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international
film festival
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2015

Peacock

A Comedy In Three Acts



*FAMU and Ondřej Hudeček
present*

JULIUS FELDMEIER

in a short film by
ONDŘEJ HUDEČEK



OVERVIEW

Log-line

A twisted queer romance set in the 19th Century picturesque Bohemia telling a tabooed true story of birth of one of the nation's most influential writers, starring Julius Feldmeier (*Nothing Bad Can Happen*). Suspense, laughter, violence, hope, heart, nudity, sex, and happy ending. Mostly happy ending.

Synopsis

Bohemia, 19th Century. Ladislav, the mischievous son of a landlord, terrorizes the village with cruel jokes. War breaks and Ladislav is forced to hide in a monastery, where he unexpectedly discovers his hidden desires. He returns home and befriends Jan, a sensitive young poet. Together they experience moments of undiluted happiness. However, passionate Ladislav soon becomes jealous and his endeavor to dominate Jan triggers a series of grievous events... A dramatic history of the rise of one of the most influential Czech writers, paved with flesh, bones and blood. A black comedy based on a true story, a queer literary encyclopedia, and a historical picture book in one.

DIRECTOR'S Q&A

Peacock is inspired by the life of Czech dramatist Ladislav Stroupežnický. How did you learn about his story? And what attracted you most about it?

In 2012 I had to present an idea for my bachelor's thesis film at FAMU. I knew I wanted to make a period piece, set in the 19th-century Bohemia. So I talked about it with my production manager, Kamila Dohnalová, and she told me this incredible story, and I just fell in love with it. A character that is pushed to his limits, makes a wrong decision, reaches the bottom of his existence, but ultimately survives - I think such a character knows more about what it means to be a human being than most of us.

Form plays an important role in your film. How did you decide to tell the story in this particular way?

I would say that for me the form is more important than the story itself. Stories keep repeating; it's form that is constantly evolving. So I focus a lot on how I tell the story and why. With *Peacock*, the idea was basically to place the audience in an art gallery, give them earphones, push them in the direction of the exposition, let them look at the paintings, read the notes, listen to the voice of the guide, and put the story together step by step.

You have made a great many short films. Is it your favorite genre?

I enjoy making short films because they provide so much space to play around. If you want to make a short film today, you can just go and do it. There is no excuse not to anymore. Obviously, feature films are more expensive than shorts, so there is a tendency to play it safe. In a short film you can do whatever you want. I'm sure there is a whole new film language out there and I'll bet it'll be discovered through short films.

What do you plan next?

My goal now is to expand *Peacock* into a feature-length film. The short will function as an introduction to the feature. The main part of the film will take place 20 years later, when Ladislav is already well known dramatist, facing the ghosts of his past that threaten him with losing everything he's worked so hard to get. Apart from that I'm working on a couple of other feature-film scripts and TV shows. And I'd love to direct a stage play again so I'm considering that idea too.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

ONDŘEJ HUDEČEK studied directing and cinematography at Trebas Institute in Montréal and at FAMU in Prague. In 2014 he participated in the Berlinale Talents program. His previous shorts O-Ring (2011), Years (2012) and Karaoke (2012) among others were screened and awarded at numerous festivals. His latest short Peacock had its World Premiere at the 50th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival as part of the section Future Frames: Ten New Filmmakers to Follow. At present he is developing Peacock into a feature that will incorporate the short film of the same name. He is also developing TV series and video games.

<i>2015</i>	Peacock	(26')
<i>2012</i>	Karaoke	(11')
<i>2012</i>	Framed	(8')
<i>2012</i>	Years	(4')
<i>2011</i>	Marathon	(10')
<i>2011</i>	Detective	(3')
<i>2011</i>	O-Ring	(11')

View the full filmography at www.ondrejhidecek.com

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The story of *Peacock* has begun 10 years ago while I attended literary seminar back at my high school. The seminar was led by a great and ultimately knowledgeable professor, Vladimír Nezkusil, who truly inspired me to deepen my interest in Czech language and Czech authors among others. Through the research for my seminar work on Ladislav Stroupežnický crucial play *Our Uppish and Defiant Fellows* I've learnt his incredible life story including the fact that he came from South Bohemia, my mother's birthplace. The limited information I'd been able to gather stayed within me during the years, but only after I spoke with my long-time collaborator, filmmaker Ondřej Hudeček, in 2012 we started to think about it as a possible story for a film. The consecutive research about Stroupežnický and the historical context of the late 19th century only revealed that the historical sources are limited and there is still quite much to be discovered about the playwright.

Fully aware of all the possible risks and demandingness of shooting a period film we decided to make it happen. It would have never been

possible without a precious help from our families, friends and tens of crew members who dedicated their time and worked for free during very hot summer of 2014.

While scouting for the best locations we found out that South Bohemia is unfortunately so much fouled with utility poles that only limited number of exteriors can be used. On the contrary we were lucky enough to be warmly welcomed in original Stroupežnický birth place of Cerhonice Chateau, who's generous owner allowed us to shoot there as well as use the site as our unit base. For the other locations we decided to take advantage of the director's birthplace, South Moravia, where we had an amazing background and support as well as access to open-air museum in Strážnice, kindly granted by the National Institute of Folk Culture.

Kamila Dohnalová





MOVIE REVIEW: PEACOCK

By André Crous (Prague Post)

Czech short about playwright Ladislav Stroupežnický is a period film like almost no other, and one of the highlights of the year

Review filed from the 2015 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

The youth of the 19th-century critical realist Czech playwright Ladislav Stroupežnický is brought to life with a dazzling display of humor and unconventional storytelling in Ondřej Hudeček's 25-minute short film, *Peacock* (Furiant), which is part of the newly unveiled Future Frames section, in cooperation with *Variety*, at this year's Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

Borrowing liberally from the visual style of Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*, as is to be expected in any period film worth its salt, the film has another reference that is even more pertinent in terms of eccentricity and playfulness, namely Tony Richardson's 1963 classic *Tom Jones*, which today has become regrettably underseen and underknown. Hudeček's use of a period setting to tell a story that is every bit as energetic as a music video yet almost entirely devoid of dialogue and is filled with painterly landscapes is thrilling, and the film's glimpse of this famous playwright is as witty as it is educational.

