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How to win the lottery – Academy Awards for the Czech film industry

The stories of the Academy Award-winning films *Obchod na korze*, *Ostře sledované vlaky* and *Kolja*.

“(…) high value is placed on awards from various film or cultural institutions in different countries. Among the awards, the most famous is the Oscar, an award (...) that often carries the undertones of political and commercial interests.”[1]

If ever you come across someone from outside the Czech Republic who is nevertheless familiar with the Czech film industry, they will most likely name three: two films made in the 1960s and one in the 1990s.[2] What all three have in common is a gilded statuette, weighing in at almost four kilos, and depicting a naked knight pointing his crusader’s sword tip downwards while standing on a reel of film – Oscar.

The first ever ceremony during which awards from America’s Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences were handed out took place on 16 May 1929 at a Hollywood hotel named after President Theodor Roosevelt. A total of 15 awards were presented in the space of about as many minutes.

More categories were added as time went on and in terms of the Czech film industry the most important addition has been the Oscar, or officially the Academy Award of Merit, for the best foreign language film. It was bestowed for the first time in 1957, upon the Italian drama *La Strada* (1954).[3] Since then, most of the Academy Awards for the best foreign language film have gone to Europe. Films of Asian, African or Latin American origins have very rarely been awarded.

Czechoslovakia was for the first time able to celebrate the film award that draws most media attention following the 38th Academy Awards ceremony. It saw Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos return home as Oscar recipients for their film adaptation of a novel by Ladislav Grosman, *Obchod na korze* [*The Shop on Main Street*].[4] Until then, Czechoslovak cinema was virtually unknown in the USA, save for a few animated films.

Oscar number one

A key step towards winning an Academy Award is the screening of a candidate motion picture in US cinemas, something that did not escape former director of Československý filmexport (a Czechoslovak film import and export company) Ladislav Kachtík:

“By screening the film in numerous places across the USA, its chances of winning an Oscar increased compared to the other candidates. And it was a success in commercial terms as well, given that at that point there was still shooting in black-and-white, selling for a fixed amount and screening, for the first year, with the original sound and English subtitles, before the local distributor invested in dubbing.”[5]

When asked about the film’s chances of winning an Academy Award in early 1966, Ján Kadár demonstrated a remarkable insight in terms of the awarding process as well as both a likeable humility and a knack for pragmatic thinking:

“The Oscar really is a curious award where on the one hand higher interests do play a role but on the other it is still a competition organised in a highly democratic way with a considerable number of voting members of the Academy. A series of screenings to audiences of many thousands in the first round produces the five candidates. More screenings follow to allow the voting members to determine the standings. The final decision is determined by the vote count. When it comes to *Obchod*, we must keep our feet on the ground and remain humble. We have made it to the final five and we can be very happy with that. I would not venture [to speculate] any further. But there again, winning an Oscar would multiply the film’s distribution chances to a point that can hardly be expressed financially...”[6]

Kadár also acknowledged the increased interest in Czechoslovak cinema and expressed his belief that *Obchod na korze* made its mark in the United States mainly with its message of humanity, non-conventional genre positioning on the divide between humour and tragedy and its ability to present a grave issue while maintaining at least a ray of hope.

The victory of *Obchod na korze* was subsequently explained away by those more sceptical of the film's merits by the prevailing leftist worldview and Jewish origins of many Academy members. The film's success was certainly helped by a "promotional tour" that preceded the Academy Awards. The film was, for example, screened during the Cannes Film Festival in May 1965 where the two leading protagonists Jozef Kroner and Ida Kamińska received Special Mentions for their acting performances.[7]

The film, garnering mostly enthusiastic reviews from foreign film critics, was also presented during the New York Film Festival alongside Miloš Forman's *Černý Petr* [*Black Peter*, 1963]. New York was also where *Obchod na korze* was premiered in general distribution in the USA.[8] On behalf of the film's creators the December 1965 premiere was attended by Ján Kadár.

