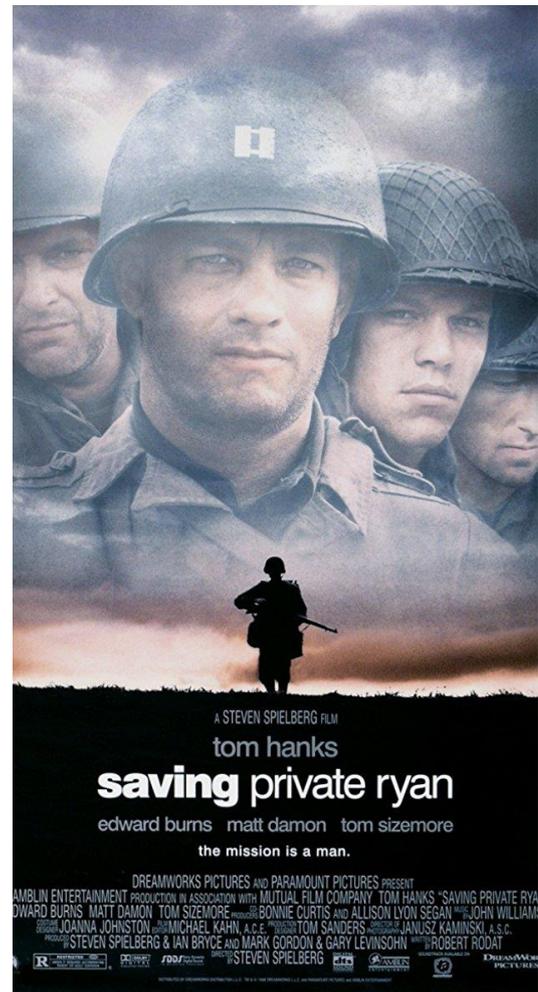
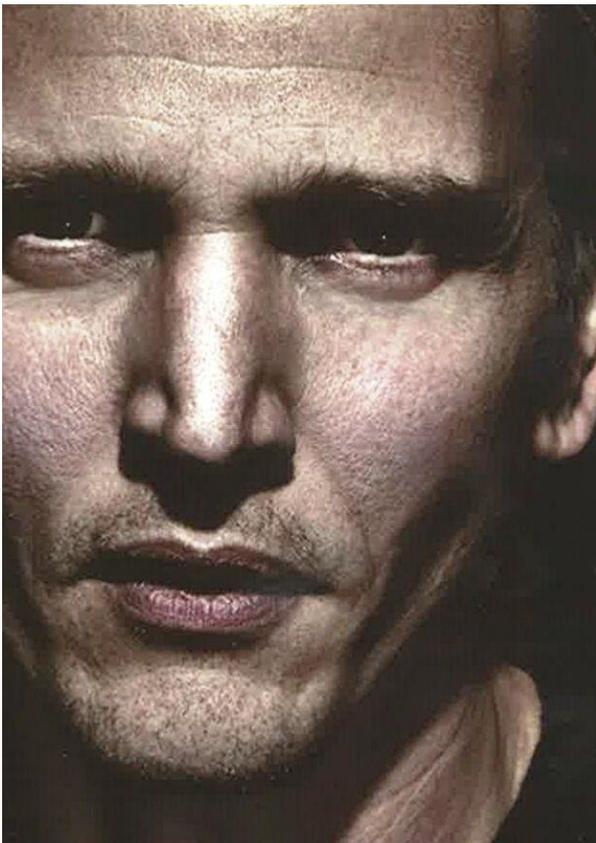


