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We ain't heard nothin' yet – Czech musicals

“Ever since its conception, the musical has been the American pill of oblivion, the potion of optimism, that lets audiences stop thinking, start dreaming and keep hoping.” [1]

A recent article here declared that the fairy tale is the genre most characteristic of Czech cinema. In the same vein, the musical film, alongside the western and the gangster movie, can be viewed as a most typical genre of US cinema.

“Wait a minute, wait a minute, you ain't heard nothin' yet” were the words that constituted one of the earliest synchronised speeches heard from a film strip. They were uttered by American singer and cabaret entertainer Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer* (1927), which marked the beginning of a new era in the history of cinema. In the years that followed, singing and dancing on the silver screen were the likes of Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, Gene Kelly and Barbra Streisand, who shone so brightly in a film adaptation of Broadway stage musical *Hello, Dolly!* (1969), one of the final classical productions of the once immensely popular genre. The golden era did indeed come to an end. Since the 1970s, American musical film has stagnated – with the notable exception of animated musicals (*South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*, *Tangled*, *Frozen*). On the other hand, Czech musical film ... has been stagnating since the medium first included synchronised sound. [2]

Musicals around the world have drawn inspiration from Viennese operetta, French vaudeville and American music halls. In a country that produced the saying “Every Czech is a musician”, the origins of the genre stem instead from stage pieces penned by dramatists Klicpera and Tyl featuring songs and dancing, or from Prague's cabaret and music halls. There was very little interest in producing stage musicals, with their

considerable technical and financial demands, where music, singing and dancing are integral components of the storyline. The main reason was the limited size of the market and the apprehensions, probably justified, of local entrepreneurs when it came to making returns on investments sunk into musical productions for the stage.

A situation similar to that of the theatre repeated itself after the advent of sound cinema as film production suddenly became about four times as expensive. Even though a purebred Czech musical only appeared as late as in the 1960s, that did not mean that Czech cinema was devoid of singing and dancing. The vanguard consisting of Czech-language versions of German musical comedies was quickly followed in the early years of sound film by clumsy operettas (*Bláhové děvče* [*Foolish Girl*], *Děvčátko, neříkej ne!* [*Don't Say No, Girl!*], *Jsem děvče s čertem v těle* [*The Devil in Me*], *Na růžích ustláno* [*Bed of Roses*], *Na svatém Kopečku* [*On Holy Hill*], *Slečna matinka* [*Miss Mother*], *Žena, která ví, co chce* [*A Woman Who Knows What She Wants*]). The quantity of such films was sadly offset by their low quality, something even period publicists were fully aware of:

“The whole world is inundated with film operettas. Every cinematic commodity enjoys its period of boom and while operettas are still screened in the majority of cinemas it must be said that the peak interest in them has already come and gone. Producers of film operettas understand that their audiences give little thought to the intrinsic values of their pieces and have therefore long since resorted merely to competing in terms of décor and amounts invested.”[3]

It was only with difficulty that the early musical comedy films shed their stage-like stiffness. Their rather simple storylines often caused some extra disappointment to those members of the audience with something of a musical ear as they had to endure amateurish singing by film actors. Despite these shortcomings, film operettas remained popular in the interwar period while they were also of considerable value to the country's folklore. For city audiences, these films presented a unique opportunity for acquaintance with folk songs, a traditional domain of the countryside. The emphasis on folk music increased during the WWII years when dotting films with traditional songs was a method of keeping up the nation's morale (*Advokát chudých* [*Lawyer of the Poor*], *Madla zpívá Evropě* [*Madla Sings to Europe*], *Muzikantská Liduška* [*Liduška and Her Musician*], *Štěstí pro dva* [*Happiness For Two*], *To byl český*

muzikant [That Was a Czech Musician]).

