

Harvey Keitel in the role of a priest.

Harvey Keitel has confirmed he will be in *The Painted Bird*, making him the third world-class star that Václav Marhoul has managed to get in his film.



Harvey Keitel confirmed his involvement in *The Painted Birds* by signing the contract; his possible engagement had been talked about ever since the announcement that the film was to be made. In the film he will play a Catholic priest

*“The talks about casting **Harvey Keitel** began in August last year in the form of a script I sent after he talked about it during his stay at the Locarno festival where he inadvertently learnt that I wanted to shoot *The Painted Bird*. I really didn’t believe that it would work out. However, it was mainly the script that influenced his decision and then the role I offered him. The negotiations on his pay and all the other possible conditions went on from July until mid-October this year. His approach to the role is*

*different and quite impressive. So far I have yet to meet an actor who prepares for the role by breaking the character down into such minute detail so far ahead of filming. So, after **Udo Kier** and **Stellan Skarsgård**, I will be able to work with another great actor. I truly believe that the way he creates his role will be a huge contribution to the film,”* says director, screenwriter and producer **Václav Marhoul**.

After just completing the shooting of a new film, **The Irishman**, directed by **Martin Scorsese**, Harvey Keitel will arrive in the Czech Republic for ten days, five of which will be spent filming. Filming will start on November, 9th and will take place around Český Krumlov and Hartmanice near Sušice. The Russian actor **Aleksei Kravchenko**, whose film debut was in Elem Klimov’s **Come and See**, has also confirmed his participation in the film.

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 and Karel Kraus (Certicon)

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

Supported by: Czech State Cinematography Fund
Creative Europe – MEDIA
Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic
Slovak Audiovisual Fund
Ukrainian State Film Agency

Partners / Service suppliers: České dráhy, a.s. (Czech Railways)
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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ThePaintedBirdMovie>

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