And it was Kadár's words "I'm very, very happy and deeply moved" that were heard on 18 April 1966 at about 9pm local time from the stage of the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. Those words expressed the Slovak director's gratitude for the award received from the hand of Gregory Peck. By that time it was clear that the 1965 foreign language Oscar would not travel to Italy (*Matrimonio all'italiana*, *Marriage Italian Style*), Japan (*Kwaidan*), Greece (*To Homa vaftike kokkino*, *Blood on the Land*) or Sweden (*Käre John*, *Dear John*) but to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

The Oscar statuette would become one of the few tangible possessions left to Kadár following his emigration to the United States to remind him of his previous work in creative tandem with Elmar Klos. Klos brought the statuette to Kadár when visiting him in the USA.[9] Kadár's failure to return to his homeland in November 1968 provided an excuse for the new leadership in the Czechoslovak film industry to lock up *Obchod na korze* in the "imaginary vault" for the next two decades.

In his journal entries, intended for an autobiography at a later date, Elmar Klos recounted the Academy Awards ceremony as follows: "The Oscar ceremony – a circus –

but we won. And all of a sudden we were interesting and desirable. While for the first three days all we had was an electric razor and a Francis Lederer shirt.”[10] It was not just Kadár and Klos who suddenly became interesting and desirable but the whole of Czechoslovak film production as such. This was corroborated by Czechoslovak press of the period:

“A clipping from a Hollywood paper has made it to our office desk quite recently. It describes the success of a film directed by the duo of J. Kadár and E. Klos, ‘*Obchod na korse*’ [older Czech spelling]. The article is titled ‘First Oscar to make it behind the Iron Curtain’ and we wish to cite the following: ‘The first ever Oscar to cross the Iron Curtain has been carried by leading creators who represent a new wave in a small country. The past festivals over the previous two years have been characteristic of the high quality of Czech films. The US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was able to witness this growing quality by watching ‘*Obchod na korse*’ along with the best of the foreign films of the previous year, which came from Italy, Greece, Sweden and Japan.”[11]

The fame that came with the Academy Award made it plain that Kadár and Klos were now attractive enough as filmmakers to garner sufficient interest from foreign investors (and producer Catherine Desmarais in particular who was also a registered importer of foreign films and helped to sell *Obchod na korse* overseas) that would enable them to make a costly adaptation of Karel Čapek’s novel *Válka s mloky* [*War with the Newts*]. However, the tightening of the regime in their home country after August 1968 prevented the realisation of the ambitious project.

Although Kadár and Klos eventually did not make it in Hollywood their Oscar-winning film still convinced US film critics that Czechoslovak cinema was worth paying attention to. It also opened the door for later Czech films that arrived on the American market. Among the first to “walk through the door” was Miloš Forman. The director’s *Lásky jedné plavovlásky* [*Loves of a Blonde*, 1965] was nominated for the 1966 Academy Award along with the French-Italian *La Bataille d’Alger / La battaglia di Algeri* [*The Battle of Algiers*, 1966], the Polish *Faraon* (*Pharaoh*, 1966), the Yugoslav *Tri* (*Three*, 1965) and the French *Un homme et une femme* (*A Man and a Woman*, 1966).

Lásky jedné plavovlásky was distributed in the same package and by the same company that brought *Obchod na korze* to the US market. As Ladislav Kachtík recalled, the promotion of Forman's film cost some USD 250,000, considerably more than the whole production. Kachtík also knowledgeably observed that the film was not as successful on the west side of the USA, where according to him most Academy members happened to reside, as it was on the east coast.[12]

We can only guess how much of a role US geography actually played in the eventual victory of *Un homme et une femme*. The very next year Forman was anyway to be bested by another graduate of the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU).

