

A SPELLBINDING ROMANTIC TALE
OF EXTRAORDINARY LOVE...

ZELARY

„OUR FILM IS CRUEL, BEAUTIFUL, MOVING, RAW, BUT ABOVE ALL ELSE, TRUE AND HONEST. I TRIED TO SHOOT IT SIMPLY, UNPRETENTIOUSLY, WITHOUT USING CRUTCHES, BUT ALSO PROVIDING THE ACTORS WITH SPACE SO INDIVIDUAL SCENES COULD BE FILMED IN REAL TIME. THE ACTORS COULD THEN PLAY THEMSELVES AND BE EMOTIONALLY NATURAL.“

ONDŘEJ TROJAN - DIRECTOR

ZELARY HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED BY THE CZECH FILM ACADEMY
FOR THE ACADEMY AWARD FOR BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

ZELARY IS INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS THAT ARE DESCRIBED
IN KVĚTA LEGÁTOVÁ'S AUTOBIOGRAPHIC NOVELLA „JOZOVA HANULE“.

PRESS INFORMATION

MORE INFORMATION AND PHOTOS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.ZELARY.COM

Director: Ondřej Trojan
Screenplay: Petr Jarchovský based on the novella „Jozova Hanule“ by Květa Legátová
Cinematography: Asen Šopov
Production Designer: Milan Býček
Costumes: Katarína Bieliková
Editor: Vladimír Barák
Sound: Jiří Klenka
Music: Petr Ostrouchov
Executive Producer: Milan Kuchynka
Production Managers: Daria Špačková, Marcela Dvořáková
Produced by: Total HelpArt T.H.A. Film Company
in cooperation with
Barrandov Studios and Czech Television
Producers: Ondřej Trojan – Total HelpArt T.H.A.
Helena Uldrichová – Barrandov Studios
Co-producers: Pavel Borovan, Jaroslav Kučera – Czech Television
Danny Krausz – Dor Film (Austria)
Marian Urban – ALEF Film & Media Group (Slovakia)

Starring: Aňa Geislerová, György Cserhalmi, Jaroslava Adamová, Miroslav Donutil, Jaroslav Dušek, Iva Bittová, Ivan Trojan, Jan Hrušínský, Ondrej Koval', Juraj Hrčka, Edita Malovcic, Michael Hofbauer, Jan Tříška, Imre Borároč, Reinhard Simonischek, Tomáš Žatečka, Anička Věrtelářová

This film was supported by
State Fund for the Support and Development of Czech
Cinematography, Eurimages, The Vienna Film Fund, ORF, atd.
Programme of the Pro Slovakia and The Ministry
of Culture of the Slovak Republic

Premiere: September 4, 2003

Format: 1:1,85; 150 min; 4200m, Dolby digital





Synopsis

It is the 1940s and the Czech lands have been occupied by the Nazis. Eliška is a young woman who was unable to complete medical school because the Germans closed the universities and now works as a nurse in a city hospital. She is also involved in the resistance movement along with her lover, the surgeon Richard, and their friend Dr. Chládek.

One night, a man from a rural mountain area is brought to the hospital with serious injuries and desperately needs a transfusion. Eliška is the only one with the same blood type. Her blood saves his life and a connection is formed between the two that in the course of the story becomes an extraordinarily strong relationship between the modern, cosmopolitan, and educated Eliška and the barbaric, salt of the earth man with the soul of a child, Joza.

The resistance group that the doctors are involved in is discovered and hunted by the Gestapo and suddenly their lives are threatened. While Eliška's lover, Richard, flees the country overnight, the group quickly has to find a different safe haven for her. They ask Joza, the patient whose life she saved with her blood, to hide her in his remote mountain cabin. Eliška is forced to leave her urban life and all at once become a new woman: Hana, the wife of a mountain man. Her new home is the wild mountain village where time stopped one hundred and fifty years ago called **Zelary**.