Voskovec, Werich, Frič

However, even before the breakout of WWII, the authorial duo of Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich, whose visual (and acoustic) creations were indeed hard to miss, provided a possible solution to the prevalent musical film misery. Their hugely popular theatre pieces were first adapted for the silver screen under the watchful eye of stage director Jidřich Honzl (*Pudr a benzin [Powder and Gas]*, *Peníze nebo život [Your Money or Your Life]*), who was later succeeded by the more skilful Martin Frič (*Hej rup! [Heave-Ho!]*, *Svět patří nám [The World Belongs to Us]*). Frič also directed several well-made musical comedies starring Vlasta Burian or Oldřich Nový.

Frič was able to enliven the stage forms through dynamic editing and the playful use of soundtrack (e.g. by using music to dictate the rhythm of dialogues). Frič thus showed the way to his colleagues in terms of incorporating songs into a storyline in a fashion that avoids the end product giving the impression of a stage play merely recorded on film. It is no wonder then that films directed by Frič ignited considerable interest when it came to other similarly composed works while they also propelled into the public domain catchy melodies created by Jaroslav Ježek and easy-to-remember lyrics penned by Voskovec and Werich.

In addition to utilising songs already in existence, the genre also saw composers provide lyrics and music tailored to particular films. With the close links between the film and music industries, audiences soon became able to acquire vinyls with popular silver screen hits. Until the advent of television and subsequently audio-visual media, gramophone records remained a unique route to enjoying one's favourite films in the comfort of one's home, if only through their soundtracks. The boom in sales of film song records is described for example in the following report from an interwar issue of *Film* magazine:

“Ultrapphon extends its collaboration with Czech cinema and releases further records featuring our Czech film artists. Lída Baarová has recently made her first record *Možná, možná ... [Maybe, Maybe ...]* containing songs by J. Kumok that featured in the sound film *Dokud máš maminku [While You Have a Mother]*. (...) The voice of another popular actress, Ljuba Hermanová, will also be heard from records. Her first

recording is slow-fox *Zakázané ovoce* [*Forbidden Fruit*] composed by Ježek. Blues *Ze dne na den* [*Day to Day*] and foxtrot *Hej rup, chceme žít!* [*Heave-Ho, We Want to Live!*] that appeared in *Hej rup!* have also been released as audio records. Both hits are sung by Voskovec and Werich accompanied by Ježek's big orchestra that forms part of Osvobozené divadlo [Liberated Theatre]. (...) Jiří Sedláček and Ferenc Futurista, also well-known from the silver screen, feature on further records released by Ultraphon. (...) R. A. Dvorský and his Melody Boys have recorded title song *Dokud máš maminku* from the eponymous film. Ultraphon is working on the release of more records from Czech sound films, featuring Czech film artists.”[4]

Good sales of film songs also serve as proof that sophisticated marketing and media synergies propped up the film industry long before the massive entrée of *Jaws* or *Star Wars*.

Hudba z Marsu

Following the intermezzo of the war years, which for example produced the ambitious revue-like comedy *Veselá bída* [*Merry Poverty*, 1939], and a post-war period largely devoid of musical films, there came a time of close ideological supervision that brought with it the birth of the phenomenon of “builders-of-the-future comedy”. The key demand made of “musical films” during the socialist realism period [5], such as *Zítřka se bude tančit všude* [*Tomorrow, People Will Be Dancing Everywhere*, 1952] or *Písnička za groš* [*Ditty for a Penny*, 1952] was to promote unconditionally the optimistic ideology of building a brighter tomorrow. In addition to rousing songs, the ruling communist party also tolerated a return to folklore, as long as it was stripped of its framework of Christian traditions. Given its American birthplace, jazz, on the other hand, was firmly on the blacklist.[6]

Zítřka se bude tančit všude, a model would-be musical film of the period, was closely modelled after the example set by Soviet “kolkhoz musicals” in which folklore music underlined depictions of merry life across the collectivised countryside. The film's plot as well as the contempt in which today's audience hold the celebration of love and honest work immersed in revolutionary romanticism are best illustrated by an excerpt from a user's comment posted on the Czecho-Slovak Film Database (ČSFD) website:

