

Czech New Wave
CZS36 + CMA018

Dr. Šárka Jelínek Gmitterková

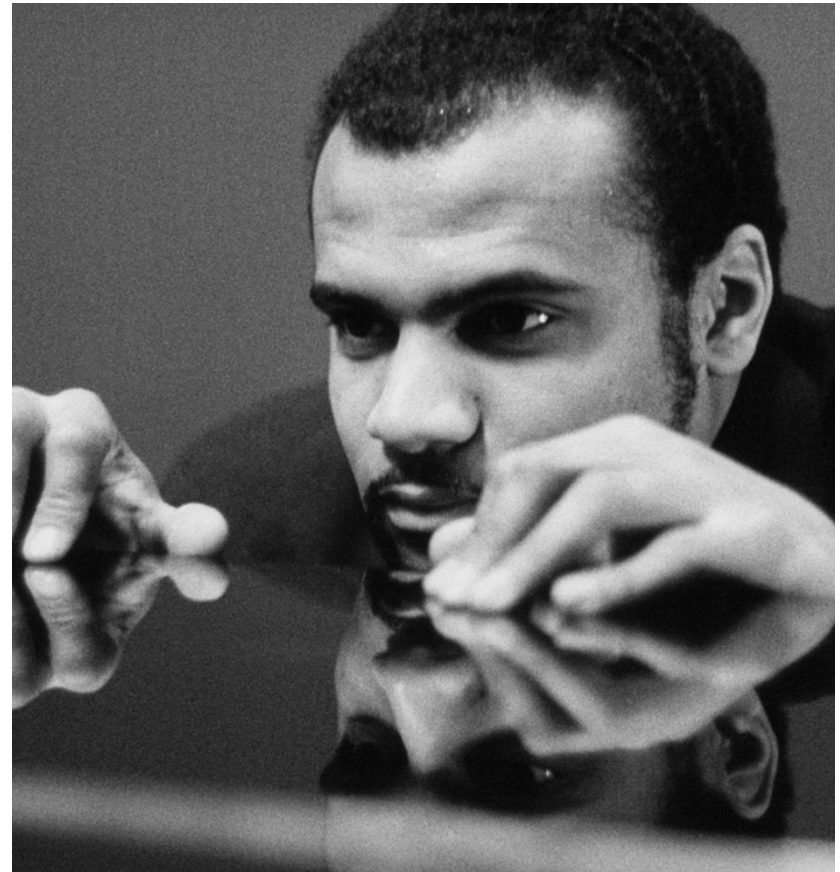
Fall 2023

2. 11. 2023

Please note, that L6 films are not uploaded in the IS, but can be accessed on famufilms.cz and dafilms.cz

The Black Keys Fugue (1964)

- A student film directed by **Drahomíra Vihanová** tells a story about Faty Farari, who comes from Africa and studies music in Prague. Before his graduate concert he finds out, that his whole family tragically deceased.
- This is a very personal film for Vihanová, since she always wanted to study music. In contrast to her peers she knew that creative writing was not her forte. On the other hand, her sense of rhythm and her visual style were remarkable; she also edited her own films.