Oscar number two

Ostře sledované vlaky [*Closely Watched Trains*] entered into US cinema distribution thanks to an influential Italian producer and contractual partner of Československý filmexport, Carlo Ponti.[13] Without his contacts and reliable marketing strategies, the Czechoslovak Oscar hopes would have been much diminished as the state lacked the necessary foreign currency to fund the film's promotion and its subtitling or dubbing.[14]

When Ponti's purchasing agent Moris Ergas invited Jiří Menzel to his Prague flat in January 1968 to let him know that *Ostře sledované vlaky* would be screened across the big pond and that the film's US distributor had put it up for an Academy Award, the film's director was more intrigued by the idea of visiting the West than he was by the possibility of winning the prestigious award. Even in his memoirs, the director recalls the Academy Award nomination in a rarely seen matter-of-fact kind of way:

“Winning a nomination for the Academy Award for best foreign language film is about as much of a work of chance as winning the lottery. Of course, a nominated film must be at least worth a look but there are many good films made every year and many of them also deserve an Oscar. But only a few good films are lucky enough to enjoy the support of a US distributor.”[15]

As Jindřiška Bláhová writes in her study of the foreign distribution and reception of *Ostře sledované vlaky*, the Academy Award win was considerably assisted by US film

critics who helped to create a myth of a “Czech film miracle”. [16] Jiří Menzel also believes that the door to the global stage had been cracked open for him by the previous positive acceptance abroad of films made by his colleagues. Czech cinema had already built a good name outside the country, distributors were purchasing Czech films, critics were writing about them and audiences flocked to see them.

Menzel’s film began drawing a collection of ecstatic reviews, which often searched for parallels between *Ostře sledované vlaky* and *Obchod na korze* [17], soon after its screening during the Czechoslovak Film Week organised in New York in 1967. It left the film week having earned the reputation as the best of the presented films. A promotional campaign, with personal support from both Jiří Menzel and Moris Ergas, took off in early 1968, around the time the Academy Award nominations were announced.

Despite the film’s indisputable merit, the actual victory was in no small part aided by Ponti’s massive promotional campaign. Ponti succeeded in selling *Ostře sledované vlaky* in a package together with other commercially more attractive movies while other competitors in the foreign language film category lacked similar background support as those films were either missing from US distribution altogether or had arrived in American cinemas much later than *Ostře sledované vlaky*.

Using an interpreter, Jiří Menzel presented his film debut in person (first to journalists and then to “regular” cinemagoers) in New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. Menzel visited LA again in April 1968 in the company of Vlastimil Harnach, director of Film Studio Barrandov, Jitka Bendová, the female conductor protagonist, and Ladislav Kachtík, director of Československý filmexport, for the Academy Awards ceremony. It was delayed by two days in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

The Academy Award of Merit for the Best Foreign Language Film was presented that year by actor and singer Danny Kaye and *Ostře sledované vlaky* was not the only representative in the Eastern Bloc category. The five nominees also included *Skupljači perja* [*I Even Met Happy Gypsies*] from Yugoslavia while the others represented countries with better Oscar strike rates: France (*Vivre pour vivre* [*Live for Life*]), Japan (*Chieko-sho* [*Portrait of Chieko*]) and Spain (*El amor brujo* [*Enchanted Love*]).

However, it was Jiří Menzel who was invited to come up to the stage to collect the statuette, meaning he had to temporarily leave the company of such stars as Rod Steiger and Faye Dunaway. Among the first people to congratulate Menzel in person after his return to the hotel with his Oscar was Ján Kadár and his wife.

Two days after the Academy Awards, i.e. on 12 April 1968, *Ostře sledované vlaky* had a renewed premiere in its home country. Belief in the boosted commercial appeal of an Oscar-winning film apparently did not stop at the easternmost frontier of the imperialist west. There is no doubt that winning the Academy Award contributed to *Ostře sledované vlaky* becoming the most commercially successful Czechoslovak film of the latter 1960s. Before the decade was out it had been sold to some 30 countries, leapfrogging by a considerable margin not only *Obchod na korze* but also all the Miloš Forman films made in Czechoslovakia.