“The plot is just so desperately trivial it makes one laugh. There is the lazy son from a bourgeoisie family, introduced to the viewer through an inspection of his living quarters (ugh, that hideous non-socialist, non-realist cubism!), who spins a web of intrigue within a folk dance society. Ethnographer Pavel, detached from real people, gradually comes to the realisation that only through working with people and for people can he ever achieve fulfilment. And they are all just smiling like idiots – Nesvatba smiles at Martínková, Martínková at Nesvatba. Kubešová at Buchvaldek, Buchvaldek at Kubešová. Nesvatba at Buchvaldek...”[7]

In his musical comedy about a factory dance band, Vratislav Blažek, a core author of the Divadlo satiry [Theatre of Satire], librettist, playwright and lyricist, did his best to avoid the open promotion of communist ideas, such as a happy life in the countryside and proclamations of peace, friendship and the solidarity of the youth. Together with a duo of directors, Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, Blažek created *Hudba z Marsu* [Music from Mars, 1955]. Today’s audiences will probably find the film’s satire rather tame. Yet at the time of its creation, it revealed not only Blažek’s developed feeling for combining songs and the spoken word but also his ability to marry the period’s building-the-future optimism with storylines that traditional socialist patterns would tend to overlook. Blažek was eventually able to let that ability roam free during the more liberal 1960s.

Starci na chmelu, Dáma na kolejích

It took more than the greater freedom afforded to the cultural scene and a boom of the stage musical to see the emergence of the first Czechoslovak film truly deserving of the musical film label. The early foundations of the genre were laid back in the 1950s by what were then termed visual songs. In today’s terminology, short films like *Dáme si do bytu* [Let’s Furnish Our Flat, 1958],[8] *Jezdím bez nehod* [Driving without Accidents, 1961] or *Mackie Messer* (1962) would be described as video clips. Authors of these short musical pieces earned international acclaim and demonstrated a boundless ability to merge the visual and musical sides, actors’ performances with song, and dance sequences with final editing. See, for instance, *Ztracená revue* [Lost Revue, 1961].

This short musical comedy, winner of the Rose d'Argent (Silver Rose) award at the Montreux International Festival of Television Light Entertainment, was directed by Zdeněk Podskalský for whom the 30-minute sketch was a warm-up exercise ahead of feature-length cinema and television musicals such as *Sedm žen Alfonse Karáska* [*Seven Women of Alfons Karásek*, 1967], *Noc na Karlštejně* [*A Night at Karlštejn*, 1973] and *Trhák* [*Blockbuster*, 1980]. In the early 1960s, Podskalský along with Ladislav Rychman, Ján Roháč and Pavel Hobl, were members of an upcoming generation of filmmakers with plenty of courage to step outside the tried and tested genre boxes and to seek inspiration beyond the country's borders.

Global musical film hit *West Side Story* (1961) served as a major source of inspiration for the creators of early Czechoslovak musicals. Filmmakers behind the country's musical film number one, *Starci na chmelu* [*Hop-Pickers*, 1964], were clearly among those who did little to hide their enchantment with *West Side Story*'s modern take on the Romeo and Juliet story. Responding to a question as to whether the script of *Starci na chmelu* had been influenced by *West Side Story*, Vratislav Blažek said without a moment's hesitation: "To a significant degree. And that's because there is not a single person who would not fall under the film's spell." [9]

In defence of the screenwriter, accused by period reviewers of plagiarism, it must be said that the script for *Starci na chmelu* was created without any knowledge of *West Side Story*. It was initially intended for a stage musical to be performed by Divadlo ABC [Theatre ABC]. Blažek was motivated by the lack of themes exploring young people's emotional coming of age. However, he soon realised that Czechoslovak theatre was sorely short of the necessary number of actors possessing passable singing and dancing skills. Blažek therefore turned to Ladislav Rychman to see if he would be interested in using the script to make a film. Rychman agreed. Following an extensive casting exercise, 25 fresh faces were selected from among 1,200 young candidates to whom eight students of Prague's Academy of Music were added.

