

UP AND DOWN

A Film by Jan Hřebejk

**2005 CZECH REPUBLIC'S SUBMISSION FOR THE ACADEMY AWARD FOR
BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM**

A SONY PICTURES CLASSICS RELEASE.

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CAST

Martin – Petr Forman

Vera – Emilia Vasaryova

Mila – Natasa Burger

Otto – Jan Triska

Hana – Ingrid Timkova

Lenka – Kristyna Liska-Bokova

Eman – Pavel Liska

Lubos – Marek Daniel

Milan – Jan Budar

Goran – Zdenek Suchy

Plukovnik – Jaroslav Dusek

Himself – Vaclav Havel

The Colonel – Jaroslav Ducek

CREW

Director - Jan Hrebejk

Story – Petr Jarchovsky and Jan Hrebejk

Screenplay – Petr Jarchovsky

Cinematography – Jan Malir

Production Design – Milan Bycek

Costumes – Katarina Beiliková

Editor – Vladimir Barak

Sound – Michal Holubec

Music - Ales Brezina

Executive Producers – Ondrej Trojan, Milan Kuchynka

Production Managers – Michaela Kuchynková

Produced by: Total HelpArt T.H.A. Film Company

In Cooperation With: Czech Television and Barrandov Studio

Producer: Ondrej Trojan - Total HelpArt T.H.A. Film Company

Co-Producers: Jaroslav Kucera – Czech Television, Jan Bradác – Falcon

Director's statement

After the 1989 fall of the Communist regime, which my co-screenwriter Petr Jarchovsky and I experienced firsthand as students at the Prague Film Academy, life around us started to change dramatically.

It was easier for documentary filmmakers to reflect on the fast-moving changes taking place at that time, when reality was faster than feature film stories could keep up with. That's probably why all our films prior to **UP AND DOWN** take place in the past. We looked for stories in bygone periods and found parallels to what we were going through, as in the historical drama *Divided We Fall*, or in the retro-comedy genre films *Pupendo* and *Cosy Dens*.

UP AND DOWN is our first contemporary film where we talk about life in the Czech Republic. We decided to tell the story of everyday people and to shoot in the streets we walk on every day. We even shot at the airport while it was in full operation!

We are fascinated by the power and simultaneous fragility of the world. We found a few stories, both local and universal: a child lost and sold, the re-union of old lovers, siblings who did not know of each other for twenty years, stories of forgiveness and hope, of aggression and humanity, stories of the Old World versus the New World. We decided to tell these stories with a sense of humor... And the strangest thing is that, we did not have to invent that many things!

Our characters are both heroes and victims of today's globalized world, a world in which love and hate seem to roam so indiscriminately.

-- Jan Hrebejk

Synopsis

In the dead of the night, near the Czech-Slovak border, two smugglers discover their truckload of illegal Indian immigrants have left a baby behind.

In a small Prague apartment, Franta (Jiri Machacek) and Mila (Natasa Burger) dream of having a child, but Franta – on probation because of his soccer hooliganism past - is not allowed to adopt, and Mila is unable to conceive. After cashing in on her savings, Mila decides to buy a baby from a pawnshop that fronts a den of thieves and pickpockets.

Meanwhile, an unusual family reunion is taking place: Academy professor Otto (Jan Triska) collapses while teaching, prompting his estranged son Martin (Petr Forman, son of director Milos) to return to Prague from Australia to see his father and his mother, Vera (Emilia Vasaryova), long separated from Otto whom she still pines for. Otto is now living with the beautiful and much younger Hana (Ingrid Timkova), who works in a refugee aid center helping immigrants to adjust to their new lives....

An Interview with director Jan Hřebejk

Q: **UP AND DOWN** is your first film that takes place in the present...

A: Writing the screenplay was a very natural process. My co-writer, Petr Jarchovský told me about the story of a lost child reported in a television report about refugees. I also drew inspiration from the story of a Czech friend of mine from Los Angeles, about his emigration thirty years ago. We added a few true stories that we experienced or had heard of and the rest was fictional.

Q: The main themes in your films, whilst having comic spark, are always very serious. Can you expand on your fascination with “great events” playing out in the background of “little stories”?

A: With our previous films we never said: “Now we’ll make a film about the Holocaust or the occupation.” We have always been intrigued by a certain character or story. **UP AND DOWN** was no different. We always look for something compelling in our stories and in the humanity of the characters whose stories we are telling. In a sense, it’s a sort of plebian view of the world; history goes on regardless of our little characters. Our heroes don’t make history; instead they are usually its victims.

Q: Can you describe your inspiration for this new film?

A: Our main inspiration is what we see around us and not what we see in the theater. Personally, British cinema, for example Mike Leigh’s *Secrets and Lies* and Stephen Daldry’s *Billy Elliot*, is very inspiring. It’s contemporary and I see similarities in my work and their use of dialogue and character within the narrative. I also consider the work of Woody Allen and Milos Forman to be masterful.