Menzel returned to the streets overlooked by the famous “Hollywood” sign in March 1987 after his comedy *Vesničko má středisková* (titled *My Sweet Little Village* in English) was nominated for an Oscar. Menzel did not win on this occasion but wrote in his memoirs that such stellar promotion of the Czech film industry earned him some respect from Jiří Purš, the central director of Československý film. He had finally accepted the director who was previously barely tolerated by the communist leadership in response to his 1960s work.

A few months after the Soviet-led invasion of the country in August 1968, Czechs and Slovaks were infuriated again with the Soviets when in April 1969 the Academy chose the six-and-half-hour epic *Voyna i mir* [*War and Peace*] directed by Sergei Bondarchuk over Miloš Forman’s 70-minute bitter comedy of 1967, *Hoří, má panenko* [titled *The Firemen’s Ball* in English]. Despite such a bitter defeat, the four-year streak of uninterrupted Czechoslovak presence at the Academy Awards marked an exceptional success for the country’s cinema and convincing proof its heyday in the 1960s.

Oscar number three

The presentation of the Czech Academy Award candidate in October 1995 was also an opportunity to introduce the Czech Film and TV Academy (Česká filmová a televizní akademie, with František Vlácil as its director) that has nominated the country’s Oscar

hopefuls since. The academy demonstrated its Midas touch the very next year when it bypassed *Zapomenuté světlo* (*Forgotten Light*, 1996) directed by Vladimír Michálek, Jan Švankmajer's *Spiklenci slasti* (*Conspirators of Delight*, 1996) and Petr Václav's *Marian* (1996) to select *Kolja* (*Kolya*, 1996), directed by Jan Svěrák.

Jan Svěrák had had some preparation for the measure of attention that came with *Kolja* following a previous Oscar nomination, that given to his *Obecná škola* (*Elementary School*, 1991) [18]. He had also won a student Oscar several years previously for his environmentally-minded mock documentary *Ropáci* (*Oil Gobblers*, 1988). Some idea about the nature of the peculiar award can be gleaned from a period report penned by the awarded film's dramaturge Antonín Navrátil: "It is a cube made from some sort of exotic wood as it is very heavy. On its front side it bears a circular inscription saying 'Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' above an additional one of 'Student Film Award'. In the middle there is a relief of your traditional Oscar and on top the cube bears a plaque with the actual dedication. So it is anyone's guess if it is an Oscar or not." [19]

In the same account, Navrátil also described the feelings of someone coming from a small, inward-looking central European country visiting the big wide world for the very first time:

"To tell the truth, Honza [Jan Svěrák] and I felt hopelessly lost there the first day: the realisation that you simply cannot walk anywhere, that public transport is practically non-existent, can be quite depressing..." [20]

Filming *Kolja*, a universally accessible story of kindness mirroring the "restoration of national self-determination following years of guardianship", [21] the father and son Svěráks targeted their domestic audience and did not expect much in the way of international success. But when the film won the Golden Globe on 19 January 1997, following previous accolades that were picked up in Tokyo and Venice, the authors revised their initial scepticism. Their newly found optimism received a direct boost in Los Angeles in the run-up to the Academy Award ceremony taking place on 24 March:

"Many of the journalists interviewing us would tell us that they had not seen such a nice film for a long time. It made us feel less like outsiders. There was some hope. But there was some strong competition too." [22]

Strong competition came in the form of the Russian *Kavkazskiy plennik (Prisoner of the Mountains, 1996)* directed by Sergei Bodrov, the Belgian-German-French-Georgian *Shekvarebuli kulinaris ataserti retsepti (A Chef in Love, 1996)*, *Søndagsengler (The Other Side of Sunday, 1996)* from Norway, and *Ridicule (1996)* from France. The creators of *Ridicule* shared a table with the Czech father-son duo and their producer Eric Abraham during the Academy Award evening. The elder of the two Svěráks, Zdeněk, described the stifled atmosphere around the table with his typical detachment:

“So you sit there, smile and exchange polite words, while neither side has a clue whether we’ll all leave empty-handed.”[23]

Readers hungry for tabloid details from one of the most closely watched events on the US film industry calendar will have to make do with Svěrák’s recollection of the food they were served. He begins by remembering “that there were some sea creatures” before going on to say:

“It tasted well and there were plenty of green things around it. There was even a flower included that I think was meant to be consumed.”