Zelary tells the story of a clash between two different worlds and two different people. It is the story of an extraordinary relationship, of fear, misgivings, suspicion and especially of the love that forms out of antagonism between Eliška/Hana and Joza; a love born of the common will to survive.

Zelary is also the story of a beautiful corner of the Earth where everything lives in accordance with nature and her often cruel and timeless laws that humans must adapt to and honor. Eliška, in spite of setbacks, but with great fervor, tries to learn this.

Last but not least, **Zelary** is also a dramatic story filled with unexpected twists of fate that takes place in a God-forsaken part of Europe surrounded by the storm of war.

Film History



Ondřej Trojan (director, producer)

Ondřej Trojan is a film director, producer and an actor in Prague's cult theater company Sklep.

The Trojan family is active in drama, as Ondřej Trojan's father Ladislav is an actor and his younger brother Ivan appears as Richard in *Zelary*.

In 1985 he was accepted to the Prague Film Academy, which he completed in 1991.

During his studies, Ondřej Trojan was able to film his feature debut **"Let us sing a song"** which was penned by his classmates Petr Jarchovský and Jan Hřebejk. This film continues to win over audiences at festivals in the Czech Republic and abroad. It was also Aňa Geislerová's first film.

In 1992 he directed the two-part film **"Pension"** for Czech Television.

In the same year, Ondřej Trojan and his colleagues from the Sklep company Tomáš Hanák and Jiří F. Burda founded Total HelpArt T.H.A. film and television production company. He then helped to realize a series of television films both as a director and a producer with the Sklep theater company, including: **"Mills"** (1993), an adaptation of a **"Sklep-Havel-esque"** play; **"Camels in the Mysterious Night"** (1993); **"Fireside Stories"** (1994, 1995), a series of eight short films directed by Ondřej Trojan, Tomáš Vorel, Zdeněk Tyc, and Václav Koubek; **"Forest Wisdom"** (1997); **"Multikár Movie Show"** (1998); and **"Wartburg Movie Show"** (1999).

In the same period, Trojan and his Total HelpArt realized tens of music videos and commercials.

Since the late 1990s, Trojan has been especially active as a feature film producer. In cooperation with Czech Television, Trojan in 1999 brought Hřebejk's successful feature **"Cosy Dens"** to the silver screen and a year later Hřebejk's next film **"Divided We Fall"**. In that same year, Trojan acted as producer for Tomáš Vorel's new feature film **"Out of the City"**.

In 2002, Trojan was a co-producer for a new Slovak-Czech feature film dubbed **"Cruel Joys"**.

In the spring of 2003 he produced Jan Hřebejk's and Petr Jarchovský's newest film **"Pupendo"**, which has broken attendance records in Czech theaters once again. The fall of 2003 will see Trojan in his comeback as a director with **"Zelary"** and **"Loop the Loop"** Jan Hřebejk's newest film with Trojan as producer.



Aňa Geislerová (Eliška/Hana)

Aňa Geislerová is currently not only one of the most popular Czech actresses, but also one of the best, regardless of her young age. Her first role was the young girl Tráva in Ondřej Trojan's 1990 film **"Let us sing a song"** (1990), but renown came a year later with her excellent performance as Marika in Filip Renč's drama **"Requiem for a Maiden"**.

She then starred in Jan Svěrák's **"Ride"** (1994), **"The War of Colours"** (1995) directed by Filip Renč, **"Bringing Up Girls in Bohemia"** (1997) directed by Petr Koliha, Jaroslav Brabec's **"Melancholic Chicken"** (1999), **"Return of the Idiot"** (1999) directed by Saša Gedeon.

Aňa Geislerová has won a Czech Lion award for her supporting role in *Return of the Idiot*.



