



61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021



PRESS RELEASE

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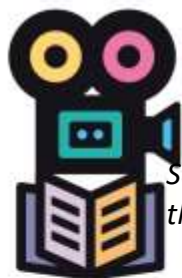
THE 61st ZLÍN FILM FESTIVAL WELCOMES THE PRODUCER OF A STAR IS BORN, BILL GERBER

Prague – The second part of the 61st Zlín Film Festival will start in a few days. The largest and oldest film festival for children and young people in the world will be attended by the well-known American producer Bill Gerber. The organizers will award the Golden Slipper this year to Ondřej Vetchý. The Walk of Fame will now have stars bearing the names of actresses Anna Geislerová and Klára Issová. The main theme of the festival this year, which is taking place in two parts, is "Literature in Film". The Autumn Part (or Part 2) of the Zlín Film Festival will take place from September 9 to 15, 2021.

A Star is Born, Gran Torino, Grudge Match, A Very Long Engagement – these are just some of **Bill Gerber's** successful projects as a producer. He also took part in the making of *You've Got Mail, L.A. Confidential, JFK, and Heat*, as well as in Harry Potter films, and many others. "It is a great honor for us that this world-renowned American producer is going to visit us at the festival and personally present a screening of the film *A Star Is Born* on Friday. He will also actively participate in the program for film experts," says the president of the Zlín Film Festival, Čestmír Vančura. A meeting with Bill Gerber entitled "From Rock and Roll to Oscars" will take place on Saturday, September 11 starting at 4:30 pm and will focus on his work on some of the best films of the last thirty years, including the aforementioned film *A Star Is Born*.

Another important guest who will be visiting the Zlín festival this year is the actor **Ivan Shvedoff**, known, among others, from the films *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol, Bridge of Spies*, and from the successful series *Babylon Berlin*. In Zlín, the actor will present the festival's evening opening film, *Mission Ulja Funk*.

During the 61st festival, two more stars will be unveiled in Zlín on the Walk of Fame. The history of this joint project of the Drop of Hope Endowment Fund and the Zlín Film Festival dates back to 2006. This year, the names of actresses **Anna Geislerová** and **Klára Issová** will appear on stone tiles in front of the Grand Cinema. "The film career of both ladies began at an early age. Anna Geislerová indelibly entered the history of Czechoslovak film history at just fourteen years of age in Filip Renč's debut film *Requiem for a Doll*, which was also shot right here in Zlín," explains executive director Jarmila Záhorová, who adds: "For Klára Issová, her first film role in a dark comedy by director



61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
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Saša Gedeon was *Indian Summer* at the age of sixteen, for which she was nominated for the Czech Lion award."

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
7/6 — 15/9/2021

For several years now, the Zlín Film Festival has also focused on interesting young actors. This year's Young Stars, who are coming to Zlín, will be **Veronika Divišová** and **Oskar Hes**. „*Veronika Divišová and Oskar Hes are talented actors and audiences have been able to see them in many films and series. Our choice was probably most influenced by the film The City by director Jiří Diviš, in which they both had leading roles and which will have its premiere at the festival. Another common title is the television miniseries Božena, in which they both acted. Oskar also appeared in the film Sleeping City,*” explains Markéta Pášmová on the decision of the organizers and adds that the fantasy film *Sleeping City* will also be shown as part of the festival program.

The previously announced Golden Slipper award for extraordinary contribution to cinematography for children and young people will be taken home from Zlín by actor **Ondřej Vetchý**, who will be awarded it during the closing gala evening on September 15.

In contrast to recent years, a number of films from domestic productions for children and young people will also appear in the film program and in competitions. “*Although cinemas were closed for a long period of time, Czech filmmakers never gave up; they were able to adapt to difficult conditions and create new films,*” says the artistic director of the Zlín Film Festival Markéta Pášmová, adding: “*Quality Czech film for children and youth is therefore being reborn after many years, and the proof is that we are presenting four Czech films in the main competition.*” These are the animated feature film **Even Mice Belong in Heaven**, which is also the morning opening film; other films include the feature film by director Petr Oukropec **Martin and the Magical Forest**, a feature-length puppet film entitled **A Colourful Dream**, and a co-production animated film **The Crossing** by French director Florence Mialhe.

This year, the oldest and largest film festival for children and young people is paying homage to literary art, which has been an inspiration for film screenwriters since the birth of cinema. We are mostly focusing on books that are for audiences both big and small. The main theme of the festival will be reflected not only on the film screen, but also in the supporting program. After the Festival's spring online part ("Part One"), visitors will once again have the opportunity to visit a number of workshops, concerts, discussions, exhibitions, virtual reality and other interesting activities for the whole family. “*We can't forget the annual auction of film clapperboards, the festival half marathon, and drawing on the pavement. However, audiences should not miss Ondřej Soukup's concert Film Melodies performed by the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra nor the screening of the film The Blue Star Hotel from 1941, whose special*



61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

screening we want to dedicate to teachers and health professionals as a thank you for their work during the pandemic," adds Jarmila Záhorová.

