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Author(s)	A. James Liska
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'Snowdrop Festival' (Czech)

Saturday, 5:15 p.m.

Richly allegorical and delightfully humorous characterize the neatly filmed "Snowdrop Festival," a Czechoslovakian entry by director Jiri Menzel ("Closely Watched Trains," 1966) and writer Bohumil Hrabal ("Cutting It Short," 1980). The story revolves around a hunt for a wild boar (it is killed in front of a roomful of schoolchildren) and the ensuing struggle between two villages for the prized trophy. A compromise is worked out — at the insistence of the teacher and for the benefit of the children — and the villagers share both head and flesh, but not without considerable

incident over the positioning of the boar's head and whether pork is better with rose-hips or sauerkraut.

But the story line is almost incidental to stories of conflict and resolve. Utilizing a variety of characters as non sequiturs, the indignities suffered by the struggling class from seemingly ineffectual authority figures are contrasted sharply with the hollow rewards of greed or enterprise. Like all that is Czech, there is a sadness to life — one which demands that failure be accepted. While there remains an unexplainable happiness from life's simple pleasures (roast pork and beer, time away from a nagging wife) those pleasures seem almost not worth the struggle. The film, however, is worth a viewing. — **A. James Liska**