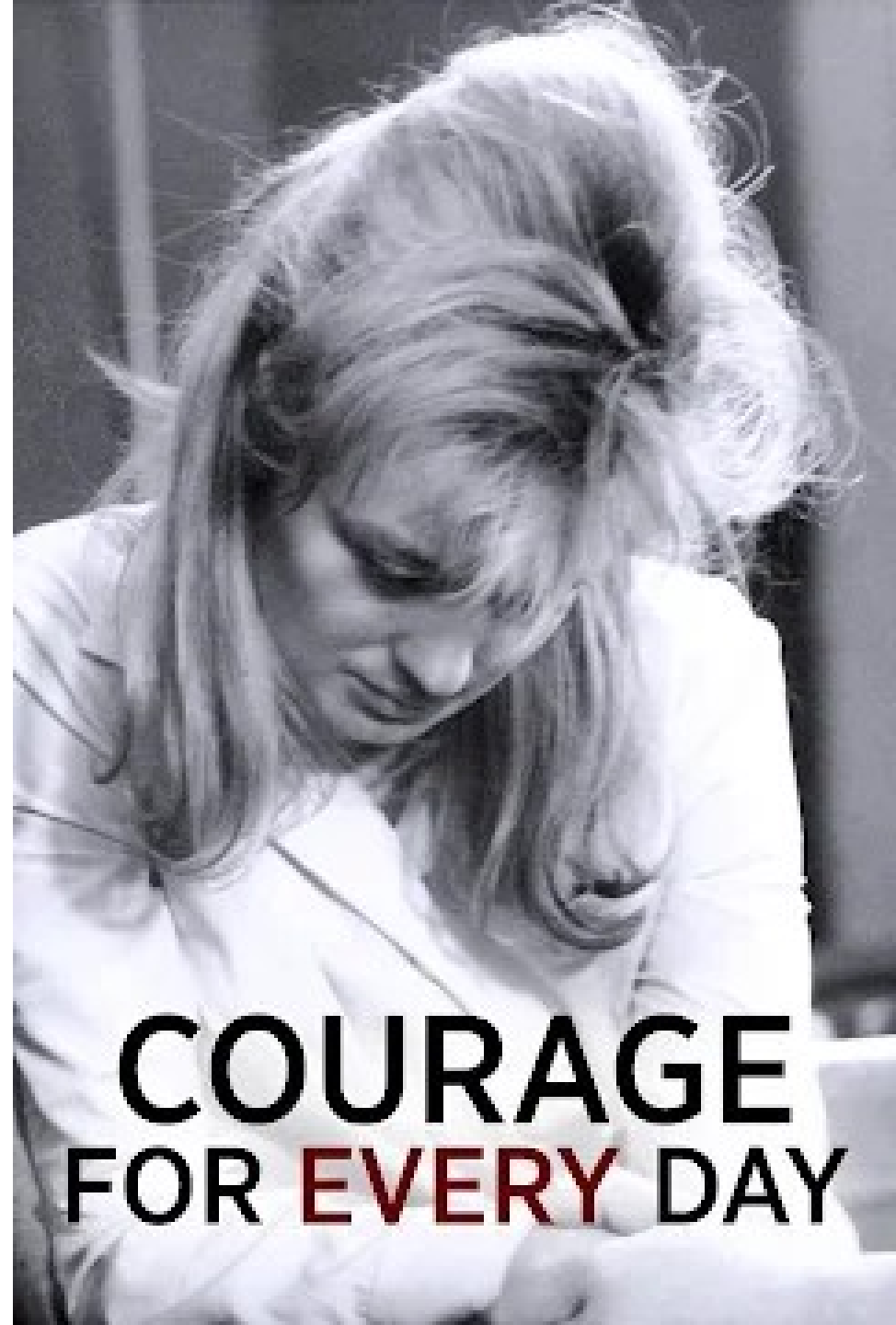


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Courage for Every Day (1964)

Directed by: Evald Schorm, **Screenplay:** Antonín Máša, **Cinematography:** Jan Čuřík, **Music:** Jan Klusák, **Starring:** Jana Brejchová, Jan Kačer, Josef Abrahám, Vlastimil Brodský, Jiřina Jirásková, Václav Trégl, Olga Scheinpflugová...

The screenwriter Antonín Máša started to develop this psychological drama as a commissioned work by the CG Novotný–Kubala, wishing to make a film about a small-town youth. While researching the topic, Máša met in one of the factories a former youth functionary- His story was the basis for a film exploring connections between the purpose of work and the meaning of life; and subtly examining a sense of stagnation.



