

## **KVIFF Distribution's spring film to be Cannes award-winner *Happy as Lazzaro***

After Sorrentino's *Loro*, KVIFF Distribution is bringing another great Italian film to Czech cinemas. The original *Happy as Lazzaro* is the third feature film by director Alice Rohrwacher, an outstanding representative of the young generation of Italian filmmakers. Like her previous films, *Happy as Lazzaro* had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, where Rohrwacher won the Best Screenwriting award for her script. Like Cannes, Rohrwacher's films are also a regular feature at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, which is where Czech audiences had their first opportunity to see *Happy as Lazzaro*. On 14 March, this magical and touching film now comes to Czech cinemas thanks to a joint distribution effort by the Karlovy Vary IFF, Czech Television, and Aerofilms.

"With *Happy as Lazzaro*, KVIFF Distribution continues to present outstanding works of cinema characterized by a high level of artistic quality and with the potential to attract a broader audience through unusual and enchanting stories. In her films, Alice Rohrwacher creates worlds that viewer do not want to leave, just like when a reader hopes that an engrossing book will never end," says Karel Och, artistic director of the Karlovy Vary IFF.



*Non-actor Adriano Tardiolo as the honest and innocent Lazzaro*

### **A film about hope and faith in a better world**

The film's main character is the young Lazzaro, who lives among an isolated peasant community in a remote part of Italy. The local peasants, who exist in a modern form of serfdom, are being exploited by the owner of a tobacco plantation. Decades ago, they lost contact with the outside world, and now they toil for their devious "Queen of Cigarettes" with no access to wages, education, or decent living conditions. The film was inspired by real events, when a similar community of workers was "freed" from servitude in the 1980s.

Lazzaro is so innocent and kind-hearted that some people think he is an idiot. When the police comes across a group of enslaved peasants by chance, the villagers realize what kind of a lie they have lived in

for years, and set out for the city in the hope of fulfilling their dreams. While the others must face harsh reality, Lazzaro remains almost touchingly honest and natural even within modern civilization. His purity and innocence help the director to depict the absurd and sometimes cruel nature of the contemporary modern world.

### **One of the best-rated Europeans films of last year**

Well received by critics (with a 90% rating on Rotten Tomatoes), the film is open about its inspiration from the works of Visconti and Pasolini, and thanks to its dreamlike elements it is often described as “magical neorealism.”

- *“[Rohrwacher] does not want to just show you pretty pictures, but a genuine vision.”* (David Fear, Rolling Stone)
- *“This movie feels bracingly new and also like something that has been here forever. It has the urgency of a news bulletin and the authority of a classic.”* (A. O. Scott, New York Times)
- *“Combines the documentary-like aesthetic of Italian neorealism with mysterious circumstances.”* (Eric Kohn, IndieWire)
- *“Rohrwacher makes us believe that a world of empathy and accord may someday exist again.”* (Jordan Ruimy, The Playlist)

### **KVIFF Distribution – the joint distribution project of the Karlovy Vary IFF, Czech Television, and Aerofilms**

KVIFF Distribution was established in 2015 by the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in collaboration with Czech Television and the Aerofilms distribution company. Over the course of each year, KVIFF Distribution brings interesting international films to Czech cinemas. Czech Television identifies interesting television films and makes them available for special cinema screenings. The aim of all these activities is to bring to Czech cinemas original films of great artistic quality that would otherwise have difficulty finding a wider audience.

KVIFF Distribution first film was Italian director Paolo Sorrentino’s *Youth*, which was an audience hit when it was brought to Czech cinemas on 8 October 2015. In 2016, the company expanded its activities to include Vary at Your Cinema, which presents some of the best film’s from that year’s Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

In its three years of existence, the films distributed by KVIFF Distribution have attracted more than 200,000 viewers to Czech cinemas.

More information at [www.kviffdistribution.com](http://www.kviffdistribution.com)

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