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28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021

The complete film and supporting program is available at www.zlifest.cz and in the Zlifest festival application.

As part of its 61st year, the festival is beginning cooperation with a new charitable partner, the Patron of Children. The Sirius Foundation charity project wants to draw the attention of Zlín Film Festival visitors to the stories of children from disadvantaged families. *"If you know a child for whom parents cannot pay for basic things, such as school supplies, after-school clubs, or school trips, or perhaps they cannot afford medical treatment, physical rehab, or medical devices from state social allowances or health insurance, tell us about them,"* invites Edita Mrkousová, Executive Director of Patron of Children.

This year, the 61st Zlín Film Festival is being held in two parts for the first time in its history. The spring (1st) part took place during the festival's traditional period in online form. The autumn (2nd) part, in its traditional format, starts on September 9 and lasts until September 15.



61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021



BILL GERBER

Emmy winner and Oscar nominee Bill Gerber has gained extensive experience in the film industry over the past thirty years in various positions, including as president of Warner Brothers Pictures. He has been involved in the production of many films, including *L.A. Confidential*, *JFK*, *Grudge Match*, *You've Got Mail*, *A Perfect Storm*, *Three Kings*, as well as in the Harry Potter films series. Bill founded Gerber Pictures with a long-term exclusive agreement (at first glance) with Warner Bros. His productions include *A Star Is Born*, *Gran Torino*, *A Very Long Engagement*, and *Grudge Match*. He was nominated for a Golden Globe for his film *A Very Long Engagement*. His successful film *A Star Is Born*, earned him an Oscar nomination for Best Picture and he recently received an Outstanding Long Sports Documentary for the HBO series "*What's My Name: Muhammad Ali*".

Prior to joining Warner Brothers, Bill Gerber worked for a leading music company, Lookout Management, which over the years has represented rock classics such as Neil Young, Joni Mitchell and Tom Petty. Together with Elliot Roberts he represented the bands The Cars, Devo, Heaven 17, ABC, Scritti Politti, and even Paul Reubens.

In 2019, Bill Gerber was an official judge for the international competition at the 32nd Tokyo International Film Festival. In the same year, as a distinguished artist, he was also a professor of Marion Knott Studios at Chapman University in California. He has also served on the boards of the Environmental Media Association, the California Center for Early Education, and the Los Angeles 2024 Olympics Initiative.



61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021



CZECH FILMS COMPETING AT THE ZLÍN FILM FESTIVAL

The opening film, which is also a competition film, is the animated film ***Even Mice Belong in Heaven***. After almost ten years of preparation, development, filming, and post-production, audiences will get to see an exciting adventure – one that takes place primarily in the afterlife. It is a film about hope, about the search for love and courage, about overcoming prejudices and old pains, which will certainly find audiences among all generations.

The tradition of Czech film for children is honored by the feature film by director Petr Oukropec ***Martin and the Magical Forest***, which will fight for the Golden Slipper in the category of films for children. The family film tells the story of a city boy, Martin, who initially is not too happy to find himself at a scout camp in a magical forest full of magical forest creatures.

In the category of films for teenagers, you can look forward to a feature-length stop-animation film with the poetic title ***A Colourful Dream***. An adventurous story about how easy it is to lose one's freedom and how difficult it is to regain it, the movie was filmed by renowned director, animator, and artist Jan Balej, who won the Czech Lion award for it.

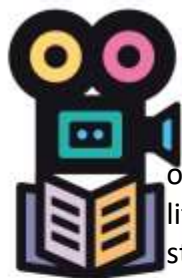
Furthermore, the Czech Republic will be represented in the main competition by the co-production animated film ***The Crossing***, by French director Florence Mialhe. The story, which deals with the theme of freedom, tells the story of our eternal effort to achieve it; it's something for which we are willing to risk our own lives for whilst looking for a new home to live a better life. The film, in which the Czech company MAUR Film played a significant role in making, was created using a special technique of hand painting on glass and won a significant award at the most prestigious festival of animated films in Annecy, France.

The figurative icing on the cake is the short animated film ***Red Shoes***, shot by Anna Podskalská, a talented FAMU student. This year, the film was the only Czech representative to take part in the competition at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, and our joy is all the greater because its creation was supported by the FILMTALENT ZLÍN Endowment Fund. You can look forward to it in the international student film competition.

A number of other Czech films will also appear in the official festival program, which you will be able to see on the movie screen!