However, Svěrák was yanked from his musings about flowery decorations around the food that was served by words coming from the president of the MPPA (Motion Picture Association of America) Jack Valenti, who together with Kristin Scott Thomas was presenting the best foreign film Oscar that year:

“(…) so we rose from our chairs and began looking for the shortest way up to the stage. We exchanged kisses with Melanie Griffith and while Honza was delivering his thank you speech I was enjoying the view of the entirety of the famous Hollywood sitting right in front of, and below, me.”[24]

It did seem for a while that the Svěráks really had Hollywood at their feet. Following the success of *Kolja*, Jan Svěrák received a number of offers from the USA. He was asked to direct *Chocolat (2000)*, *Good Will Hunting (1997)* and *The Cider House Rules (1999)*. Having a hunch that as a hired director he would not be fully in control of the creative process, Svěrák Jr. turned down all the offers and stuck with his native language (even though he did contemplate shooting his *Tmavomodrý svět (Dark Blue*

World) with the dialogues completely in English) and scripts penned by his dad.

Since the success of *Kolja*, only two films proposed by the Czech Film and TV Academy have made it onto the final shortlist for the Oscars: *Musíme si pomáhat* (*Divided We Fall*, 2000) and *Želary* (2003). In connection with the first, foreign critics often mentioned links to the tradition of previous Czech (and Czechoslovak) film characters such as Tóno Brtko (*Obchod na korze*), Miloš Hрма (*Ostře sledované vlaky*) or František Louka (*Kolja*). These characters all see their respective fates turn them into accidental, and to an extent unwilling, heroes.

However, the chances of Jan Hřebejk as the director of *Želary* were rather slim in 2001 as he was up against *Amores perros* (2000) and the eventual winner of the foreign language category *Wòh Cánglóng* (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, 2000).

Although Hřebejk returned empty-handed from Los Angeles, he did find new resolve to improve his English in order to next time around not be so dependent for his thank-you speech on producer Ondřej Trojan.[25] Trojan returned to Hollywood in 2004 as the director of *Želary*, an adaptation of the novel *Jozova Hanule* by Květa Legátová.

Anna Geislerová, the lead actress of *Želary*, described the trip overseas in vivid colour in her travel diary. Besides not wanting to let go of the warm hand that smelt of cigars, which had Benicio Del Toro attached to it, she also described a secret behind one of the illusions aimed at television audiences:

“As soon as you leave the auditorium, hired extras take your seats and pretend to be guests at the ceremony, since no-one wants to see empty seats.”[26]

The words which Geislerová used to describe her feelings after learning that of the five nominees it was the Canadian *Les Invasions barbares* (*The Barbarian Invasions*, 2003) that had won the Oscar could possibly be seen as relating to the solidarity and well-wishing found in the atmosphere (or the pretence thereof?) that emanates from the whole Academy Awards ceremony:

“At the Oscars, there are no winners and losers, there are only winners and non-winners.”[27]

The situations faced by both Hřebejk and Trojan were from the off made more difficult by the fact that their films were not propped up by the support of a major US distributor, while neither had been selected by a top-tier film festival (Berlin, Cannes, Venice).