Q: Why did you cast Václav Havel (Award winning writer, and former President of The Czech Republic) in your film?

A: The Burmese dissident couple in our film was inspired by my wife’s work for Amnesty International. At the time, she was working on an exhibition of photographs on Burma held under the auspices of then President Václav Havel. I knew that his participation in the film could contribute to the believability of this element of the narrative.

Q: How did you choose the music for **UP AND DOWN**?

A: The composer of the music is my long-time friend and collaborator Ales Brezina, who also composed the music to *Divided We Fall*. We worked with Goran Bregovi and Slobodan Dedeji (who have worked many times with award-winning director Emir Kusturica), and a number of top-notch Serbian musicians including Boban Markovi Orkestar and Ognjen Popovi. In addition, rising London club star Luk Richie with the current biggest Czech singing star Dan Bárta, worked on the film.

Q: Can you talk about the stars of **UP AND DOWN**?

A: Besides Jan Triska (Otto) (a great Czech film and theater star of the 1960s who now lives in Los Angeles), we had the pleasure of working with Milos Forman's son Petr Forman (Martin) and Slovak actress Emilia Vásáryová (Vera), who first appeared in Vojtech Jasny's *When The Cat Comes*, which won three major awards at the Cannes Film Festival in 1964.

Q: Where did you shoot the film?

A: Cinematographer, Jan Malir and I filmed in real apartments and on the streets in the center of Prague, often in a semi-documentary style. We were inspired by Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic*, which I personally consider one of the best films in recent years, in terms of style and cinematography.

Q: Part of the film takes place in Australia. What was it like to work there?

A: Milos Forman's brother Pavel and his family have lived in Brisbane, Australia since the end of the 1960s and helped us a great deal. Some of the scenes were actually filmed in their backyard.

Q: Can you talk about the look and the sound of the film?

A: For the first time, we were shooting in CinemaScope and processed the image electronically after editing. We took our inspiration from *Traffic* and *Amores Perros* when deciding on the color hues. As for the music, we found the musicians among Balkan jazzmen and in a rock club in London.

An Interview with co-screenwriter Petr Jarchovsky

Q: **UP AND DOWN** is your first film set in the present day. How different was this for yourself and director Jan Hřebejk when writing the film?

A: I can't say that we think about our films as historical or contemporary. Films that are set in the past have to resonate with today's viewers. Otherwise, they wouldn't have a chance to catch the interest of the audience. Basically, we are drawn to tales, which then have to take place in a certain period. The period itself is secondary because we are interested in the human characters and how they react and change in certain historical contexts. So we didn't plan anything, but when we decided on a contemporary theme we were happy for the chance to show our audience something different. We reveled in the opportunity to break out of the "nostalgic retro-comedy" box we are often placed in.

Q: How is it different to write a screenplay when you are describing a reality that you know well and live in?

A: You don't have to work with sources as much to check reality, because you're living in the present and contexts are obvious. It gives you a kind of freedom and you can concentrate more on the fate of your characters.

Q: But viewers can possibly be more critical of a contemporary narrative...

A: Everyone sees the present from his or her own point of view and that is what's exciting about it. We are not looking for some wide consensus, but we are trying to pose questions about our period and ourselves.

Q: As a screenwriter, do you participate in the selection of actors?

A: It's one of the most pleasant phases of preparing the film; a sort of daydreaming and I'm happy that I can be a part of it.

I owe a debt of thanks to all the actors who worked on **UP AND DOWN**. It was exciting and inspiring to watch how their talent enriched the filmmakers' collaboration and made it into a film that I stand behind completely.

Q: Last year you worked on **PUPENDO**, now **UP AND DOWN**. What are your future screenwriting plans?

A: We are working on the second version of a love story, which is still very much a work in progress. It will be a story told on two levels, where the common past and present of our characters will play out. I see it as a tragicomedy, a story of forgotten childhood love that unexpectedly comes to life.

Q: Two films that you wrote the script for (**ZELARY** and **DIVIDED WE FALL**) were nominated for a Best Foreign Film Oscar. Some would call that a great success. How is it reflected in your work today?

A: I have more peace in my work and I'm not as tortured by existential problems. I'm a bit wiser, but on the other hand I'm a bit more careful. You gain something and you lose something. The biggest advantage is that I can continue to work on themes that interest me and that are close to me and I don't have to adjust to the tastes of others.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Jan Hrebejk, film and theater director, screenwriter.

