



# Protektor

A film by Marek Najbrt

**"Striking! A smart ... handsome drama."  
Sheri Linden, *The Hollywood Reporter***



**Czech Republic | 2009 | Drama-Thriller | in Czech w. English subtitles  
100 min. | 1:1.85 | Dolby Digital**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Set in Prague at the outbreak of WWII, *Protektor* centers on the story of radio reporter Emil, who is married to Hana, a famous film star who is initially oblivious to the Nazi threat. Hana's Jewish heritage precipitates her fall from the height of her career to the bottom of the social ladder. In order to protect her, Emil compromises himself, collaborating with the new Nazi-controlled state radio station. Conditions worsen as restrictions on Jews are systematically increased. The assassination of the Third Reich Deputy Protector and a chance encounter on a bicycle bring their malingering marriage to a crisis.

## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

**PROTEKTOR** was Czech Republic's Official Entry for Best Foreign Language Film to the 82nd Academy Awards®

**WINNER** Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Actress **CZECH LIONS** (Czech Film Academy Awards) 2009

**WINNER** Best Film **STARZ DENVER** Film Festival 2010

**WINNER** Best Film **CINE PECS** Film Festival 2010

## **OFFICIAL SELECTION**

**London International Film Festival**  
**Seattle International Film Festival**  
**Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival**  
**Tallin Black Nights Film Festival**  
**Palm Springs International Film Festival**  
**New York Jewish Film Festival**  
**Atlanta Jewish Film Festival**  
**Portland Film Festival**  
**Cleveland Film Festival**  
**Sofia International Film Festival**  
**Vilnius International Film Festival**  
**Belfast Film Festival**  
**Off Camera Film Festival, Poland (Best Film)**  
**Moscow International Film Festival**  
**Shanghai International Film Festival**  
**Karlovy Vary International Film Festival**  
**Sarajevo International Film Festival**  
**Vancouver International Film Festival**  
**London Jewish Film Festival**

## BIOGRAPHIES & FILMOGRAPHIES

MAREK NAJBRT

Director, Screenwriter

Marek Najbrt lives and works in Prague. After graduating from Charles University with degrees in social sciences and documentary filmmaking (FAMU), he wrote and directed a number of amateur and professional audiovisual projects. Among the most important are the multi-media performances *Balconies (Balkóny, 1994)* and *Seven Dreams Realized (Sedm splněných snů, 1996-1997)*, staged in the Prague theater Archa. In recent years, he has devoted his efforts towards directing films, the most ambitious project of which was *Encyclopedia of the Universe*, 2 cycles of short films for television produced by the production company Negativ and Czech Television. He debuted with the feature *Champions*.

Filmography

- 2004 **Champions**
- 2002 **The Making of Year of the Devil**
- 2001 **Encyclopaedia of the Universe**
- 2000 **Prague Stories**
- 1999 **Encyclopaedia of the Universe**
- 1999 **The Evening News**
- 1999 **Action Man: Fantasy Film Collage**
- 1994 **Invention Of Beauty**

JANA PLODKOVÁ

Hana

Born 5 August 1981, she graduated from the Janacek Academy of Performing Arts (JAMU) in Brno, Czech Republic, and is a current member of the HaDivadlo theater company there. She also performs at the Prague theater na Fidlovačce.

Filmography

- 2006 **Prague** by Ole Christian Madsen
- 2006 **Empties** by Jan Svěrák

MAREK DANIEL  
Emil

Born 13 September 1971, he graduated from the Janacek Academy of Performing Arts (JAMU) in Brno and is a current member of the HaDivadlo theater company there. He also performs at other theaters in Brno and Prague, and has appeared in a number of local television series. He made his feature film debut in Jan Sverak's international hit *Kolya*.

#### Filmography

2008 **The Country Teacher** by Bohdan Sláma

2005 **Over And Over!** by Petr Vachler

2005 **Something Like Happiness** by Bohdan Sláma

2004 **Up And Down** by Jan Hřebejk

2004 **Fatherland – A Hunting Logbook** by David Jařab

2003 **Bored in Brno Aka Sex in Brno** by Vladimír Morávek

2001 **Wild Bees** by Bohdan Sláma

2001 **Expulsion from Paradise** by Věra Chytilová

2001 **Parallel Worlds** by Petr Václav

1996 **Kolya** by Jan Svěrák

## **INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR**

**by the New York Jewish Film Festival**

**NYJFF:** We know of both the glory days of Czech film and the suspension of cinematographic freedom during the Soviet era. How would you define this post-Soviet era of Czech film, and where does *Protektor* fit in?