COURAGE FOR EVERY DAY

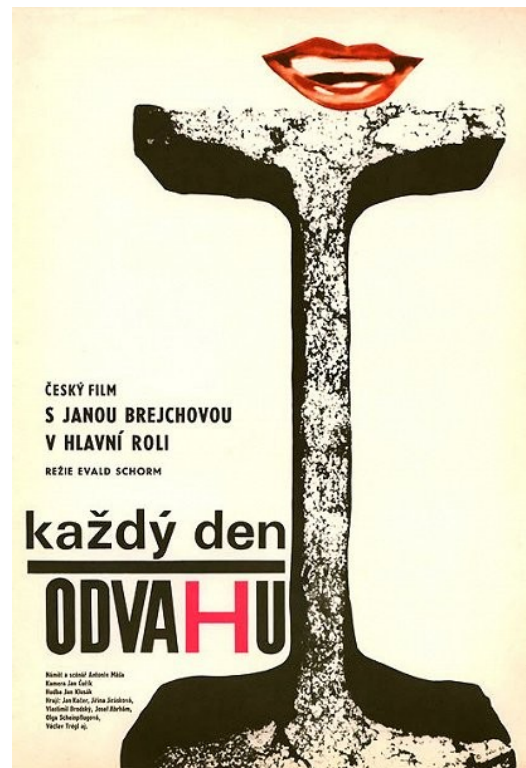
Questions

The Black Keys Fugue and Courage for Every Day

1. In which aspects *The Black Keys Fugue* feels like a typical new wave film and which characteristics go against?
2. Note the scenes, where you feel Vihanová's sense of rhythm and her tendency for visual storytelling the strongest.
3. Think about three characteristics, which adequately describe the movie and why.

1. How would you describe the main character, Jarda Lukáš?
2. Schorm's style is not ostentatious and very visible, similarly to the films by the trio Passer, Papoušek and Forman. Yet these films are definitely not without interesting stylistical choices. Try to think about those instances, when Schorm transforms and elevates reality for the needs and purposes of his storytelling.
3. „This is how the Sartrean concept of nothingness becomes the expression of modern experience of human existence: lonely man, freed from his past, forced to choose and to look out for his own self, endangered by the freedom of others, constantly has to face the lack of sublime values, and this lack is incorporated by the concept of nothingness.“ (KOVÁCS, András Bálint. *Screening modernism. European Art Cinema, 1950–1980*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007, s. 93)

Is this characteristics suitable for describing *Courage for Every Day*? Why?



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Reading L6

SZCZEPANIK, Petr. The State-socialist Mode of Production and the Political History of Production Culture. In: Petr Szczepanik and Patrick Vonderau (eds.). *Behind the Screen. Inside European Production Cultures*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 113–133.



Drahomíra Vihanová (1930–2017)

- Student film called *The Black Keys Fugue* (1964)
>> she continually reflects the topic of racism and ethnicity
- She worked as an assistant director at Otakar Vávra's films *Romance for the Bugle* (1966) and *The Thirteenth Chamber* (1968)
- Studied film directing and editing at FAMU, her feature debut is called *A Squandered Sunday* (1969) >> addresses inner closure, resulting in depression and suicide
- Three feature films and a string of short documentaries



Evald Schorm (1931–1988)

- „ Creativity and arts should be like a dessert after a great diner. But I am like a bone that is stuck inside your throat.“ >> the author of worrying and existential films.
- He made many documentaries, which demonstrate his interest in people not in tune with the regime, and in the topics nobody wanted to talk about (biblical references)
- Lacking consistent style – his films are tied together on the topical level and articulating similar values
- His films are cast with professionally trained actors, even stars (Vlastimil Borský, Dana Medřická, Jana Brejchová, Jan Kačer)
- Feature debut *Courage for Every Day* (1964), followed by *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1966), *Left with Five Girls* (1967), *The End of a Priest* (1968), concluding 1960s with *The Seventh Day, the Eighth Night* (1969)



