

PRESS RELEASE

June 1, 2020

THE ZLÍN FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS THE COMPETITION FILMS

Zlín – Although the grand 60th Zlín Film Festival has been postponed until September due to the situation caused by the coronavirus, its dramaturges are already clear about the form of international competitions, which will once again offer attractive films with strong stories from many countries. To its great joy, the Czech Republic will not be left out either; it is introducing the world premiere of the co-production film *The Pack* (Smečka).

Even though the global pandemic has slowed down and somewhat complicated the preparations for the 60th Zlín Film Festival, the dramaturges have managed to prepare a quality list of competitors for the international competitions. "Each of the films that will be fighting here for the Golden Slipper will be presented in the Czech Republic for the first time. Festival-goers will once again have a unique opportunity to see the children's world through films from South Korea, Mexico, Australia, Spain, Brazil, Norway and many others," says ZFF artistic director Markéta Pášmová. She mentioned that the last-mentioned country has been long-known for its production of quality children's films. This is also true of Johanne Helgeland's debut film *The Crossing*. This World War II drama introduces us to ten-year-old Gerda, whose incredible bravery will help save some Jewish siblings.

All of the other stories also focus on the theme of the extraordinary courage of child protagonists. The heroine of the film *The House of Us* embarks on a difficult fight for her home; the film is by Korean director Ga-eun Yoon, whose debut film won the Golden Slipper in 2016. A Brazilian group of friends with detective skills have to deal with a dog thief in Daniel Rezende's film *Monica and Friends*, which is based on the famous comic book by Mauricio de Sousa. In the film *Starry Road* by directors Xie Deju and Huang Zhanchang, a group of kids is trying to find a way out of their provincial Chinese school by journeying on the difficult path to the World Jump Rope Championships. Saving her family is the most important task for the talented and unique girl Candice in the Australian film *H is for Happiness*, by John Sheedy, a participant at this year's Berlin Generation.

Family themes were chosen by the creators of *Summer Rebels* and *My Hero Alexis*. While in the first film, ensconced in the atmosphere of summer atmosphere, 11-year-old Jonas tries to improve his grandfather's lonely life, in the second film, little Tito finds himself in a difficult situation when his father expects him to follow a professional football career. "Youth or coming-of-age films are increasingly in the lense of filmmakers and they are being found not only in



festivals such as the Zlín Film Festival, but also in Sundance-type film events. This year's Zlín youth competition also offers strong stories in which young people reach a new stage in their lives, but also in borderline situations in fights against contemporary society," says Markéta Pášmová.

Between childhood and adolescence is where we find the protagonists of the films ***Life without Sara Amat***, ***Sunburned***, and ***Summer White***. Two representatives from Great Britain will take part in the 60th ZFF; both, coincidentally, have female heroines. Sarah Gavron's world-acclaimed ***Rocks*** takes us to today's London, whose streets lay witness to the bitter life story of a girl named Shola and her younger brother. Fifteen-year-old gymnast Leigh is trying to get a 10 out of 10 on her journey to adulthood in the debut movie by Eva Riley, ***Perfect 10***.

The 60th Zlín Film Festival will feature the world premiere of the feature debut film by director Tomáš Polenský, ***The Pack*** (Smečka). The film was created in international co-production between the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Latvia and deals with the topic of bullying in the youth hockey environment. The main thread of the film follows the story of 16-year-old hockey goalie David, who joins a new hockey team. The members of the team, however, do not accept him and David becomes the victim of bullying. *"According to research, every fifth child deals with the problem of bullying. Bullying is usually talked about only in connection with the education system. However, I know from my own experience that youth sports teams are full of it, and it is often much more brutal than bullying in schools,"* explains the director and co-author of the screenplay Tomáš Polenský and adds that he is convinced that this is why the topic will resonate especially among young viewers. *"We are all very happy that the premiere of The Pack will take place in Zlín, where the film was also shot. We'll be coming back here almost exactly a year from our last shooting,"* add the film's producers Julietta Sichel and Jan Froněk from 8Heads Productions.

Markéta Pášmová will also be welcoming the screening of the Czech film in the competition section of films for young people at the Zlín festival. *"The Pack is a film about teenagers for teenagers. As such, it fits exactly into the composition of films that the Zlín Festival has been offering to its audiences for sixty years. We are glad that the Czech Republic will have its own candidate in the international competition, which, especially in recent years, has not been common. We are all the more pleased that a story set in Zlín, moreover about hockey in Zlín, will have its premiere right in front of a Zlín audience. We believe that its screening at the Zlín Film Festival will also be a successful start for the film's participation in foreign festivals,"* she says. The ceremonial premiere of the film will take place on Saturday, September 5, with a screening for schools on Monday, September 7.

The grand 60th Zlín Film Festival will take place on an alternative date from September 4 to 10.

You can find out more at www.zlifest.cz.

Media contact



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Zlín Film Festival

60th International Film Festival for Children and Youth

4/9 — 10/9/2020

www.zlinfest.cz



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2020: NĀVRAT DO BUDOUCNOSTI

2020: BACK TO THE FUTURE



ABOUT THE FILM *THE PACK*

The film *The Pack* takes the audience into the fictional Zlín hockey club Vlci (The Wolves) and into the environment of youth hockey, where teenage boys are brought up according to the law of strength. The strongest dominates the whole team, which thus becomes like a pack of wolves, where there is a lot of rivalry and harsh rules.

Filming took place in the summer of 2019 in the exteriors of Zlín and in the local hockey rink. In addition to Zlín, the filmmakers also visited nearby Vizovice. The film *The Pack* was shot internationally by the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Latvia and was supported by the State Cinematography Fund, the Slovak Audiovisual Fund, the Latvian National Film Center, and the Media Creative Europe Fund. The film was also supported by the Zlín Region with two million crowns from its subsidy program.

It will premiere at the festival on Saturday, September 5 and again for schools on Monday, September 7. In addition to the Zlín Film Festival, Czech audiences will be able to see the film in cinemas in the autumn of this year.

ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION:

Directed by: Tomáš Polenský
Screenplay: Irena Kocí, Tomáš Polenský
Cameraman: Andrejs Rudzāts
Producers: Julietta Sichel, Jan Froněk (8Heads Productions)
Co-producers: Lívía Filusová (Furia Film, Slovakia),
Guntis Trekteris (Ego Media, Latvia)
Main partner: Prima FTV
Other co-producers: Moss & Roy, Sleepwalker, MagicLab, Studio 727, BB Rental, IS Production
Distribution: Bontonfilm
World Sales: LevelK

CAST:

Tomáš Dalecký
Tomáš Mrvík
Michal Dluhoš
Anastasia Chocholatá
Denisa Biskupová
Jiří Vyorálek
Vlastina Svátková
Václav Vašák
Patrik Děrgel
Martin Hosták