Other Oscars

The National Film Archive (NFA) has in its safe keeping a Juvenile Award (children's equivalent Oscar) received by Ivan Jandl, then nine, in 1949. He was the very first Czech to receive one. It was awarded for his role in *Poznamenání* (*The Search*, 1948), a war drama directed by Fred Zinnemann.[28]

Theodor Pištěk received an Oscar for Best Costume Design for his contribution to *Amadeus* (1984). Pištěk was later nominated again for the same contribution to *Valmont* (1989). *Amadeus* also brought about an Academy Award for Karel Černý for Best Art Direction. The director of both of these films, Miloš Forman, has won two director's Academy Awards: for *Amadeus* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1976).

February 2005 brought newspaper headlines boasting how an "Oscar has gone to Pilsen – for cranes". Horst Burbulla had received the Scientific and Engineering Award. Burbulla is the German owner of Pilsen-based company Technocrane which manufactures telescoping camera cranes.

Markéta Irglová, a singer-songwriter from Valašské Meziříčí, received her statuette for the Best Original Song alongside Irish musician Glen Hansard in 2008 in recognition of *Falling Slowly*. It featured in the low-budget musical romance *Once* (2006).

Headlines carried by newspapers and magazines in years of late, including "Annual dream goes by the name The Golden Oscar", "The one trophy every filmmaker wants", "Oscar, the statuette that captivates the gaze of the film world", along with the yearly attention trained on domestic candidates who make it to the Academy Awards, demonstrate the contemporary-era importance seen in the awards issued by the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Although the importance of the Academy Awards was occasionally mentioned in the socialist-era press – especially after a domestic film received an Oscar – [29] the tone

was rather restrained back then, with frequently expressed doubts as to whether it was really the highest accolade there was or whether it was a prize for the “absolute average”. [30] A contribution by an author who used the abbreviation “KI” (it was possibly one of the leading post-1968 normalisation-era ideologists, Jan Kliment) is fairly typical in this respect:

“Quite simply, the American Oscar is an American film award. A nice award, nice to win, but that’s it.” [31]

Regardless of the dominant ideology, a material discussion over cinematography, both domestic and foreign, would benefit greatly from each and every film being evaluated according to its qualities and not in terms of its winning, or not winning, a “nice American film award”.

Notes:

[1] Entry “Film awards” (Ceny filmové) in Bernard, Jan, Frýdlová, Pavla, *Malý labyrint filmu*. Prague: Albatros, 1988, p. 64.

[2] Japanese cinemaphiles are more likely to talk about films by Karel Zeman and Jan Švankmajer.

[3] Foreign films were able to receive an Academy Honorary Award even before that, with the very first film recognised in this way being neorealist *Sciuscià* (*Shoeshine*, 1946) by Vittorio De Sica.

[4] The novel was preceded by a 1962 short story *Past* (*Pitfall*).

[5] Oliva, Ljubomír, “*Tak co, Čs. filmexporte?*”, an article in *Filmové a televizní noviny* 2, 1968, issue 16 (7 Aug), p. 4.

[6] Fiala, Miloš, *Každý by měl vidět Obchod na korze...*, an article in *Kino 21*, 1966, issue 5 (10 March), p. 6.

[7] It is less known that Ida Kamińska was nominated in 1967, i.e. after *Obchod na korze* entered US distribution; she was additionally nominated for the Best Lead

Actress award.

[8] English subtitles were provided prior to the film's screening at a London festival by director Lindsay Anderson as a friendly gesture during his visit to Prague.

[9] The whereabouts of the statuette are unknown, see Menzel, Jiří, *Kam zmizel Oscar?* In Lukeš, Jan (ed.), *Černobílý snář Elmara Klose*. Prague: Národní filmový archiv (NFA), 2011, pp. 148–149.

[10] Lukeš, Jan (ed.), *Černobílý snář Elmara Klose*. Praha: Národní filmový archiv (NFA), 2011, p. 195.

[11] *Ohlas Obchodu na korse v americkém tisku*. Záběr 17, 1966, issue 8, p. 3.

