

Václav Marhoul completes filming of *The Painted Bird*.

Early this morning on a bridge near the village of Kácov on the Sázava river, the final take was shot in the new full-length film by **Václav Marhoul**, entitled **The Painted Bird** and based on the world-wide bestseller of the same name by author **Jerzy Kosiński**. This moment is the culminating point of eight years of preparation, including two years of efforts to acquire the filming rights, seventeen (17) revisions of the screenplay, which took three years to complete, and then in the remaining years much effort, eventually successful, to ensure the financing of the entire project.

Filming took place successively for a period of sixteen (**16**) months in Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic, in a total of forty-three (**43**) locations, reaching precisely one hundred (**100**) filming days with the realisation of two hundred and sixty-three (**263**) scenes with one thousand, five hundred and twenty (**1520**) individual shots, created out of a complete total of three thousand, five hundred and thirty-one (**3 531**) realised takes.

Appearing in *The Painted Bird* alongside the main character, personified by the now-eleven-year-old (11) **Petr Kotlár** from Český Krumlov, is an impressive range of international actors, above all including such global superstars like **Harvey Keitel** and **Stellan Skarsgård**, along with **Udo Kier**, **Julian Sands** and **Barry Pepper**. Also appearing on the screen are **Tim Kalkhof** from Germany, **Alla Sokolova** from Ukraine, **Alexej Kravchenko** from Russia, **Lech Dyblik** from Poland, **Júlia Valentová** and **Martin Nahálka** from Slovakia, and of the Czech actors, most significantly **Míša Doležalová**, **Zdeněk Pecha**, **Jitka Čvančarová**, **Radim Fiala** and **Petr Vaněk**.

“My feelings after the final take? Yes, there were many indeed... But one is worth mentioning. I had the sense that a year and a half ago, I'd saddled a wild horse, and the two of us had gone galloping boldly off into the distance.... At high speed... So quickly did the filming pass...” Director, screenwriter and producer **Václav Marhoul**.

The film, realised by camera operator **Vladimír Smutný** on **black-and-white 35 mm negative film** in the format **Cinemascope**, is now entering the phase of full visual and auditory postproduction, with completion aiming for the end of February next year. The world premiere is planned for May and the film's theatre release for September **2019**.

The Painted Bird

Trying to protect their child from the mass extermination of Jews, a Jewish couple sends their son to a relative in the countryside somewhere in Eastern Europe. However, the boy's aunt dies unexpectedly and the child is forced to set out on a lone journey through the wild and hostile world governed only by local rules, prejudices and superstitions. When the war ends, his fight for physical survival is replaced by a different kind of a fight. A battle he may not even be aware of, a battle with himself, a battle for his soul, his future...

Jerzy Kosiński (1933 Łódź – 1991 New York) drew inspiration for his first novel from his own experience and traumas – he was forced to hide in the Polish countryside during the war due to his Jewish background. Kosiński borrowed the title “The Painted Bird” from the rural environment. This expression refers to a custom once popular in the countryside – people used to catch birds and painted their feathers in striking colours. After this, they released the painted bird back into its original environment. However, the other birds would never accept the painted bird back. It would be perceived as an enemy, a foreign element in the flock, and was pecked to death. The main character in the novel feels like a painted bird, as he encounters fear, scorn and cruelty all the time and everywhere simply because he is different. The main character of the novel is a young boy, who himself is THE PAINTED BIRD.

Václav Marhoul

The Painted Bird is the third feature film for Václav Marhoul (1960, Praha) as the scriptwriter, producer and director. His previous film, *Mazaný Filip* (Smart Philip, 2003) and in particular *Tobruk* (2008) received numerous Czech and international awards. He was also involved in the production of films *Pražská pětka* (Prague Five, 1989) and *Kouř* (Smoke, 1990), and was the producer of the film *Postel* (Bed, 1998). Václav Marhoul graduated from FAMU, specialising in production, and worked successively for Czech Television, Short Film, and AB Barrandov Film Studios first as Assistant Producer and later from 1990 to 1997 as the General Director. In 1997, he established his own company Silver Screen s.r.o., focusing on the creation of feature films and organising theatre and visual arts events.

Production:	Silver Screen
Czech co-producers:	Czech Television Eduard Kučera Vladimír Mařík (SynergyCon) Richard Kaucký
Foreign co-producers:	Directory Films (Ukraine) PubRes (Slovakia) Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska (Slovakia)
Supported by:	Czech State Cinematography Fund Creative Europe – MEDIA Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic Slovak Audiovisual Fund Ukrainian State Film Agency Pilsen Region South Moravia Film Fund

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