Jan Hrebejk and Petr Jarchovsky studied together at the legendary school of screenwriting and dramatic arts at the Prague Film and Television Academy of Musical Arts (FAMU). They first worked together on the original musical *Big Beat*, a retro-comedy set at the end of the 1950s about the coming of rock'n'roll to Czechoslovakia. The film went on to win four Czech Lions (Czech Oscars) including Best Director and Best Film in 1993. They have collaborated on all of Hrebejk's subsequent films

Big Beat was followed by 1999's Czech box office smash *Cosy Dens* and *Divided We Fall* a year later, which received an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film, five Czech Lions and a series of awards at international film festivals as well theatrical releases all over the world including Sony Pictures Classics in the U.S. *Pupendo* debuted in 2003, and was followed by **UP AND DOWN**.

In 1997, Jan Hrebejk made his theater directorial debut with Christopher Hampton's *Dangerous Relations* in Prague's Pod Palmovkor Theater. In 2000, he directed an adaptation of Woody Allen's *Bullets over Broadway* for the same theater, followed by his direction of *Amadeus*, the play, in 2002.

Selected filmography:

UP AND DOWN – 2004.

PUPENDO – 2003.

DIVIDED WE FALL – 2000 (writer)

COSY DENS – 1999.

BIG BEAT – 1993.

Ondrej Trojan, Producer.

Ondrej Trojan is one of the co-founders of Total HelpArt T.H.A along with theater director and actor Jiri Burda and actor and screenwriter Tomáš Hanák.

Total HelpArt T.H.A. is a film and television production and distribution company that focuses on features films, production services for the Sklep theater company.

In addition to his work as a producer, Trojan also directed Academy Award Nominated film *Zelary* in 2003.

Petr Jarchovsky, screenwriter.

Petr Jarchovsky is a long-term collaborator with director Jan Hřebejk, and wrote the script to his first feature film, *Big Beat* (1993) then *Cosy Dens* (1999) and *Pupendo* (2003). He also scripted the Academy Award Nominated *Divided We Fall*, which premiered in 2000, and was based on his book of the same title. **UP AND DOWN** was based on a story written by both Jarchovsky and director Jan Hřebejk.

Jarchovsky's other credits include World War Two drama *Zelary*, directed and produced by Ondrej Trojan (who also produced **UP AND DOWN**), based of the novel by Jozova Hanule. The film premiered in 2003 and like *Divided We Fall* was nominated for a Best Foreign Film Oscar. Jarchovsky has also scripted the upcoming film *I Served The King of England* directed by Jan Hřebejk. He is currently also writing the original script to the feature film titled *The Beauty In Trouble* with director Jan Hřebejk.

Select filmography;

UP AND DOWN – 2004, directed by Jan Hřebejk

ZELARY– 2003, directed by Ondrej Trojan

PUPENDO – 2003, directed by Jan Hřebejk

DIVIDED WE FALL – 2000, directed by Ondrej Trojan

COSY DENS – 1999, directed by Jan Hřebejk

BIG BEAT – 1993, directed by Jan Hřebejk

Jan Malir, cinematographer.

In addition to his feature film work, Jan Malir has shot several short films with animator and director Jiri Barta. He has also directed one episode of the German TV series Tat Ort (“**Crime Scene**”) for the German TV station NDR, which was shot partially in Prague. He regularly directs commercial and works on American films being shot in the Czech Republic.

Selected filmography:

UP AND DOWN – 2004, directed by Jan Hřebejk

ZELARY– 2003, directed by Ondrej Trojan

PUPENDO – 2003, directed by Jan Hřebejk

CRUEL JOYS – 2003, directed by Juraj Nvota

DIVIDED WE FALL – 2000, directed by Ondrej Trojan

COSY DENS – 1999, directed by Jan Hrebejk

RUFFIANO AND SWEETEETH – 1997, directed by Karel Smyczech

THE DANCE MASTER – 1994, directed by Jaromil Jires

BIG BEAT – 1993, directed by Jan Hrebejk

Vladimir Barák, editor.

In addition to his long-term collaboration with Jan Hrebejk, Vladimir Barak has worked across several mediums including short films and television. TV credits include the films “**Multicar Movie Show**,” “**Wartburg Movie Show**” and “**Milan Is Coming**.” He also edited Petr Zelenka’s TV film “**Powers**” and Igor Chaun’s “**The Red Card**.” Barák also regularly works on Czech Television’s programs and has also edited many music videos and commercials in his native Czech Republic.

Selected filmography:

UP AND DOWN – 2004, directed by Jan Hrebejk

ZELARY – 2003, directed by Ondrej Trojan.

PUPENDO – 2003, directed by Jan Hrebejk

OUT OF THE CITY – 2001, directed by Tomáš Vorel

DIVIDED WE FALL – 2000, directed by Ondrej Trojan.

COSY DENS – 1999, directed by Jan Hrebejk

BIG BEAT – 1993, directed by Jan Hrebejk