[12] Oliva, Ljubomír, c. d.

[13] The film was sold to the distributor Sigma 3 together with ...*a pátý jezdec je Strach* (*And the Fifth Rider Is Fear*, 1964), *O slavnosti a hostech* (*The Party and the Guests*, 1965) and *Sedmikrásky* (*Daisies*, 1966).

[14] The undiminishing (or even growing) importance of marketing support and media resonance for any given film was pointed out several years ago by, among others, Kryštof Mucha, who is likely to be acquainted quite well with the workings of the acquisition and sale of film rights being the Executive Director of the Karlovy Vary Film Festival: "I think that the [US] Academy is so diverse and filled with strong personalities that it is governed for the most part by the opinions of its members. On the other hand, it is also under strong pressure from big studios and film productions. There are also all the marketing activities surrounding the individual films so the Academy members are influenced to a degree by box office success and by what is generally being talked about." Podskalská, Jana, *Proč český film neboduje na Oscarech*. Deník.cz http://www.denik.cz/z_domova/proc-cesky-film-neboduje-na-oscarech20110220.html

[15] Menzel, Jiří, *Rozmarná léta* [*Capricious Summer*]. Prague: Slováry, 2015, p. 193.

[16] Bláhová, Jindřiška, *České hubičky na vývoz. Distribuce a recepce Ostře sledovaných vlaků v západní Evropě a v USA*. In Skupa, Lukáš (ed.), *Ostře sledované*

vlaky. Prague: Národní filmový archiv (NFA), 2014, pp. 64-91.

[17] One often-cited parallel was the ability of Czechoslovak filmmakers to artfully combine tragedy and comedy.

[18] One of a few films lacking a US-based distributor and therefore with considerably diminished chances of winning the award.

[19] Navrátil, A., *Jak se přebírá Oscar (studentský)*. An article in *Zpravodaj československého filmu* 15, 1989, issue 14–15, p. 51.

[20] Navrátil, A., c. d., p. 50.

[21] Tippnerová, Anna, *Kolja jako symptom. Ideologie, fantasma a národ ve filmu Jana Svěráka*. *Iluminace*. Prague: Národní filmový archiv (NFA), 2001, issue 1, p. 36. In her penetrating analysis of hidden meanings in Svěrák's film, the author offers one of the less frequent explanations of its foreign success when she writes "Svěrák's *Kolja* works brilliantly with symptoms in much the same way Hollywood films do."

[22] Hejčová, H., *Svěrákovi mezi hollywoodskými celebritami*. An article in *Kinorevue* 7, 1997, issue 3, p. 81.

[23] Hejčová, H., c. d.

[24] Hejčová, H., c. d.

[25] Dědek, Honza, *Jan Hřebejk. Až budu kompletní*. An article in *Cinema* 2001, issue 5, p. 18.

[26] Geislerová, Anna (recorded by Jaroslav Sedláček), *Jak jsme nepotkali Oscara*. An article in *Cinema* 2004, issue 4, pp. 30–35.

[27] Geislerová, Anna, c. d., p. 34.

[28] NFA vaults also hold another prominent award received by Jandl for the same role: the Golden Globe Award for Best Juvenile Actor.

[29] Such as: "After all, the most important accolade won by a Czechoslovak film last year was the Academy Award of Merit – the famous Oscar given to *Obchod na korze*."

Rudé právo daily, 5 Jan 1967, p. 5; “For the second time our film industry has attained success that has truly far-reaching international importance (not diminished in any way by the fact that we previously turned our noses up at Oscars...).” Oliva, Ljubomír, in *Po dvou letech druhý Oscar*. An article in *Kino 23*, 1968, issue 23 (2 May), p. 11.

[30] *Strýček Oscar*. An article in *Kino 44*, 1989, issue 10 (9 May), p. 8.

[31] Kl, *Oscar není všechno*. Rudé právo daily, 15 Nov 1982, p. 5.