

How Zdeněk Svěrák lost his marbles and why he loved puppets with chins

Who else should be awarded **the Honorary Mention** for contribution to the films for children than Zdeněk Svěrák? Even the youngest Kuky is Back viewers remembered his song There is no need.

Recently he turned seventy four but he can still play like a boy, at least with words. He started his career as a teacher of Czech language, then he left school for the radio, he was one of the founders of Jára Cimrman, wrote scripts, stories, fairy tales and together with Jaroslav Uhlíř also songs that became a sort of folklore. Yet, much less is known what he was like when he was the same age as his grandson Ondřej with whom he dubbed the leading characters of Kuky.

By the way, what do you think about your son Jan's film Kuky is Back that you saw for the first time in the company of children?

I liked it a lot, really. I was particu-

My son Jan loved to draw but he kept mixing up colours for a long time. Instead of red he would say firemen's colour. >>>

larly amazed by the music that gave the film a special boost. For example when the Teddy bear is being approached by a crusher, the music arouses anxiety and yet one does not perceive it, that's why it is really good. I felt like telling my son he was a magician as he achieved the magic by blowing up the details of seemingly ordinary objects such as drops of water or raspberry leaves.

The preschool children asked you after the performance why one of the characters in the film was evil. How can you explain such a phenomenon to children?

I told them it was the same as with people. Some are good and some are bad and that is why the good must get together to prevent the bad ones from smashing them. And one of the nippers responded: As far as I know the robbers steal things!

Have you found something in Kuky that you share with your son, something you both enjoy? Well, of course, it is a funny film and at the same time there are moving moments, that is what we both like. I was touched for

example by the scene in which the birds bring Kuky their own fathers. Or by the moment when the boy gives a homeless guy his favourite toy, a gesture of saying good-bye to his childhood.

Your son apparently offered you to participate in the script but you refused saying that he as little Ondřej's father should know much better how a child of that age thinks, responds, what he dreams about. Does it mean Kuky reflects a great deal of reality?

Oh yes, there is a clear imprint of the family life. Little Ondřej does have asthma the same as the character in the film and all Jan's children really go to sleep with their soft toys. The film shows Jan did not make it all up.

Would you remember the toys you used to have at home and loved most of all?

I was fond of all my toys but I particularly loved those puppets with moving chins. I spoke for them and nodded their chins for them.

Did you cry when you lost your favourite toy?

I think I cried only for a canary who flew away. And I do admit that the same as the boy in Kuky I imagined where my canary could be wandering and whether – for God's sake – he would not meet a cat.

Would you remember the when and what film did you see first?

I cannot remember the film but my first similar experience I do remember is connected with a slide show. The local pharmacist was a great traveller and that time he brought pictures from Africa, I think. Still, what I remember most is the clicking thing which I found fascinating. He pressed it, it clicked and a new picture came up.

In Kuky the boy loses his dusty teddy bear who is according to his mother harmful for his health. Have your parents ever confiscated a toy of yours?

Yes, they did. I was already a grammar school student and yet I loved playing marbles...

Marbles, at grammar school?

So what? It's not that funny, you start grammar school at ten or eleven. Anyway, I was enthusiastic about playing marbles and played for so long that one day my father confiscated them and to be sure he buried them. However he did not know I followed him secretly and made sure to remember the place. I



The great storyteller Zdeněk Svěrák can put himself in children's shoes even as an adult. See for example his script to Primary School in which he returns to his childhood.

Foto: David Neff, MF DNES

FACTS

Zdeněk Svěrák About and for the children

Zdeněk Svěrák is well known by his affinity to children. He wrote several film scripts and many songs for them.

Film scripts

Three Veterans (orig. Tři veteráni)

Werich-like fairy tale about the search for wisdom.

Lotrando and Zubejda

Čapek-like fairy tale about a princess cured by a highwayman's son.

Primary School (orig. Obecná škola)

A story about Svěrák's childhood.

Long Live The Spirits (orig. Ať žijí duchové)

Adventurous comedy about the children defending Brtník Castle from the adults' plan to turn it into a homestead.

Television

Singing Lessons (orig. Hodina zpěvu)

Songs cycle – Zdeněk Svěrák and Jaroslav Uhlíř.

Dictation (orig. Diktát)

TV programme about the intricacies of the Czech language.

Books

Jake's Joys

(Radovanovy radovánky) What is it like to take a walk (Jaké je to asi v Čidu) Songbook (Zpěvník)

Songs

There is no need (Není nutno), Making things (Dělání), I'll find you, fool (Hlupáku, najdu tě), Statistics (Statistika), Hobgoblin Emil (Strašidýlko Emilek), Health springing from Sázava River (Pramen zdraví v Posázaví)

thought I was cunning to wait some two weeks before I dug them out – but they made of clay, there was rain in the meantime, and as you know clay marbles get soaked.

Now you have told us something about your own childhood can you tell us what your son Jan – the well known director – used to play with?

I think he had a puppet dog but most of all he loved to draw since he was really very small. In fact he drew most of the time and actually he used to be scolded at school for it. And now, you see, it comes useful when he draws the individual takes before he starts shooting!

Tell us something about your son nobody knows.

It is true Jan used to draw but he kept mixing up colours for a long time. Instead of red he would say firemen's colour. **Mírka Spáčilová**

DNES festival zlín

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Vydává MF DNES ve spolupráci s FILM FESTIVAL ZLÍN



Důležité orientační body pro zlínský festival

- 1 Univerzita Tomáše Bati (akreditace, informace)
- 2 Velké kino (prodej vstupenek)
- 3 Zlaté jablko, obchodní a zábavní centrum
- 4 Univerzitní centrum
- 5 Zámek Zlín
- 6 Radnice – Magistrát města Zlín
- 7 Krajský úřad Zlínského kraje
- 8 Letní kino
- 9 Vlakové nádraží
- 10 Hlavní autobusové nádraží

>>> Čtete zitra



Rozhovor o detektivkách O úsměvných detektivních příbězích Ach, ty vraždy! mluví Jiřina Bohdalová.



Tip mimo festival Navštivte výstavu věnovanou Tomáši Baťovi a unikátní zlínské architektuře, která se koná ve zlínském Domě umění.