Even though there was a distinct boom in artistic productions targeting young people in the period that elapsed between the creation of the script and the premiere of *Starci na chmelu*, the musical film, set in the environs of a hop harvest where the young protagonists help out, still remained in a league of its own not only due to its genre but also thanks to its nature as a generational manifesto. The film presented

standpoints of the post-war generations through songs, organically integrated into the whole. Unlike TV clips of the period, they conformed to a uniform style and were in step with the film's storyline. The movie, the sprightliness of which corresponded with the liberal 1960s, was advertised in cinemas as the "first Czech musical film". State-controlled cinema production was generous enough to secure for the film not just the widescreen colour format but also four-channel audio.

All efforts to impress with audio-visual brilliance were lost on audiences in some cinemas due to the poor quality of some copies of the film supplied by the state-owned Central Film Rental Authority (ÚPF). Commenting on the low quality of these copies, director Ladislav Rychman said: "... instead of young, healthy, suntanned people you have delivered a different film, a film about youth seriously stricken by green sickness, instead of suntanned people we watch curd-white blots." Rychman also requested the immediate recall of the defective copies and their replacement with flawless ones.[10]

However, the unsatisfactory visual and audio quality did nothing to deter audiences from arriving at cinemas in their droves or reviewers from lavishing praise upon the film:

"*Starci na chmelu* delivers a feast for the senses. There are young, beautiful people to behold. There are songs and colours, there is humour, with a satirical bite at times. In short, there is everything that a good, audience-friendly film requires. And I have no doubts that the film will attract its audiences." [11]

"*Starci na chmelu* can proudly stand shoulder to shoulder with *West Side Story*, and more than that, the film is more balanced in terms of composition, and its core idea is more original." [12]

The first rock musical became especially popular in Eastern Bloc countries but it was also screened in Latin America. Another musical film to arrive boasting world-class quality, and win international recognition, was *Limonádový Joe aneb Koňská opera* [*Lemonade Joe*, 1964], in which director Oldřich Lipský and screenwriter Jiří Brdečka boldly merged the musical and western genres. Czech cinema has ever since been waiting for the next reason to rejoice over the ability of domestic filmmakers to produce a music-and-dance film on a par with the genre's foreign productions.

Before leaving the country for West Germany in 1968, and killing off any hopes of a sequel to *Starci na chmelu* [13] in the process, screenwriter Vratislav Blažek contributed to two more musical films: *Strašná žena* [*Figure Skater and Fidelity*, 1965] and *Dáma na kolejích* [*Lady of the Lines*, 1966]. Yet neither the revue-like film featuring the country's top figure skaters of the period, nor the feminist musical about a tram driver (Jiřina Bohdalová) fighting the unequal position of women in marriage, managed to attain a following comparable to *Starci na chmelu*, which has been used as a yardstick to the detriment of any subsequent musical film. In the eyes of period reviewers, a similar defeat befell the exquisitely staged *Kdyby tisíc klarinetů* [*If a Thousand Clarinets*] directed by Ján Roth and Vladimír Svitáček who worked with a theme supplied by Jiří Suchý and music composed by Jiří Šlitr.

The film, arranged as a television broadcast from a location where all firearms morphed into musical instruments, delivered a stream of songs by the era's brightest stars of domestic pop music, prompting film publicists to mull whether it ranked as a musical film at all:

"*Kdyby tisíc klarinetů*, that freakish hybrid, cannot be placed without serious difficulty in any of the categories commonly used for describing musical genres. Perhaps the most fitting term to use would be a 'variety show' instead of that polite and diplomatic description under which the film is distributed. The key weakness is above all the complete neglect and underestimation of the purported genre, the discrepancy between the film's theme and its pursuit of putting on a monster show. It is sometimes said of the film that it is overloaded with songs but that is not exactly true. It is rather an illusion, created by the songs' non-functional integration in the storyline which is itself insufficiently and hurriedly explored. (...) It is never possible to create a musical film by having Mr Matuška come and say: 'Tereza, I love you. I have written a song for you and will sing it to you now.' Choreography is best not mentioned. It would require a powerful magnifying glass [to detect any]."[14]

