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THE LIFE AND EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF PRIVATE IVAN CHONKIN

Život a neobyčejná dobrodružství vojáka Ivana Čonkina



Menzel's most recent work is based on a legendary Russian comic novel by Vladimir Voinovich which created a stir when it was smuggled out of Russia and published over twenty years ago. Voinovich's story, which has been called a

"masterpiece" and "perhaps the greatest modern Russian comic novel," ridicules the sacred cows of the Soviet Union: the party, the army, and the police. The film tells the story of a simple, awkward private sent to guard a downed plane in a far-off village during World War II. Once dispatched, the soldier's superiors soon forget about him. Reluctant to abandon his duty, the young man pushes the plane into the garden of a peasant girl he has fallen in love with and continues to watch the plane while tending his love's land and milking the cows. Following a confused string of misunderstandings and mistaken identities, the private unknowingly makes fools of the Soviet military machine, the secret police and the party bureaucracy. The London-based producer for the film believed so strongly in Menzel that he waited six years for Prague's Velvet Revolution to shake free the director, known for his genius at crafting subtle humor. Slovak star Marian Labuda rounds out the otherwise Russian cast. The film, in Russian, was shot in Milovice, an old Russian army base in the former Czechoslovakia.

Screenplay: Zdeněk Svěrák, from the novel by Vladimir Voinovich.

Photographed by: Jaromír Šofr. **With:** Gennadij Nazarov, Zoja Burjakova, Vladimir Iljin, Marian Labuda. 1993, color, 106 min.

JIŘÍ MENZEL

Born in Prague in 1938, Jiří Menzel was trained in film at FAMU, the Prague film academy, from 1958 to 1962. Menzel is well known for his genius at crafting bittersweet tales tinged with subtle humor, warmth, and reality. While some of his peers from the Czech New Wave of the '60s, such as Miloš Forman and Ivan Passer, went west, Menzel stayed home and honed his craft for years under the Communist regime. Thus his body of work reflected the trials and triumphs of the ordinary citizen everywhere.



Menzel has made 15 feature films and won several major prizes, including an Oscar for Best Foreign Film and a nomination in the same category. Many of his screenplays are based on the work of the Czech author Bohumil Hrabal, whose work Menzel greatly admired and brought to the screen often with Hrabal as screenwriter. Besides his efforts with Hrabal, Menzel's passion for literary works also led him to adapt the works of other great writers, including Vladislav Vančura (executed by the Nazis), Václav Havel, Josef Škvorecký, and the Russian underground novelist Vladimir Voinovich.

In addition to his filmmaking career, Menzel has also acted—both in his own works and in those of his colleagues (for instance, Věra Chytilová's *Apple Game*)—taught at Prague's Film Academy, and penned screenplays. Moreover, he is a prolific and successful theater director both at home and elsewhere in Europe.

2P #30110

JIŘÍ MENZEL FILM RETROSPECTIVE at ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, NYC

OCTOBER 15-31 1999

Friday, 15	7 p.m. Closely Watched Trains 9 p.m. Capricious Summer
Saturday, 16	7 p.m. Capricious Summer 9 p.m. Larks on a String
Sunday, 17	7 p.m. Larks on a String 9 p.m. Cutting it Short
Wednesday, 20	7 p.m. Cutting It Short 9 p.m. Festival of the Snowdrops
MEET THE DIRECTOR:	
Thursday, 21	7 p.m. Closely Watched Trains (followed by discussion with Jiří Menzel and lead actor Václav Neckář)
Friday, 22	7 p.m. Festival of the Snowdrops 9 p.m. My Sweet Little Village
Saturday, 23	7 p.m. My Sweet Little Village 9 p.m. The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin
Sunday, 24	7 p.m. The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin 9 p.m. Closely Watched Trains
Wednesday, 27	7 p.m. Closely Watched Trains 9 p.m. Capricious Summer
Thursday, 28	7 p.m. Capricious Summer 9 p.m. Larks on a String
Friday, 29	7 p.m. Larks on a String 9 p.m. Cutting It Short
Saturday, 30	5 p.m. Cutting It Short 7 p.m. Festival of the Snowdrops 9 p.m. My Sweet Little Village
Sunday, 31	5 p.m. Festival of the Snowdrops 7 p.m. My Sweet Little Village 9 p.m. The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin



