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SFFest '72

MY LOVE TO THE SWALLOWS

(A Pozdravuji Vlastovsky)

Czechoslovakia

Source: Ceskoslovensky Filmexport. **Production:** Barandov Studios. **Direction, Script:** Jaromil Jires. **Photography:** Jan Curik. **Music:** Lubos Fiser. **Leading Players:** Magda Vasaryova, Viera Strniskova, Julius Vasek, Hana Pasterjikova, Dagmar Blahova, Jan Ekl, Vaclav Helsus.



One of the artistic revelations at this year's Karlovy Vary Film Festival was Jires' new film, a richly-imaged, poetic description of the last fateful days of a young Slovakian girl, Marushka Kuderikova. She was a 22-year-old student who, when the Germans occupied, became a courier for the resistance movement. Her terrified family is unable to dissuade her from this dangerous activity, and even her lover finds himself ostracized to a secondary level of Marushka's emotional commitments. Suddenly, she is arrested, interrogated and sentenced to death. During imprisonment at Breslau, she manages to scribble out notes of her thoughts, and these are smuggled to her parents. These true-to-life recollections are the main dramatic source of the film, a bright succession of images, filled with all the color and astonishment found in Jires' **Valerie And the Week of Wonders**. If it is possible to find cinematic poetry within the grim confines of tragedy, then the director has succeeded in making one recall, as Marushka does, the exhilaration and nostalgic longing for those beautiful moments of a lifetime which are held on to if only for the immediate solace and warmth they can revive. Marushka knows that prisoners are always executed after 99 days and only on Fridays, then gradually, she realizes that for some reason, her deadline has exceeded this period. Life rushes more strongly through the girl's consciousness in this Limbo: in dreams, her suspenseful escapades; an apple is received and joyously eaten as a symbol of resistance—girls sing while strolling across a twilight field, over Slovenian hills of a vanished summer—these things help Marushka to wait for death with a song rather than with tears. When her last birthday arrives, she gives her thanks to Nature, and Jires makes Marushka the embodiment of the anonymous wartime young who gave their lives to danger, linked to an ideal stronger than their existence.