founded in 1995 and in 2013 it was transformed into a registered association. Its main aim is to support and promote Czech cinematographic art in the Czech Republic as well as abroad and create conditions for the development of Czech film. The academy presents the most prestigious Czech film award – the Czech Lion and nominates the Czech candidate for the awards of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. At the moment the CFTA consists of 325 members.

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