Book-ended by gorgeous shots of the interior of Prague's National Theatre, a magnificent symbol of the Czech National Revival in which Stroupežnický would become an important contributor (many of his plays would also be performed here), the film covers 14 years in the author's early life, from 1853 to 1867, as we follow him on his riotous rejection of authority, especially of the Church, and his first love. This first love, of a close friend, very intelligently marks the end, at least for him, of romanticism and the appreciation of a more realist approach to theater and to life.

Ironically played by a German and not a Czech actor, the young Stroupežnický (Julius Feldmeier) has a tense face that almost never relaxes, except when he is in the company of Jan Aleš (Cyril Dobrý), whom a title card early on introduces us to him as “a poet and a great lover.” The film suggests that the end of their relationship, a moment whose melodrama is rivaled only by the climax, in which

Stroupežnický attempts to commit suicide but is seemingly (and rather hilariously) spared by divine intervention, was a turning point for the artist and somehow explains his subsequent conversion to critical realism.

The film's structure, comprising an introduction, three acts and an epilogue, is about the only aspect that may be labeled as traditional, as the contents and the presentation of the material are dynamic and not only deploy animation, droll title cards and a side-splitting extract from a screenplay but even do away with dialogue altogether, replacing it with the coherent, ubiquitous and atmospheric voice-over by Lukáš Hlavica.

The music of Antonín Dvořák, who is one of the most famous Czech composers of all time and lived in the same era as Stroupežnický, is used throughout the film, and his series of “Slavonic Dances,” in particular, provides a rich and sometimes thrillingly bombastic frame for the emotions at work in the story.

The Czech title appears to be somewhat ironic, too, as *Furiant* literally means “show-off,” even though Stroupežnický never says a word, but the original meaning refers to the type of movements that accompanied, among others, Dvořák's “Slavonic Dances.” Clearly, the English title is connected to the first meaning, and the attention paid to the film's absolutely stunning visuals — especially the exterior scenes, although at least one interior shot also draws attention because of its theatrical composition — is highly commendable and helps to immerse us in the beauty of the story.

This is one of the most exciting films in a very long time. Filled with sly humor, bubbling with creativity and assembled as a coherent work of fiction that draws on reality for inspiration, *Peacock* is as colorful as its English title suggests, and its inclusion in the Future Frames sidebar at this year's KVIFF is well-deserved. It is with great thrill and enthusiasm that we await Hudeček's first feature film.

[Read the online review at www.praguepost.com](http://www.praguepost.com)



CAST

Ladislav Stroupežnický (16-year-old)

Jan Aleš (17-year-old)

Hanička

Monk Florian

František Charvát

Priest

Maiden

Kadlec

Ladislav's mother

Ladislav's father

Vítězslav Hálek

Ladislav (10-year-old)

Ladislav (10-year-old)

Ladislav's brother Hynek

Jan Aleš (11-year-old)

Old Ladislav Stroupežnický

Narrator

Julius Feldmeier

Cyril Dobrý

Marie Poullová

Tomáš Pivoda

Lukáš Příkazký

Filip Chlud

Tereza Vítů

Petr Borovec

Bára Císařovská

Pavel Šimčík

Marek Adamczyk

Mikuláš Linhart

Vojtěch Linhart

Eduard Tomeček

Jakub Štrba

Stanislav Majer

Lukáš Hlavica

CREDITS

Directed, Photographed and Edited by
Ondřej Hudeček

Story and Produced by
Kamila Dohnalová

Written by
Jan Smutný
Ondřej Hudeček

Producers
Ondřej Hudeček
Ondřej Šejnoha (Studio FAMU)

Sound Designer
Viktor Prášil

Costume Designer
Helena Tavelová

Production Designers
Anna Mayerová
Petra Vencelidesová

Assistant director
Štěpán Pech

FAMU Tutor Jaroslav Brabec *Studio FAMU Executive Producer* Marek Jindra
Script Supervisor Jan Smutný *Extras Supervisor* Filip Chlud *Make-up* Lenka Odehnalová
SFX Make-up David Šesták *Paintings and Drawings* Jan Saska, Hana Linhartová, Mikuláš Linhart and
Vojtěch Linhart *Sound Editors and Mixers* Viktor Prášil, Vladimír Chorvatovič and Michal Pajdiak *Special*
Effects Trick Special Effects *Costumes* Barrandov Studios *Props and Furniture* Barrandov Studios and
Requick *Camera and Lenses* Panavision Prague *Lighting Equipment* Panalux Prague and Michael Samuelson
Lighting Prague *Film Processing* Czech Television Film Laboratory *Digital Post-Production* Universal
Production Partners *Sound Equipment and Post-Production* Soundsquare *Shot on* KODAK Motion Picture
Camera Film *Film Stock Supplied by* Film 16.35 *With Financial Support from* The South Moravian Region



TECHNICAL INFO

Shooting Format
35mm

Screening Format
4K DCP / HD (coloursmalr)

Aspect Ratio
1:1,85

Sound Format
Dolby Digital 5.1

Duration
26 minutes

Language
Czech, German

Subtitles
English

Year of Production
2015

CONTACT

Producer

Ondřej Šejnoha
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Director & Co-Producer

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PARTNERS



FAMU



God will be watching

www.peacock-film.com