Sleeping City

Four siblings, the eldest Kryštof, twins Ema and Kristýna, and little Samuel, live happily in a happy family. But one morning they wake up to an unexpected situation. Their parents cannot be woken up and the kids suddenly have to deal with everything on their



61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
7/6 — 15/6/2021

own. They soon realize that parents all over the world have fallen asleep. What's worse, little Samuel has been kidnapped! For the siblings, a daily struggle begins in which the strong and clever win against the cunning and ruthless. This dystopic thriller for the whole family was shot by director Dan Svátek based on the book of the same name and the popular bestseller by author Martin Vopěnka, and we will also welcome a large delegation of its actors to the festival!

Lame-Os

You can look forward to the premiere of a Latvian co-production film with Czech participation with the apt title *Lame-Os*. After the successful film *The Pack*, Czech producer Julietta Sichel bet on a teenage retro comedy - this time for girls! The year is 1999 and the celebrations for the end of the millennium are approaching. Sarmite, Sveta and Katrina, three 9th grade students, have had enough of being bullied at school. They decide to change that and become the most popular girls in the school by the date of the ball. Armed only with the inspiration gained from Hollywood movies and TV series, they intend to achieve popularity by getting the class's coolest guys as their prom dates...

City

Don't miss the premiere of a feature film shot on iPhones! The story takes place over 24 hours in Prague. Klára, Viki, and Mechanik live on the edge of the law. As a junkie, Viki tries to get the money she needs to buy a regular dose, preferably by stealing. Mechanik keeps his distance; he's a dealer but doesn't use. Klára has partially recovered from addiction, but she's homeless. And soon she'll give birth. The neighborhood they all live in is run by a pair of loan sharks: a former boxer and his partner Majk. Their destinies intersect dramatically over one day.

My Sunny Maad

The animated film *My Sunny Maad* has a very topical feel to it. This is the story of a Czech girl named Helena (who goes by the name of "Herry"), who leaves Prague to marry her classmate Nazir in Kabul, Afghanistan. This was filmed by director Michaela Pavlátová and won the jury prize at the Annecy festival. The film enters distribution in October this year, so you will have a unique opportunity to see it earlier than other moviegoers.

Complete film program at <https://program.zlifest.cz/cz/filmovy-program/>



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61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021



PATRON OF CHILDREN – A STORY

Mariya could have been a great orchestra conductor, and she was a sought-after translator. She is now asking for help in acquiring a car, because she cannot travel on public transport with her son Artík. Not to school, to the doctors, nowhere. The boy suffers from a severe autism spectrum disorder, epilepsy, hyperactivity, and a severe sleep disorder. His brother Saša is only a year older and attends a grammar school for exceptionally talented children and is a great gymnast. The boys are being raised by their mother on her own; their father simply failed to cope with the burden and abandoned the family.

The Patron of Children, a charity project of the Sirius Foundation, would like to draw the attention of visitors to the Zlín Film Festival not only to children like Artík. *"If you know a child for whom parents cannot pay for basic things, such as school supplies, after-school clubs, or school trips, or perhaps they cannot afford medical treatment, physical rehab, or medical devices from state social allowances or health insurance, tell us about them,"* invites Edita Mrkousová, Executive Director of Patron of Children. Or those interested can find the stories of such children at www.patrondeti.cz and help them. *"Right now, the school supplies mentioned earlier is the most urgent; you can find them in the Education section. We protect the donations of our donors by screening applicants in the risk department so that aid only goes where it really belongs,"* adds Edita Mrkousová.



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61st International Film Festival
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THE ZLÍN FILM FESTIVAL – International Film Festival for Children and Youth is the oldest and, currently, largest film festival of its kind in the world. Its prestige increases every year not only in the Czech Republic, but also abroad. This is evidenced by the number of invitations and the participation of ZFF representatives to sit in the juries of international festivals in Russia, Latvia, Germany, Poland, Greece, India, and other countries of the world, plus the enormous amount of interest in the festival's film dramaturgy.

The festival received an important award at the end of 2019 in Tokyo, Japan at the KINEKO International Children's Film Festival, where it won the KINEKO HONORARY AWARD for its contribution to cinematography for children and youth.

The festival's mission is to present international film productions for children and teenagers, to make them accessible to the child audiences, and offer a high-quality alternative to commonly available audiovisual content. An important aspect of the festival is to educate young audiences through the medium of film, expand their awareness of the outside world, and develop their aesthetic, social, and moral feelings. The aim of the program is to systematically contribute to the development of Czech cinema for children and youth. The organizer of the festival is the company FILMFEST, s.r.o..

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

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61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021



The organizer of the Zlín Film Festival, FILMFEST, s.r.o., would also like to thank all of our partners and supporters, who were absolutely crucial for making it possible for the 61st festival to happen.

Co-organizer

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61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021