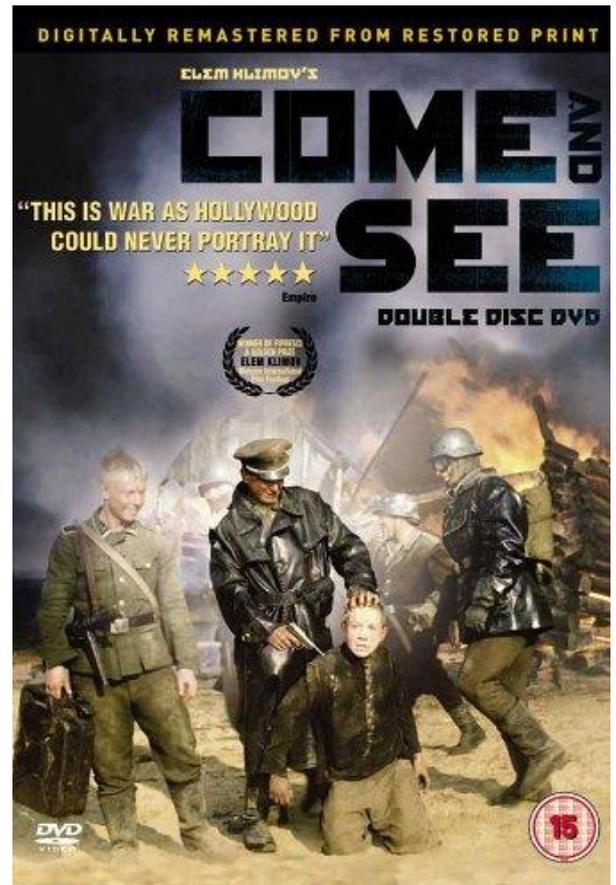
Barry Pepper and Aleksey Kravchenko to play Red Army soldiers in the film *The Painted Bird*.

Participation in filming has been definitely confirmed through a contract signed with American actor **Barry Pepper**, now the fifth such start of international format whom **Václav Marhoul** has gained for his film. In the upcoming adaptation of **The Painted Bird**, Pepper will appear in the role of the Soviet soldier Mitka. He has appeared in three films that have been nominated for Oscars: **Saving Private Ryan**, **The Green Mile** and **True Grit**. He has been nominated 3 times for the **Screen Actors' Guild Awards**. For his portrayal of Robert F. Kennedy in the TV miniseries *The Kennedys*, he won the **Primetime Emmy Award**.



*“Negotiations for **Barry Pepper**’s casting, like those for other actors of similar standing, took several months. And just as in the other cases, the main factor was the script. Nonetheless, in his case – specifically at the moment of the first offer – I was finally able to provide a 23-minute excerpt of all the scenes that we’d shot up until then. Which certainly helped a lot”,* says the film’s director, screenwriter and producer **Václav Marhoul**.

Participation in the film was also finally confirmed in writing by Russian actor **Aleksey Kravchenko**, who made his debut at the age of 16 in the internationally renowned film by Elem Klimov, **Come and See**. From 1991 to 1995, he studied at the Boris Shchukin Theatre Institute, and from 1994 to 2001 appeared regularly in the Evgeny Vakhtangov State Theatre, situated on the Arbat in central Moscow. As of 2007, he became a full-time member of the ensemble of the Moscow Art Theatre (MKhT), one of the city's most prestigious stage institutions. In **The Painted Bird**, he will play the role of political officer Gavril.



*“Aleksey’s role in my film is for me little short of symbolic. Because I personally regard Klimov’s film **Come and See** as one of the best films ever made. I vividly recall the day I saw it for the first time. And also how, after it was over, I sat for nearly an hour in front of the now-vanished Cinema Paris on Wenceslas Square, and was completely unable to perceive the extant world around me. I’m incredibly happy that Aleksey agreed to my offer and took the role”, adds **Václav Marhoul**.*

Both actors will travel to the Czech Republic for a total of nine days, five of which will be for filming. Realisation of their scenes will take place in early June near the town of Český Krumlov.

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
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Vladimír Mařík (SynergyCon)
- Foreign co-producers:** Directory Films (Ukraine)
PubRes (Slovakia)
Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska (Slovakia)
- Supported by:** Czech State Cinematography Fund
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