Music played an indispensable role in films that marked the beginning of Miloš Forman's directing career, namely in the mock documentary *Konkurs* [*Talent Competition*, 1963] and the short story of two brass bands *Kdyby ty muziky nebyly* [*If Only They Ain't Had Them Bands*, 1963]. And just as Forman's early films were a breath of fresh air for Czechoslovak cinema, so was the musical collage *Máte doma*

Iva? [*Do You Keep a Lion at Home?*, 1963] that came after years of schematic building-of-the-future comedies. The series of loosely connected narratives with animated intermezzos and songs earned its director Pavel Hobl the Lion of Saint Mark at the children and youth film festival in Venice.

The last two manifestations of the closeness between 1960s film and music are music fairytale *Šíleně smutná princezna* [*Incredibly Sad Princess*, 1968] and the visually imaginative *Kulhavý ďábel* [*Limping Devil*, 1968]. Both films featured songs by Václav Neckář, whose name also joined those of dozens of other artists in the credits of legendary TV series *Píseň pro Rudolfa III* [*Singing for Rudolf III*]. Watching the seven episodes (of which the sixth has not survived in its entirety) written by Jaroslav Dietl and featuring songs performed among others by Marta Kubišová, Helena Vondráčková, Waldemar Matuška, Karel Gott, Eva Pilarová, Karel Hála, Josef Laufer and Yveta Simonová, is one of the most pleasant ways of acquainting oneself with Czechoslovak pop music as it existed up until the post-1968 political crackdown.

Gott, Svoboda and David

The period, commonly labelled as “normalisation”, which followed the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact armies in August 1968 was characterised by a swift return to tried and tested approaches, free of experimentation with genres imported from the other side of the Iron Curtain. Yet the production of musical films for cinema and TV continued, albeit lacking in the unbridled playfulness so typical of pre-normalisation productions. Following his *Dáma na kolejích*, Ladislav Rychman made one more attempt at replicating the success of *Starci na chmelu* and created a modern take on J. K. Tyl’s *Strakonický dudák* [*The Bagpiper of Strakonice*] named *Hvězda padá vzhůru* [*The Star Is Falling Upwards*, 1974]. Instead of Vratislav Blažek’s satirical humour, the film, described by Jiří Flígl as a “beautifully unpalatable normalisation-era monument to the immortal icon of Czech pop culture”,^[15] strove to lure its audiences into cinemas with Karel Gott’s inimitable acting and singing.

Far greater taste in adapting a literary classic was demonstrated by Zdeněk Podskalský who transformed a play by Jaroslav Vrchlický into the abovementioned *Noc na Karlštejně* (1973). For the purposes of the musical film, featuring music by Karel Svoboda and acting by the married couple Vlastimil Brodský and Jana Brejchová in the

roles of Emperor Charles IV and his wife Elizabeth of Pomerania, Barrandov Studio created a Luxembourg-era hall, demonstrating the studio's willingness to invest in other popular genres on top of fairytales. However, audiences were only able to enjoy the film's musical riches, including the song *Lásko má, já stůňu* [*I'm ailing, my love*], until one of the singing cast, Waldemar Matuška, left the country for the US, after which the film was withdrawn from distribution.

Increasing numbers of songs in films was used as a safeguard against the low footfall that hit a number of other *expensive films*. There was plenty of singing in fairytales (*Zlatovláska* [*Goldilocks*], *Princové jsou na draka* [*Princes Suck (Dragon's Blood)*], and *Co takhle svatba, princí?* [*How About Marriage, Prince?*]), and in children's films with demanding special effects (*Ať žijí duchové* [*Long Live Ghosts!*]). Slightly older audiences were appeased in the 1980s with homemade alternatives to the US disco hit *Saturday Night Fever* (1977). In *Láska z pasáže* [*Love from the Arcade*, 1984] it was up to young Lukáš Vaculík to create a female following; in *Discopříběh* [*Discostory*, 1987] that honour went to the Rudolf Hrušínský (the youngest one who was given that name).

