

8. Miloš Forman: *The Firemen's Ball* (*Hoří, má panenko*, 1967).

Screenplay: Jaroslav Papoušek, Ivan Passer, Miloš Forman. Director of photography: Miroslav Ondříček. Editor: Miroslav Hájek. Music: Karel Mareš. Cast: Jan Vostrčil, Josef Šebánek, Josef Valnoha, František Debelka, Milada Ježková, Josef Kolb. 69 min.

Miloš Forman is the best-known representative of the veristic trend within the Czech new wave and his bitter comedy *Loves of a Blonde*, nominated for an Oscar, is his most popular Czech film. He declared his program as “to be interested in the life, problems, joys and sorrows of those people who had no chance of becoming Gagarin, Čáslavská or Karel Gott.” (Gagarin was the first cosmonaut, Čáslavská the most successful Czech female athlete in the sixties and Karel Gott the most popular Czech singer ever.) Miloš Forman’s method in his early works is improvisation and the use of non-professional actors. He said: “I explained to them the situation I wanted, but the words are their own.” The melody flowing from the television at midnight is the Czech national anthem “Kde domov můj” (“Where Is My Homeland?”).

After the success of *Loves of a Blonde*, Miloš Forman made the greatest and cruellest political metaphor in Czech cinema. The Czech national character was shown in a naked and very painful fashion in this burlesque. But it is also a satire about the Communist regime and about relations between the leaders and the people. The Italian co-producer Carlo Ponti was disappointed by the film, as were Czech firemen.

Assigned reading:

Hames, Peter. *The Czechoslovak New Wave*: “Miloš Forman”