György Cserhalmi (Joza)

He studied the acting school at the Theater and Film Academy in Budapest. After completing school, he worked in several regional theaters and later in the National theater. International acclaim came in the films of Miklos Jancso in the mid-1970s with roles in the films **"Elektreia"** (1974), **"Allegro Barbaro"** (1979), **"Jesus Christ's Horoscope"** (1988), and **"Blue Danube Waltz"** (1992). He also appeared in films by the legendary Hungarian director István Szabó such as **"Hanussen"** (1988) which was nominated for an Oscar, or **"Mephisto"**, which won the American Film Academy's award for the best foreign film of 1981. Other films include **"The Fifth Seal"** (1976), directed by Zoltan Fabri, **"The Great Generation"** (1986), directed by Ferenc Andras and **"Pure America"** (1987), directed by Peter Gothar. He has appeared in an incredible seventy-nine films, including **"Zelary"**.

An Interview with Aňa Geislerová

How did you overcome the language barrier?

The only thing I need from a partner is that our eyes understand one another. That's enough.

How did your relationship develop during the filming? It was filmed over the course of a year...

It didn't. I often said to myself how it was amazing that we knew each other only as characters in a film. Although we sometimes didn't see each other three or six months during filming, we just said hello on the set as though there was no problem to get back into it and come back to our roles; what had taken place before. I sometimes had to laugh that we stood next to each other on the set for nearly three months and didn't talk at all, but as soon as the director said action, then we would come together and kiss and touch each other without any problems at all.

We remain just film characters for one another... Basically, it worked!

In the film, you are an emancipated cosmopolitan woman. You are at home in the city and then all of a sudden you are in Zelary. How did you personally handle this change on screen? And what about real life? Are you more of a city type, or do you feel better in the country?

I don't think that this is a story that is basically about someone who goes from the city to the country. For me, basically, the basis is that she

must do something, that she must stay somewhere, something is keeping her there. She has to realize the things that took place and at the same time she still has to remain conscious and concentrate on what happened and. Above all that, she has to accept an unbelievable environment. But the problem, for me at least, is not so much that she has to be in the cabin, in a village, holed up, but that she **MUST** do something, that she must stay there and be with that man in that house, marry him and listen, which is totally against her nature. Learning to live with the cabin and the environment? When I look at it now, it is amusing. I think that it would bring many things though, details, that are not in the film that you would only discover if something like that actually happened to you. There has to be a great many little details that you don't even realize. Me and nature? I don't think that I would have a problem with it. Even today I still don't have a shower or bathroom at my cabin. I know flowers, animals, trees...

How did you work with the motive of defiance that you radiate in the film? Where did you find it towards the main character Joza?

I didn't have to go that far because I remember when I was little I was so easily riled that I couldn't breathe and someone had to give me a hack on the back because I was so proud and full of defiance. I think that it's still inside me somewhere. In this girl, however, its combined with reason, which I lack a bit. I'm a bit impulsive, whereas she is definitely more organized.

An Interview with Ondřej Trojan

What was it like for you to direct against after such a long time?

It was a challenge. I enjoyed the story quite a bit. Because the filming was so difficult and complicated, it was interesting to always have to overcome difficulties.

We filmed with a six-days old toddler and with 90-year old actress Zita Kabátová. We had to film during all four seasons where we needed 36 degrees or minus 20, where film in the camera would break apart and actors on the set were freezing.

Zelary is an international project. What nationalities can be seen on camera?

It's international because the budget climbed into heights that were impossible to finance in the Czech Republic. That is why we looked for financing abroad. Czech, Austrian and Slovak actors, as well as a Hungarian, appear in the film. Basically we were able to renew Austro-Hungarian cooperation. There was also Jan Tříska, who has been living in the United States for a long time, and actors from Germany.

The film takes place during World War Two. Is this important for the film's story?

The war is only the framework for the story which we used so that a believable and extreme situation could be presented without complicated and contrived film coincidences; an extreme situation where a person would need to change his or identity and start from scratch. That can happen today as well. The war is practical and easily believable for the film, but it's not a war movie.