The essence of the two latter-named films was laid bare in a subsequent hyperbolic parody, a "rhythmical" film of the totalitarian period, *Kouř* [*Smoke*, 1990], created by authors from the Sklep Theatre. The starting point for the movie, originally intended for completion in Gottwaldov (today's Zlín) studios before socialism crumbled, was student film *Kuřáci* [*Smokers*] by Tomáš Vorel. However, two years of delay caused by haggling over approval for a script seen as too cheeky and sarcastic for the regime's liking meant that the film was eventually made only after November 1989. But that delay actually freed the creators of censorship constraints and enabled them to laugh in the face of the falsely optimistic slant of normalisation-era pop culture, for example through pushy song *Je to fajn* [*All Is Fine*]. That will ring in your head for ever if you hear it just once.

The intentionally imperfect mockery by the Sklep crew of absurd norms in fact demonstrated a greater feeling for the rules of the genre than musical comedy *Jen ho nechte, ať se bojí* [*Let Him Face the Music*, 1977], musical crime comedy *Drahé tety a já* [*Dear Aunts and Me*, 1974], historical musical comedy *Dva na koni, jeden na oslu* [*Two on Horseback, One on a Donkey*, 1988], *Únos Moravanky* [*The Moravanka Band's*

Been Kidnapped, 1982] folksy in both humour and music, the adaptation of a popular play staged by Brno's Divadlo na provázku [Theatre on a String] *Balada pro banditu* [Ballad for the Bandit, 1978], or *Jonáš a Melicharová* [Jonáš and Melicharová, 1986], composed of songs born in the Semafor Theatre and followed by a sequel, *Jonáš II. aneb Jak je důležité mít Melicharovou* [Jonas 39.5C, 1988].

Unfulfilled desire

Writer and chronicler from Prague-Dejvice Petr Šabach grew up in 1950s Czechoslovakia and made it the setting of his story *Šakalí léta* [Jackal Years], which is included in his collection of stories *Jak potopit Austrálii* [How to Sink Australia]. Soon after its release in 1986, the book caught the attention of Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU) student Jan Hřebejk and his friend Petr Jarchovský, the latter of whom picked *Šakalí léta* as the starting point for his graduation script assignment. As soon as Hřebejk felt like he had accumulated some experience and mustered sufficient courage a few years later, he embarked on what would become the country's first rock'n'roll musical film since *Starci na chmelu*, working under the influence of *Grease* and other Western films that flooded the country after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

When the film version of *Šakalí léta* [Big Beat, 1993], featuring music and lyrics by Ivan Hlas, enchanted audiences and ruled the roost at the inaugural Czech Lions film awards the stage seemed set for the originally American genre to put down roots in the Czech Republic at last. The less than 10 musical films made over the next two decades – of which one was animated (*Báječná show* [A Wonderful Show]) and another a mere recording of a stage performance (*Carmen*) – demonstrated how painfully unjustified that initial optimism was.

Judging by vox populi shared on online forums of the Czecho-Slovak Film Database (ČSFD), the most satisfactory combination of music, singing and dancing was achieved by Filip Renč in his *Rebelové* [Rebels, 2001]: “A colourful kitsch with an excellent musical side.”[16] On the other hand, initial reviews of F. A. Brabec's first Czech feature-length 3D film *V peřině* [In the Duvet, 2011] created expectations of the worst: “The malice of this film lies in the fact that it eventually turns out not to be as bad as one would have expected. I, for one, had steeled myself for the possibility of

dying by the time the film wraps up but it eventually turned out to be of average uneasy awkwardness, which should in Brabec's case be credited with the fact that it was not an adaptation of an earlier work (...)." [17]

