



FILMMOVEMENT

# *Something Like Happiness*

Dir. Bohdan Slama



Czech Republic, Running Time: 102 min.

**WON** - Best Film and Best Actress - *San Sebastian Int'l FF*

**WON** - Golden Athena grand prize - *Athens FF*

**O.S.** - *Toronto Int'l FF, London FF, New York FF*

Czech selection for Best Foreign Language Oscar

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Film Movement Series

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## SYNOPSIS

Written & Directed by Bohdan Slama. Monika, Tonik and Dasha grew up together in the same housing project on the outskirts of a small industrial city. Now the childhood friends are adults, each struggling with feelings of desire and loneliness, longing and failure.

While her boyfriend pursues wealth and success in America, Monika waits, ever-hopeful that he will arrange for her to join him. Tonik has fled his stifling conservative family and lives with an eccentric aunt: together they struggle to defend her derelict farmhouse against the encroaching industrial development nearby. Dasha has two small children and a feckless married lover. Fragile, unpredictable, edging ever nearer to the brink of despair, she turns viciously on those closest to her. Though none would admit it, each craves something the other has and it's these unspoken longings which bind them in difficult, complex, passionate friendships.

Dasha's mental state worsens dramatically, and she is committed to an asylum. Afraid that they will be taken into care, Monika looks after her kids. And when Tonik readily offers his support - and his home - she discovers his unspoken love for her. For Tonik himself it's a new beginning, a new chance. But, whatever he tells himself, this game of happy families is only that - a game. Monika is waiting to escape to the Land of Opportunity, the children are only on loan, and there's always another leak in the farmhouse...

By turns poignant, absurd and profoundly moving, beautifully directed and featuring a host of flawless performances, **SOMETHING LIKE HAPPINESS** is the second feature from award-winning Bohdan Slama, whose **WILD BEES** was the Czech 2002 Academy Award candidate. Vibrant and deeply affecting, **SOMETHING LIKE HAPPINESS** is a funny, tender and very human drama of passions and lives half-understood and veering out of control, shadowed by tragedy, shot through with hope.

## CAST

Monika	Tatiana Vilhelmova
Tonik	Pavel Liska
Dasha	Anna Geislerova
Jara	Marek Daniel

## CREW

Writer/Director	Bohdan Slama
Producer	Pavel Strnad
Director of Photography	Divis Marek
Music	Lenid Soybelman
Editor	Jan Danhel

## ABOUT THE CAST

### Tatiana Vilhelmova (Monika)

Born in 1978 in Prague, Tatiana Vilhelmova was initially recognized for her acting in a stage production of Chekov's "**The Cherry Orchard**". She continues to work in the theatre, as a member of Prague's Dejvicka Theatre company, and has been nominated twice for the prestigious Alfred Radok Award. She made her feature film debut in 1995, in Sasa Gedeon's "**Indian Summer**" (**Indianske leto**). She has been nominated six times for the Czech Lion (Academy Award).

#### *Selected Filmography:*

**Stesti (Something Like Happiness) – dir. Bohdan Slama, 2005**

**Duse jako kaviar (Dirty Soul) – dir. Milan Cieslar, 2004 – nomination Czech Lion (Academy Award), Best Actress**

**Milenci a vrazi (Lovers and Murderers) – dir. Viktor Polesny, 2004**

**Jedna ruka netleska (One Hand Can't Clap) – dir. David Ondricek, 2003 Divoke vcely (Wild Bees) – dir. Bohdan Slama, 2001 – nomination Czech Lion (Academy Award), Best Actress**

**Navrat idiota (Return of the Idiot) – dir. Sasa Gedeon, 1999 – nomination Czech Lion (Academy Award), Best Actress**

**Cas dluhu (A Time of Debts) – dir. Irena Pavlaskova, 1998 – nomination Czech Lion (Academy Award), Best Supporting Actress**

**Septej (Whisper) – dir. David Ondricek, 1996 – nomination Czech Lion (Academy Award), Best Actress**

**Indianske leto (Indian Summer) – dir. Sasa Gedeon, 1995 – nomination Czech Lion (Academy Award), Best Supporting Actress**

### Pavel Liska (Tonik)

Born in 1971, Pavel Liska studied acting at Brno drama academy, before joining the HaDivadla theatre company. His film career began in 1999 when director Sasa Gedeon cast him in the lead role in "**Return of the Idiot**" (**Navrat idiota**). He has been twice-nominated for a Czech Lion (Academy Award).

#### *Selected Filmography:*

**Stesti (Something Like Happiness) – Bohdan Slama, 2005**

**Horem padem (Up and Down) – Jan Hrebejk, 2004**

**Divoke vcely (Wild Bees) – Bohdan Slama, 2001**

**Navrat idiota (Return of the Idiot) - Sasa Gedeon 1999**

### Anna Geislerova (Dasha)

Prolific actress and former model Anna Geislerova was born in 1978 in Prague, and made her feature film debut at the age of 12. She has been nominated three times for a Czech

Lion (Academy Award), winning twice: first for Best Actress in 1999 for her performance in Sasa Gedeon's "**Return of the Idiot**" and again in 2003 for Ondrej Trojan's "**Zelary**", which was also nominated for the Best Foreign-Language Film Academy Award.