How did you manage directing and producing Zelary at the same time?

Sometimes it was difficult, especially when the weather turned against us and we were not able to realize what we needed to. We had to improvise and then we lacked filming days. Things happened that make filming more expensive. We used more material than originally planned. Transportation was incredibly complicated because much of the film was not shot during the summer and actors were always moving between the set and their obligations to theaters across Europe. This all raised the budget...

Many people die and are injured in the film. Was that in the novel or did you suppress something?

Květa Legátová's novel is very naturalistic. If the reader ignores its beautiful literary qualities, there is a very raw story. We used this, but we did not make it pathetic. We tried to tell the truth of the difficult life and absurd end in the time and place that our story takes place. And underneath that raw story there is a bit of romance in the love story between the two main characters...

An Interview with György Cserhalmi

This is your second Czech film. You were nominated for a Czech Lion award for the first, The Fortress. Do you have a deeper relationship to Czech cinematography? Do you follow it?

I did in the 60s and 70s, but in the 90s cultural exchange has dropped off quite a bit. There are almost no Czech films in our theaters. Not because they would not be popular, but because there is no distributor that would import them and no theaters that would show them.

There is a strong antagonism between your and Aňa's character in the beginning that later grows into love. What was your first meeting like in reality.

I think that in reality we kept up the expectation that we are two absolute strangers who have nothing in common. We even speak different languages. On top of that, Anna wanted e not to try and speak Czech because it distracted her. So I went through the text in my way, and she in hers, therefore we did not have much to say to each other. At the beginning we only said what we had in the script to each other. I think that we did it on purpose a bit so that the development of our relationship on screen was more natural (laughs). That's nonsense but it sounds interesting, doesn't it?

Zelary was shot in rather extreme circumstances, mostly because of the weather. What was most difficult for you during filming?

Definitely the waiting. That is really annoying, but that is in every film. That you're cold, freezing and tired is not a problem. That is our job. What really bothers you is when in those conditions a scene goes wrong and you have to repeat it. If you wanted to hear some funny stories from the filming, then I'm sorry but I don't collect them.

Z E L A R Y

Producers

Ondřej Trojan - Total HelpArt T.H.A. Film Company

Feature films:

Cosy Dens, directed by Jan Hřebejk, production by Total HelpArt, produced by Total HelpArt and Czech Television, 1999

Divided We Fall, directed by Jan Hřebejk, production by Total HelpArt, produced by Total HelpArt and Czech Television, 2000

Out of the City, directed by Tomáš Vorel, production by Total HelpArt, produced by Vorel film, Czech Television and Total HelpArt, 2000

Cruel Joys, directed by Juraj Nvota, production by Alef Film Et Media Group, produced by Alef Film (Slovak Republic), Slovak Television (Slovak Republic), Total HelpArt and Czech Television, 2002

Pupendo, directed by Jan Hřebejk, production by Total HelpArt, produced by Total HelpArt and Czech Television, 2003

Zelary, directed by Ondřej Trojan, production by Total HelpArt, produced by Total HelpArt, Barrandov Studios, Czech Television, Dor Film (Austria) and ALEF Film Et Media Group (Slovak Republic), 2003

Loop the Loop, directed by Jan Hřebejk, production by Total HelpArt, shooting autumn 2003

Helena Uldrichová - Barrandov Studios

Feature films:

Lea, directed by Ivan Fíla, co-production: Ivan Fíla Filmproduktion, Avista Film, Barrandov Studios, 1997

The Bed, directed by Oskar Reif, co-production: Barrandov Studios, Etamp Film Praha, Czech Television, 1998

Sekal Has to Die, directed by Vladimír Michálek, co-production: Buc-Film, CDP, Apple Film Production, Pro Art Production, Barrandov Studios, Czech Television, 1998