Let's see if commenting on this year's challenger to the so far unassailable position of *Starci na chmelu*, a musical film by the name *Muzikál aneb Cesty ke štěstí* [*Musical, or the Way to Happiness*], provides yet another opportunity for contributors to ČSFD online forums to make more witty comments, or let's see if there is any room for praise. It would probably be best to be ready for the former while hoping for the latter. But whatever the fallout of *Muzikál* due for release in January or *Decibely lásky* [*Decibels of Love*] set to follow a month later, neither of the two will mark the end of Czech filmmakers' attempts at making a musical film of their own. A statement made by Jan Hřebejk at the time of the release of *Šakalí léta* may go some way towards explaining the filmmakers' drive to produce a musical film, as well as the reasons why their efforts so often fall short of the mark:

"I find it attractive for its combination of all the things I like: film, music and dance. I think there are many directors who dream of making a musical film in their lifetimes precisely because of the need to balance several art forms in a single creation. At the same time, it was an irresistible challenge for screenwriter Petr Jarchovský and myself to take on the most conservative of genres. The rules are somewhat looser when you make a psychological movie or a melodrama, whereas a musical film is defined quite strictly. In it, music, singing and dancing must comprise the dramatic component of what you see." [18]

Notes:

[1] Špindlerová, A., *Tradiční muzikál je mrtev?* Kino 24, 1969, issue No. 26 (25 Dec), p. 6.

[2] The first ever screening of a sound film in Czechoslovakia took place on 13 August 1929 when *Lod' komediantů* [*Comedians' Ship*, 1929] was shown in Lucerna cinema with sound partly recorded and subsequently synchronised.

[3] Smrž, Karel, *Děvčátko neříkej ne!* Studio: Měsíční revue pro filmové umění, 1932, issue No. 5, p. 238.

[4] *Nové gramofon. snímky film. umělců.* Film 14, 1934, issue No. 11 (1 Nov), p. 3.

[5] It must be said that the term “musical”, generally identified with commercially oriented products released in imperialist countries, was shunned at the time for its undesirable connotations.

[6] The 1950s regime tolerated only the “New Orleans” style, generally associated with exploited African Americans, and music by Jaroslav Ježek.

[7] A comment by user Pohrobek, ČSFD: <http://www.csfd.cz/film/9331-zitra-se-bude-tancit-vsude/komentare/?all=1>

[8] A song performed in *Dáme si do bytu* by Irena Kačírková and Josef Bek was first used in *Snadný život* [*Easy Life*, 1957] and sung by Jiří Suchý and Josef Zíma. A week after the premiere, the song was removed by censors for its inappropriate lyrics.

[9] *Se „Starci na chmelu“ od chmelu ke chmelu.* Záběr 15, 1964, issue No. 17 (30 Sept), p. 1.

[10] From a letter by L. Rychman to ÚPF. 30 Sept 1964. NFA, ÚŘ ČSF, R14/AI/1P/9K.

[11] Boček, Jaroslav, *Starci na chmelu.* Kulturní tvorba 39, 24 Sept 1964, p. 12.

[12] Laub, Gabriel, *Tři filmové vesolohry.* Plamen 7, 1965, issue No. 11 (Nov), p. 158.

[13] Blažek mentioned considering a sequel shortly after the premiere in an interview with Jaroslav Boček. Boček, Jaroslav, *O muzikálu a jiných věcech.* Kulturní tvorba 2, 1964, issue No. 46 (12 Nov), pp. 4-5.

[14] Urbánková, Dana, *Otazníky kolem muzikálu...* Film a doba 11, 1965, issue No. 9, p. 490.

[15] A comment by user JFL, ČSFD: <http://www.csfd.cz/film/8015-hvezda-pada-vzhuru/komentare/?all=1>

[16] A comment by user Radyo, ČSFD: <http://www.csfd.cz/film/7632-rebelove/komentare/>

[17] A comment by user Ony, ČSFD: <http://www.csfd.cz/film/146787-v-perine/komentare/>

[18] Halada, Andrej, *Nový český muzikál: častuška proti radiu Luxembourg*. Kinorevue 3, 1993, issue No. 14 (25 June), p. 18.