State Socialist Mode of Production: 1948 – 1989

□ „[...] liberating cinema from the dictate of the market means putting it directly under state control. [...] Weakening of the state control allowed cinema to take advantage of the nationalized production.“ (A.J. Liehm, NYC 1973)

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- State ownership >> state and its direct representatives as leaders of the Czechoslovak state film „company“
 - Political and ideological supervision, together with strategical management of the film industry >> both aspects did not change drastically during SSMP
 - Dramaturgy („script-doctoring“)
 - (strong position of the director during all stages of the creative and production proces = projects had one creative supervision from the development up to the postproduction)

System of Creative Groups (CG)

- CGs allow for both personal and working style continuities with previous modes of production; they might be the reason why not only in Czechoslovakia, but in the whole Eastern European region we are witnessing a space for artistic innovations and the rise of modernist cinema tendencies + the decline of this system post 1989 as one of the reasons for the crisis in the film industry
- 1954 – first batch of the CGs >> state control slowly decreases and allows for liberalization in the second half of the 1950s
- Personal changes at the end of the decade:
 - From 1959 Alois Poledňák is the head of the Czechoslovak State Film
 - 1960 – Vlastimil Harnach becomes the head of the Film Studio Barrandov
 - 1960 – Břetislav Kunc is the head of dramaturgy

CGs 1954–1970

- 1954-1970: relative stability of the system = conditions for profiling individual CGs (topics, style, genres)
- „networking“ – we might think of the CGs as „stables“ with core screenwriters, dramaturgs („script doctors“) and directors >> every CG has its own group identity (in period language „a face“)
- Especially between the years 1963–69 the CGs were stabilized >> crucial platforms for initiation and development of projects / as an artistic and economical supervision / as a space for grooming promising talents
- There is 5 main CGs:
 - Bohumil Šmída – Ladislav Fikar
 - Karel Feix – Miloš Brož
 - Erich Švabík – Jan Procházka
 - Jiří Šebor – Vladimír Bor
 - Ladislav Novotný – Bedřich Kubala.
- Apart from the CG Feix – Brož we see the New Wave films spread across remaining four CGs

Individual CGs: Creative profile

Producer Karel Feix and dramaturg Miloš Brož Producer Ladislav Novotný and dramaturg Bedřich Kubala

- Crowdpullers: genre films, stars and experienced directors, for example comedies and musicals
- *Lemonade Joe* (a western parody from 1964), *The Hop Pickers* (youth musical) *Lady of the Lines* (musical for middle generation)
- As a former „capitalist“ producer Feix regularly emphasized, that his group makes only 12 to 15% of Barrandov and Koliba studios overall production, but these films attract large audiences and have potential for export
- Originally under Army film studios (up to 1956)
- In the 1960s it stopped making films thematizing the army and opened itself to making existential dramas
- Evald Schorm and Antonín Máša as key auteurs

Individual CGs: Creative profile

Jiří Šebor – Vladimír Bor

- Contrasting with CG Feix–Brož and a direct competitor with CG Šmída–Fikar
- They discovered and cultivated Miloš Forman, Ivan Passer and Jaroslav Papoušek. They had the courage to produce feature debuts of other newcomers; they cooperated with prominent writers such as Jan Procházka, Josef Škvorecký, Zdeněk Páral, Ladislav Fuks and others.
- Other discoveries: directors Zdeněk Podskalský, Jiří Hanibal, Štěpán Skalský, Ivo Novák, Jindřich Polák, Zdeněk Sirový

Producer Bohumil Šmída – dramaturg Ladislav Fikar

- Paradoxically, Šmída doesn't remember 1960s as his most successful period – but his CG made films of Pavel Juráček, Jiří Menzel and Věra Chytilová
- Pavel Juráček as one of the dramaturgs since 1959
- Networking in charge of Fikar – poet and a translator, influential intellectual with a sense for modernist aesthetic