The Barber of Siberia, directed by Nikita Michalkov, co-production: Camera One, Studio Three T, Medusa, Barrandov Studios, 1999

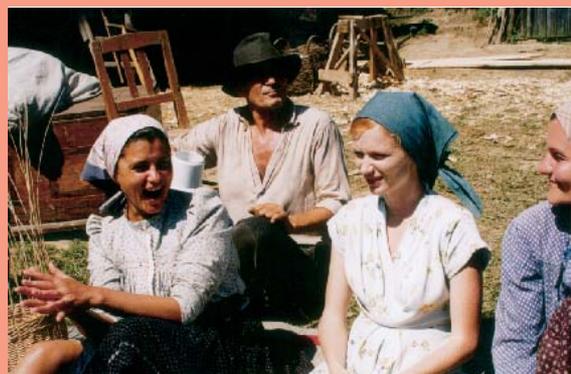
The Spring of Life, directed by Milan Cieslar, co-production: Czech Television, Happy Celluloid, Barrandov Studios, 2000

Little Otik, directed by Jan Švankmajer, co-production: Athanor, Illuminations Films, Barrandov Studios, 2000

Devil Knows Why, directed by Roman Vávra, co-production: Czech television, Verbascum, Slovak Television, Barrandov Studios, Bamac, 2002

One Hand Can't Clap, directed by David Ondříček, co-production: Lucky Man Films, Barrandov Studios, Czech Television, Cinemart, 2003

Zelary, directed by Ondřej Trojan, co-production: Barrandov Studios, Total HelpArt T.H.A., Czech Television, Dor Film, ALEF Film Et Media Group, 2003



Co-producers

Pavel Borovan - Czech Television

Feature films:

Saturnin, directed by Jiří Věřčák, 1994
King Ubu, directed by F. A. Brabec, 1996
Cosy Dens, directed by Jan Hřebejk, 1999
Divided We Fall, directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2000
Out of the City, directed by Tomáš Vorel, 2000
Cruel Joys, directed by Juraj Nvota, 2002
Pupendo, directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2003
Zelary, directed by Ondřej Trojan, 2003

Jaroslav Kučera - Czech Television

Feature films:

Escape to Buda, directed by Miloslav Luther, 2002
Girlie, directed by Benjamin Tuček, 2002
Cruel Joys, directed by Juraj Nvota, 2002
Small Town, directed by Jan Kraus, 2003
Forest Walkers, directed by Ivan Vojnár, 2003
Pupendo, directed by Jan Hřebejk, 2003
Zelary, directed by Ondřej Trojan, 2003

Marian Urban - ALEF Film & Media Group

Feature films:

Paper Heads, directed by Dušan Hanák, 1996
Rivers of Babylon, directed by Vlado Balčo, 1998
Cruel Joys, directed by Juraj Nvota, 2002
Forest Walkers, directed by Ivan Vojnár, 2003
Bloodlines, directed by Oleg Harencar, 2003
Zelary, directed by Ondřej Trojan, 2003

Danny Krausz - Dor Film

Feature films:

Comedian Harmonists, directed by Joseph Vilsmaier, 1997
Red Violin, directed by François Girard, 1997
The Inheritors, directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky, 1997
Hinterholz 8, directed by Harald Sicheritz, 1998
Come sweet death, directed by Wolfgang Munberger, 2000
Blind Spot, directed by Andre Heller & Othmar Schmiderer, 2001
Sunshine, directed by Istvan Szabo, 2000
Gripsholm, directed by Xavier Koller, 2000
All the Queens men, directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky, 2001
Poppitz, directed by Harald Sicheritz, 2002
Zelary, directed by Ondřej Trojan, 2003
Slugs, directed by Michael Glawogger, in production
C[r]ook, directed by Pepe Danquart, in production
Bye-Bye Blackbird, directed by by Robinson Savary, in production
Silentium, directed by Wolfgang Murnberger, in production

Z E L A R Y



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