Anthology Film Archives is located at 32 Second Avenue at Second Street New York, NY 10003 tel: (212) 505-5110

Czech Center New York and Anthology Film Archives present

JIŘÍ MENZEL RETROSPECTIVE



Rudolf Hrušínský in *Festival of the Snowdrops*

OCTOBER 15-31, 1999

CLOSELY WATCHED TRAINS

Ostrře sledované vlaky

Jiří Menzel's masterful first feature earned the then 27-year-old filmmaker an Oscar for Best Foreign Film (the second film to be so honored in the history of Czechoslovak cinema.) Set during World War II, the touchingly beautiful film tells the story of a young railway man coming of age in a troubled time. As the youth settles down to the routine of his first job, he slowly learns to cope with the ups and downs of ordinary life... and love, which he discovers when he falls for a female conductor who regularly passes through his station. But as the war looms closer, the railway lines soon bring the realities of the Nazi occupation right into the tiny station and into the lives of everyone there. Menzel co-wrote the screenplay with revered Czech author and long-time Menzel collaborator, Bohumil Hrabal, on whose novel it is based.

Screenplay: Bohumil Hrabal and Jiří Menzel, from the novel by Bohumil Hrabal. **Photographed by:** Jaromír Šofr. **With:** Václav Neckář, Jitka Bendová, Vladimír Valenta, Josef Somr. 1966, bw, 79 min.



CAPRICIOUS SUMMER

Rozmarné léto

This whimsical story plays out in a small sleepy town over the course of a few days during one lazy summer. When a traveling magician, Arnošek (played by Menzel), shows up with his beautiful companion,

Anna, the bored inhabitants of the town suddenly perk up. Over the course of the next few days, a trio of friends try their luck with Anna while the wife of one of the men tries to find some sexual excitement with the mysterious magician. When the visitors leave, the townsfolk are left behind with their ordinary lives again. Based on a book by Vladislav Vančura of the same name, the film was adapted by Menzel for the screen with Václav Nývlt.

Screenplay: Václav Nývlt and Jiří Menzel, from the novel by Vladislav Vančura. **Photographed by:** Jaromír Šofr. **With:** Rudolf Hrušínský, Míla Myslíková, Vlastimil Brodský, Jiří Menzel. 1967, color, 74 min.



LARKS ON A STRING

Skřivánci na niti

Set in the 1950s in Kladno, the film focuses on a group of "bourgeois elements" who have been forced to work in the town's factory scrapyard in order to get "re-educated" for the new "socialist" society. Occasionally, someone "disappears" but the group still manages to see the humorous side of their predicament. Meanwhile, nearby, a group of women have also been put to work for attempting to escape the country. Although contact is forbidden, a young guard, Angel, falls in love with a gypsy woman and wants to "re-educate"



JIŘÍ MENZEL: Retrospective of MASTERPIECES

The Czech Center New York and Anthology Film Archives present a retrospective of Czech New Wave director Jiří Menzel's greatest films made over the last thirty years.

Do not miss the chance to meet the director following the October 21 screening of *Closely Watched Trains*. The film's lead actor, Václav Neckář, will join Menzel in a discussion of the Oscar-winning film.

In conjunction with the Jiří Menzel Film Retrospective, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in New York presents an exhibition on the life and work of Bohumil Hrabal, Menzel's favorite author and long-time collaborator. Entitled "Too Loud a Solitude," the exhibition will be on view at the Anthology Film Archives from October 15 to 31.

