

Cinematik to open with Servants – an exceptional motion picture by Ivan Ostrochovský, which succeeded at the Berlinale IFF

Press release, August 14, 2020

The fifteenth Cinematik International Film Festival, which will take place from 10 to 15 September 2020 in Piešťany, will be opened by the second feature film by Ivan Ostrochovský Servants. The film had its world premiere at the Berlinale International Film Festival, where, thanks to its strong theme and impressive processing, it received a number of positive responses. Slovak viewers will be able to see Servants for the first time at Cinematik.

In 1980, two students of the priest seminary, Michal and Juraj, have just embarked on their journey to become God's servants. However, the totalitarian regime guards against the church and the leadership of the faculty is trying to find compromises that would serve both sides well in the upbringing of future priests, fearing a possible closure.

In a world ruled by spiritual peace and conciliatory contemplation, two hostile factions are beginning to emerge - the collaborating association Pacem In Terris and the silent resistance, which informs the world about the conditions behind closed seminars on Radio Free Europe. Michal and Juraj suddenly face a difficult decision: Should they bow their heads and take an easier path by cooperating with the regime, or to remain true to the conscience even at the cost of endangering their own lives?

"Ostrochovsky created a stunning work in which he cleverly puts the pallor of marble, plaster and face with the darkness of night and black reverend into contrast. Freezing film noir, in which just a few years before the fall of the totalitarian system, the forces of history and servants of two powers and two systems of faith collide," the playwrights of the 70th Berlinale described the film, where Servants drew a big attention in the Encounters competition section, despite a strong competition consisting of 15 films from the USA, Norway, France, Germany and other countries.

A dark, sometimes even suffocatingly black-and-white drama will suffice with a few words and a relatively modest timing. The exceptionally strong, compositionally ornate images from the camera of Juraj Chlpík or the disturbing musical component of Miroslav Tóth and Cristiano Loleau stand out all the more in it. *"The creators build a Kafkaesque depressing atmosphere not only with images, but also with music and sounds, thus enhancing the expression of the entire film. Asceticism and minimalism go hand in hand with the compositional purity of the image and at the same time are in absolute harmony with the story. The enchanting form does the Servants a great service. With its theme and processing, the film filled a hole in home cinema and offered a view that has not been here before,"* states the Kinema portal in the film [review](#).

The servants also received positive reviews in renowned world media such as Variety, The Hollywood Reporter or Screen International. Critics also praise the actors for their excellent performances - debutants Samuel Skyva and Samuel Polakovič as young theologians, as well as seasoned acting veteran from Romania Vlad Ivanov, who also starred in award-winning films by world-class filmmakers such as Cristian Mungiu and Corneliu Porumboiu, Constantin Popescu or Sergej Loznica.

The film Servants was made in a Slovak-Romanian-Czech-Irish co-production. Marek Leščák and the renowned British screenwriter Rebecca Lenkiewicz also collaborated on his screenplay with

Ivan Ostrochovský, who, together with director Pawl Pawlikowski, is also behind the screenplay for the Oscar-winning film *Ida*.

The *Servants* were originally scheduled to arrive in Slovak cinemas in March. However, the pandemic delayed the distribution of the film, so visitors to Cinematik will be the first to enjoy it on the big screen at the beginning of September. The film will be presented in person by the filmmakers as part of the festival's grand opening. The film will enter the Slovak cinema distribution on November 12, 2020.

Servants (Slovak title: *Služobníci*)

Countries of origin: SK, RO, CZ, IE **Year:** 2020 **Duration:** 80 min. **Directed by:** Ivan Ostrochovský
Original idea: Marek Leščák **Written by:** Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Marek Leščák, Ivan Ostrochovský
Director of photography: Juraj Chlpík **Sound:** Tobiáš Potočný **Editors:** Jan Daňhel, Martin Malo, Maroš Šlapeta **Costume Designer:** Katarína Hollá **Masks:** Lukáš Král **Music by:** Miroslav Tóth, Cristian Lolea
Cast: Samuel Skyva, Samuel Polakovič, Vlad Ivanov, Vladimír Strnisko, Milan Mikulčík, Tomáš Turek, Vladimír Zboroň, Martin Šulík, Vladimír Obšil, Zvonko Lakčević **Produced by:** Ivan Ostrochovský, Albert Malinovský, Katarína Tomková **Co-producers:** Oana Giurgiu, Tudor Giurgiu, Ivana Kurincová, Petr Oukropec, Pavel Strnad, Sam Taylor, Mike Downey, Marek Urban **Executive producer:** Albert Malinovský

The fifteenth Cinematik International Film Festival will take place in Piešťany from 10 to 15 September 2020. Accreditations are available on the website www.cinematik.sk until 31 August for a discounted pre-sale price.

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