**Najbrt:** The first decade after our “Velvet Revolution” witnessed the end of state managed cinematography and the beginning of independent production. From an artistic point of view, it was a period of confusion and searching, as well as successes, a period when the presence was reflected in the genre of tragicomedy. Contemporary Czech film attains more stability and gradually inclines towards drama, which is the case of our film *Protector*.

**NYJFF:** Can you tell us what motivated you to make this film, and how the story came to be?

**Najbrt:** The story was created out of natural interest in our history, out of the conviction that it is necessary to explore artistically the period of the German occupation of our country. This was the time which saw the start of corruption of our society, deepened even more so in the ensuing four decades of the communist rule. The discussion with my co-screenwriters Benjamin Tucek and Robert Geisler slowly generated the story of *Protektor* based on two attractive themes. We were incredibly keen on the environment of a radio station as an important element in the film, and also on the inciting role of the bicycle, which could have or might not have had anything to do with the assassination of Heydrich.

**NYJFF:** One effect that you integrate so well into the film is the frequent cuts to the characters on bicycles, riding down an as yet uncertain path that lingers in the viewer. Why did you choose to incorporate the bicycle, and can you explain its symbolism?

**Najbrt:** Bicycles played a crucial role in the assassination of Heydrich carried out in Prague in 1942 by Czechoslovak paratroopers Jan Kubis and Josef Gabčík sent there from England. The assassination sets the historical background of the final part of the story, the bicycle and painstaking pedaling is a symbol of human faith. The bicycle moves along, the pedals turn, however the question remains where it’s going to take you.

**NYJFF:** The relationship between both main characters goes through many tests, which the actors brilliantly play. You also seem to have placed great amount of emphasis on the historic role of Prague in WWII. How important was it to convey this history through these characters?

**Najbrt:** We put our main focus on the plot, on some kind of universality it contains. Similar dilemmas as those faced by our heroes are experienced by people in every era and regime, the difference is only the seriousness of their consequences. Historical background is therefore a commutable

circumstance. The fact is portraying Prague and its atmosphere in this time of war was a great allure as well as a challenge to us.

**NYJFF:** Another element that enhances the intensity of the story is the selection of music, most notably at the end, which was captured beautifully. What was the process of music selection like?

**Najbrt:** Music was composed and recorded by an electronic music ensemble MIDI LIDI led by a musician and a film-maker Petr Marek. Although he's the author of the soundtrack to our first film *Champions (Mistri)*, his involvement was a matter of an extensive competition. I wanted the soundtrack to reflect contemporary atmosphere but equally to have a completely modern structure, a requirement entirely met by Marek.

**NYJFF:** There seems to be a strong film noir influence, in the storytelling, the lighting and editing. Do you have any favorite directors, and what films are you most influenced by?

**Najbrt:** The film may create this impression, however we did not draw on any film genre. I am certainly affected by a number of cinematographic influences and inspirations, nevertheless while working, I always try to find my own original way. And I hope this is the case of *Protektor*. Despite this, if I were to mention one name which is significant to me, it would most probably be Lars von Trier.

## CREDITS

### CREW

Direction	MAREK NAJBRT
Screenplay	MAREK NAJBRT, ROBERT GEISLER, BENJAMIN TUČEK
Director of photography	MILOSLAV HOLMAN
Sound	TOMÁŠ ZŮBEK, MAREK HART
Art Direction	ONDŘEJ NEKVASIL
Costumes	ANDREA KRÁLOVÁ
Make-up	LUKÁŠ KRÁL
Editing	PAVEL HRDLIČKA
Casting	KATEŘINA OUJEZDSKÁ
Original Music	MIDI LIDI
Assistant Director	JAKUB DVOŘÁK
Producers	MILAN KUCHYNKA, PAVEL STRNAD
Co-producers	CZECH TELEVISION, UPP, SOUNDSQUARE

