

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Larks on a string</b>
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Source	<i>Los Angeles International Film Exposition</i>
Date	1990
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Skrivánci na nitich (Larks on a string), Menzel, Jirí, 1990

Sunday, April 29, 8:45 pm – Fairfax AFI L.A. FF U.S. PREMIERE

CZECHOSLAVAKIA

## LARKS ON A STRING

(*Skrivanci Na Nitich*)

Director: Jiri Menzel

Producer: Karel Kochman

Writers: Bohumil Hrabal, Jiri Menzel from an idea by  
Bohumil Hrabal

Cinematographer: Jaromir Sotr

Music: Jiri Sust

Principal Cast: Rudolph Hrusinsky, Vaclav  
Neckar, Vladimir Brodsky, Leos Sucharipa,  
Jitka Zelenohorska

Production Co.: Barrandov Filmstudio

Export Agent: Czechoslovakia Filmexport

1969/Color/94 min.

In Czech with English subtitles

1940

A full 21 years after it was made, Jiri Menzel's *Larks on a String* (Grand Prize winner at the 1990 Berlin Film Festival) is finally off the shelf. Made at the end of the Golden Age of Czech cinema, *Larks on a String* went into production just as the Warsaw Pact invaded the country (August 1968) and, as soon as it was finished, it was banned. Menzel's heresy, and that of his writer, Bohumil Hrabal, was to satirize the "re-education" of "bourgeois elements" in the early '50s, immediately after the Communist takeover of the country. Much of the film is set on a scrap-heap close to heavily polluting factories: here, a small group of "bourgeois" types are forced to do manual labor. "One day we'll see where the truth lies," says one of the characters; it took a long time for the truths in Menzel's film to be revealed to the outside world, but his anger at the destructive system imposed on his country is as valid as ever. — David J. Stratton, *Variety*