*Selected Filmography:*

**Something Like Happiness (Stesti) – Bohdan Slama, 2005**

**Shut Up and Shoot Me (UK, Czech Rep.) – Steen Agro, 2005**

**Zelary – Ondrej Trojan, 2003 – Czech Lion, Best Actress; film nominated for U.S. Academy Award, Best Foreign-Language Film**

**Navrat idiota (Return of the Idiot) - Sasa Gedeon, 1999 – Czech Lion, Best Actress**

**Jizda (The Ride) – Jan Sverak, 1994 – nominated for Czech Lion, Best Actress**

**Marek Daniel (Jara)**

Born in 1971, Daniel - like "**Something Like Happiness**" co-star Pavel Liska - studied acting at the academy in Brno, and is a member of the HaDivadlo theatre company. A familiar face of Czech stage and television, he made his feature film debut in Jan Sverak's international hit "**Kolya**".

*Selected Filmography:*

**Stesti (Something Like Happiness) – Bohdan Slama, 2005**

**Horem padem (Up and Down) - Jan Hrebejk, 2004**

**Nuda v Brne (Bored in Brno aka Sex in Brno) – Vladimír Morávek, 2003**

**Divoke vcely (Wild Bees) – Bohdan Slama, 2001**

**ABOUT THE CREW**

**Bohdan Slama (Writer/Director)**

Slama was born in Opava, Czech Republic, in 1967, and after graduating from Czech Technical University, studied at the Film Faculty FAMU in Prague. His college film, "**Garden of Paradise**", received several awards at international film festivals. His feature debut, "**Wild Bees**", won a Tiger Award in Rotterdam, the SKYY Award in San Francisco and was selected as the Czech entry for the Academy Awards in 2002.

*Selected Filmography*

**DIVOKE VCELY / WILD BEES (2001) – feature film, 94m**

**STESTI / SOMETHING LIKE HAPPINES (2005) – feature film, 100m** Selected Awards for **DIVOKE VCELY "Wild Bees"** ("**Divoke Vcely**")

Rotterdam IFF 2002 – VPRO Tiger Award – international festival premiere

San Francisco IFF 2002 – SKYY Award For First Film

Finále Plzen 2002 (Czech Republic) – First Film Prize, Best Czech Actress (Tatiana Vilhelmová)  
Sochi IFF 2002 (Russia) - The Pearl Of The World, FIPRESCI Prize, Best Actress (Tatiana Vilhelmová)  
ArtFilm Trencianske Teplice 2002 (Slovakia)- Trencianske Teplice Prize  
Arsenal IFF 2002 (Riga, Latvia) - Forum Main Prize  
Warsaw IFF 2002 - Special Mention  
Cottbus Festival of European Films 2002 (Germany) - Main Prize  
Premiers Plans Angers 2003 (France) - Special Jury Mention  
Valenciennes IFF 2003 (France) Special Jury Prize; Best Actress (Tatiana Vilhelmova); Student Jury Prize  
Nové Mesto Film Festival (Czech Republic) - Best Young Talent (Tatiana Vilhelmova)  
Czech Lions 2002 (Czech Film Academy Award) - Best Supporting Actress (Zuza Kronerova)  
Czech representative in 2002 for U.S. Academy Awards, Best Foreign-Language Film

## **SOMETHING LIKE HAPPINESS: FESTIVALS**

**SAN SEBASTIAN 2005** - Golden Shell for Best Film  
**SAN SEBASTIAN 2005** - Silver Shell for Best Actress (Anna Geislerova)  
**ATHENS 2005** - Golden Athena for Best Film  
**ACADEMY AWARDS 2006** - Czech submission  
**MONTREAL (NEW CINEMA) 2005** - WINNER BEST FILM

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

From [www.makingofeuropa.net](http://www.makingofeuropa.net) (Making Of Features on European Films):

### **Bohdan Slama - Director**

(When) we finished "Wild bees", we started thinking about our next project and we felt that we had to continue somehow what we'd started in "Wild bees". It doesn't have the same story, but it has the same theme, people looking for love. So it's basically a love story, a story about two friends who overcome the problems they have with finding true love, to find a relationship that -I hope- will be for their whole life. (We're shooting over 4 different seasons) because of the development of the characters, because we felt we needed time for this. Also because there are 2 young kids who will grow up during this year (of shooting). We started with them when they were 3-4 years old and it's going to make such a big difference when (by the end of the shooting) they're gonna be 4-5 years old. So if we're lucky, we're going to capture this process of them growing up, something that I think is going to be very special for the film.

According to [www.negativ.cz](http://www.negativ.cz), the film was shot almost completely in sequence over an 18-month period and is the director's follow-up to his debut film, "Wild Bees," winner of a Golden Tiger Award at Rotterdam in 2001.

## **ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT**

**Film Movement** is an innovative new film distribution company, created as a solution for millions of consumers across the nation whose access to outstanding film is limited by geography, lifestyle or lack of information. Film Movement has members in over 50 states and 1200 cities. Film Movement acquires award winning independent films from the world's top festivals, which they then release each month of the year to members on DVD through a subscription service, and theatrically through The Film Movement Series. Participating filmmakers are able to reach under-served film fans everywhere through Film Movement.

Film Movement has partnered with some of the leading independent theaters in the country to exhibit the Film Movement Series. The schedule includes the following films:

- Eric Eason's *Manito*
- Scott Hamilton Kennedy's *OT: our town*
- Donovan Leitch & Rebecca Chaiklin's *The Party's Over*, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman
- Mina Shum's *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity*, starring Sandra Oh
- Eric Khoo's *Be With Me*
- Ismael Ferroukhi's *Le Grand Voyage*
- Joseph Cedar's *Campfire*