### CAST

Acting Role	Name
Hana	JANA PLODKOVÁ
Emil	MAREK DANIEL
Věra	KLÁRA MELÍŠKOVÁ
Franta	MARTIN MYŠIČKA
Tomek	RICHARD STANKE
Petr	TOMÁŠ MĚCHÁČEK
Krista	SANDRA NOVÁKOVÁ
Fantl	JIŘÍ ORNEST
kolega	JAN BUDAŘ
Köppe	SIMON SCHWARZ
Svitáček	ŠTĚPÁN RUSÍN
Zdeněk	PAVEL KRYL
Jenda	ADAM KUBIŠTA

Jindra	TOMÁŠ ŽATEČKA
Producer	JOSEF POLÁŠEK
Dr. Kouba, PhD	CYRIL DROZDA
Worker	LEOŠ NOHA
Czech Army Officer	EDUARD JENICKÝ
Non-Commissioned Officer	PHILIPP SCHENKER
Policeman	ROMAN SLOVÁK
Gestapo Officers	ROMAN VEJDOVEC, THOMAS ZIELINSKY
Interrogation Thugs	DAVID MÁJ, JAN JANKOVSKÝ
Reinhard Heydrich	ONDŘEJ MATĚJKA
Groupies	PETRA NESVAČILOVÁ, DANA MARKOVÁ
Secretary	LÍDA HROUDOVÁ
Waiter	MIKULÁŠ LUBOMÍRSKÝ
Radio Station Co-Workers	ROBERT GEISLER, ROBERT SOUKUP
	KATEŘINA SOREJSOVÁ, KAMIL ŠVEJDA
	IVO MACHALÍK
Film Crew	MICHAL DALECKÝ, JAN LEPŠÍK, TOMÁŠ
	BAMBUŠEK, PETR CHOLT, VÍTEK BŘEZKA
Wedding Party	MARIE LUDVÍKOVÁ, LENKA ZOGATOVÁ
	ŠTĚPÁNKA LUDVÍKOVÁ, MARIE CICHÁ
	RADEK VAŠÍN
Rowers	MARTIN MICAN, MARTIN HLADÍK, LUDĚK
	POKORNÝ, DANIEL CHALUPA
Dancers	VIKTOR JANČ, JANA JANČOVÁ
	MIROSLAV PLUHÁČEK, HANA PROKEŠOVÁ
	JAN PTÁČNÍK, IVETA PTÁČNÍKOVÁ
	JIRÍ ROHÁČEK, BLANKA ROHÁČKOVÁ
Wedding Musicians	JAROSLAV KANTOR, LADISLAV ŠINDLER
	JAN JANDA, ZDENĚK PAZOUREK, JIRÍ
	TOUFAR
Soldiers	MAREK NĚMEC, JIRÍ HAJDYLA
	ZDRAVEE, BOHOUS MACEČEK
Dead Man	VÁCLAV NEUŽIL
Cloakroom Attendant	ŽANETA FILÍPKOVÁ
Usher	EDITA ZÁKRAVSKÁ
Woman With Gestapo	BARBORA HALAMOVÁ
Jews At The Cemetery	JIRÍ JELÍNEK, KAMILA KALOUSOVÁ
	JINDŘICH SKOPEC
Exhibition Visitors	IDA SOVOVÁ, NIKOL KOUKLOVÁ
	KAROLINA MÁCHOVÁ
Party Guests	ČENĚK KOLIÁŠ, MICHAELA HUFFSTETER
	MICHAL KRUPÍK, ANNA MEDKOVÁ, PAVEL
	VÍTEK
Neighbors	LUCIE REDLOVÁ, RICHARD NĚMEC
Jews At The Transport	TOMMY KARAS, DAVID CZESANY, MARTA
	VÍTŮ, JAN ŘEHÁK, VERONIKA RAŠŤÁKOVÁ
	TOMÁŠ POSPÍŠIL, VOJTĚCH NOVÁK
	KRYŠTOF LUBOMÍRSKÝ, TADEÁŠ
	LUBOMÍRSKÝ



ADAM SCHILLER, NATÁLIE DENKROVÁ  
ŠTĚPÁN MOSKA, AMÁLIE KOVÁŘOVÁ  
MARIE PILÁTOVÁ, VERONIKA SAMCOVÁ  
KATEŘINA SAMCOVÁ, MICHAELA  
BERKOVÍČOVÁ, VOJTĚCH ŽÁK, IVA  
KRUMPHOLZOVÁ, TEREZA STANISLAVOVÁ,  
JAKUB DOLEŽAL, MAREK ŠULISTA, MATĚJ  
BARTÁK, DANIEL SIDON