

5. Czech historic movies between great epics and art or spiritual cinema I Otakar Vávra: *Witches' Hammer* (*Kladivo na čarodějnice*, 1969)

22 October

Screenplay: Otakar Vávra, Ester Krumbachová, based on the novel by Václav Kaplický. Director of photography: Josef Illík. Editor: Antonín Zelenka. Music: Jiří Srnka. Set designer: Ester Krumbachová, Karel Škvor. Cast: Vladimír Šmeral (Boblig), Elo Romančík (Lautner), Soňa Valentová (Zuzana), Martin Růžek (bishop), Josef Kemr (Ignác), Eduard Čupák (Schmidt), Václav Lohniský and others. 103 min.

A riveting and often disturbing dramatization of the deadly witch hunts that plagued Czech lands in the late 17th century. A ruthless inquisitor is called out of retirement by the church to investigate allegations of heresy. Driven by greed and bloodlust, he finds cause to accuse anyone he wishes of witchcraft, leading to the brutal torture and deaths of hundreds of people. The film was censored and taken by the audiences as a parable about show trials and tortures committed by communist regime in the early 50ties.