



Národní
filmový
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THE PARTY AND THE GUESTS

FILM BY JAN NĚMEC

DIGITALLY RESTORED AND BACK IN CINEMAS

Jan Němec's second film after the existential war drama *Démanty noci* (Diamonds of the Night, 1964) was the subversive parable *O slavnosti a hostech* (The Party and the Guests). A group of friends, played by leading personalities of the Czechoslovak intellectual scene at the time, arrive to the birthday party of an influential man. Although the cheerful host welcomes everyone with a smile, ever more warning signs suggest that the celebration taking place under the sunny summer sky will not entirely turn out idyllically. The ominous undertones intensify when one of the guests refuses to continue pretending indifference, instead voicing his own opinion and leaving the celebration. The authorities at the time interpreted this study of hierarchical social relations as an anti-socialist political allegory for mechanisms of power that are designed to eliminate any deviation. After the film briefly hit theaters in 1968, further screenings were banned in Czechoslovakia. However, the film's absurdity – which opens it to varied interpretations and in which critics have recognized echoes of Kafka, Ionesco and Buñuel – resonated with foreign viewers and thus continued to reap success, at least abroad. The author, screenwriter, and artist Ester Krumbachová significantly contributed to the screenplay and the overall artistic form of this award-winning film.

Jan Němec (1936–2016)

Through *The Party and the Guests* and his other 1960s films, Jan Němec contributed to the international renown of Czechoslovak cinema. In August 1968 he recorded the first hours of the Soviet occupation of Prague and smuggled the images to the West, where he was subsequently forced to emigrate in 1974, after being blacklisted from working in film. On his return home after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, he resumed his work in a free society which, however, required him to find a new style and approach to audiovisual expression. His work in the digital era is again distinguished by its originality and distinctive style, which was also recognised at the Locarno Festival.

Czechoslovakia 1965 • 79 min. • parable • DCP & Blu-Ray • english subtitles

Director	Jan Němec
Screenplay	Ester Krumbachová, Jan Němec
Director of photography	Jaromír Šofr
Set designer	Oldřich Bosák
Edit	Miroslav Hájek
Cast	Ivan Vyskočil, Jan Klusák, Jiří Němec, Pavel Bošek

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