The New York screenings are part of a traveling retrospective across the country which makes stops in Montreal, Cleveland, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Santa Fe and is organized by the Czech Center New York and art cinema venues in the respective cities. Films for the Jiří Menzel retrospective were kindly provided by the National Film Archive, Czech Republic and Portobello Pictures, UK.

Sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc. and held with the support of the Consulate General of the Czech Republic, the New York leg of the retrospective is a part of the month-long festivities surrounding the celebration of Czech Independence Day.

her in his own way. Adapted from a story by Bohumil Hrabal, this potent and emotional film was disapproved of and banned by the Communist authorities for 21 years. It was finally released in 1990 after the fall of the totalitarian government.

Screenplay: Bohumil Hrabal and Jiří Menzel, from stories by Bohumil Hrabal. **Photographed by:** Jaromír Šofr. **With:** Rudolf Hrušínský, Václav Neckář, Jitka Zelenohorská, Vlastimil Brodský, Leoš Suchařípa, Jaroslav Satoranský. 1969, color, 90 min.

CUTTING IT SHORT

Postřižiny

Set in a small town Czech brewery in the 1920s during the golden years of the First Republic, this comedy is based on stories from Bohumil Hrabal's childhood. A timid brewery manager finds his routine life suddenly disturbed when his vivacious wife teams up with his lively and impulsive brother who has come to visit. Along the way, as the two enliven the town with their madcap antics, the wife is told about a general "shortening" in all spheres of life—distances shortened by the radio, fashion shortened by the scissors... etc. Inspired, she raises her hemline and cuts her beautiful hair in a moment of individual triumph.

Screenplay: Bohumil Hrabal and Jiří Menzel, from the novel by Bohumil Hrabal. **Photographed by:** Jaromír Šofr. **With:** Magda Vašaryová, Jiří Schmitzer, Rudolf Hrušínský, Jaromír Hanzlík. 1980, color, 93 min.



FESTIVAL OF THE SNOWDROPS

Slavnosti sněženek

Following the success of *Cutting It Short*, Menzel joined forces with Hrabal once again for a film about the author's beloved village of Kersko, near Prague, where Hrabal spent much of his later years.

Out of a series of seemingly insignificant incidents, a beautiful portrait of the simple local villagers emerges, endowed with Hrabal's rich dialogue and Menzel's breadth of vision. Trouble erupts when a wild boar from one village rampages into a school classroom of a neighboring village where it is shot dead in front of the teacher and students. The dispute is over who owns the trophy and a heated argument begins between the Hunters Association of the two villages. The firm teacher prevents the two sides from coming to blows and a compromise is eventually reached—a huge celebration dinner for both villages in a local pub. Over the course of the meal, numerous moments of conflict arise and are addressed as the villagers come to appreciate how closely their lives are bound with the bounty of nature.

Screenplay: Bohumil Hrabal and Jiří Menzel, from the novel by Bohumil Hrabal. **Photographed by:** Jiří Macák. **With:** Rudolf Hrušínský, Jaromír Hanzlík, Josef Somr, Libuše Šafránková, Petr Čepek, František Vlášil. 1983, color, 83 min.



MY SWEET LITTLE VILLAGE

Vesničko má středisková

Menzel received his second Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film for this charming comedy which went on to become one of the greatest box-office successes in Czechoslovakia. The screenplay, by Zdeněk Svěrák (who also wrote *Kolya*, the third Czech Oscar-winner), finds room for both comedy and deep emotion. As in many of Menzel's films, the location is a small village, this time in the mid-80s. The story revolves around a "village idiot," his little house and the gossip and everyday sorrows he suffers.

Screenplay: Zdeněk Svěrák. **Photographed by:** Jaromír Šofr. **With:** Marian Labuda, János Bán, Rudolf Hrušínský, Petr Čepek, Libuše Šafránková. 1985, color, 98 min.



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