

**Václav Marhoul completes first phase of filming *The Painted Bird***

The first stage of a total of seven has been completed of the filming of the adaptation of the international bestseller by Jerzy Kosiński, **The Painted Bird**, directed by **Václav Marhoul**. During most of the **21 filming days** in **late March and early April**, the crew was working in **Ukraine**.

Filming (after two days of pre-shooting on 13 and 14 March in Ralsko in the Czech Republic) **ran from 23 March to 12 April in the village of Svalovychi** and nearby. To reach the northern edge of the Ukrainian region of Volhynia, the crew, along with the actor playing the main protagonist, nine-year-old **Petr Kotlár**, left Prague on 18 March, passing through Warsaw and Lviv. Their return to Prague's Václav Havel Airport was on 13 April after a full 15 hours of travel. Immediately, preparations began for the three-day final shooting of scenes that, for a variety of reasons, could not be

filmed in Ukraine and were eventually completed between 21 and 23 April in the former military range of Brdy and near the town of Nový Knín south of Prague. At present, work is fully underway on preparing the **second phase of filming**, which according to plans will start on **5 June in southern Slovakia** and end **5 July in the Czech Republic**. In the Slovak phase of filming, the international star **Udo Kier** will make his first appearance, and in the Czech part, the same will be true for the Polish actor **Lech Dyblik**.

*"I'm very happy that we managed to return from Ukraine having filmed everything in succession just as planned. I can't deny that it was far from simple. For outsiders, like it or not, there's simply a kind of despair that comes from the whole situation in Ukraine and the truly hard life its people have, when they basically see absolutely no change for the better and can only imagine their future at most one month in advance,"* said director, screenwriter and producer **Václav Marhoul**.

**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, s.r.o.

**Czech co-producers:** Czech Television  
Eduard Kučera  
Vladimír Mařík and Karel Kraus (Certicon)

**Foreign co-producers:** Directory Films (Ukraine)  
PubRes (Slovakia)  
Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska (Slovakia)  
Film Produkcja (Poland)

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