

59TH KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL



FILM FESTIVAL JULY 4-12 2025

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Press Release
23/04/2025

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Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN GARFIELD

The 59th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival will feature an exclusive tribute to 1940s American screen star JOHN GARFIELD.

“We are excited to remember the exceptional but somewhat forgotten career of a pioneer of what, in his day, was an unusually realistic approach to acting by showing 10 titles,” says KVIFF’s artistic director and the tribute’s curator Karel Och. “No fewer than eight of them will be screened from the 35mm prints,” he adds.

Born on 4 March 1913 as Julius “Julie” Garfinkle, he was one of the first to captivate film and theater audiences with the acting style later known as method acting. As an intuitive co-creator of the techniques championed by the legendary Actor’s Studio, he influenced icons such as Marlon Brando, James Dean and Paul Newman, among dozens of others.



Force of Evil (1948), Photo credit: Ignite Films Distribution Services b.v



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The nearly quarter-century acting career of this unique acting legend was influenced by the political situation in the United States at the time. Garfield first appeared on stage literally on the eve of Black Thursday and the subsequent crash of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929. His powerful portrayal of the characters he played both in theater (American Laboratory Theatre, Group Theatre) and later in film grew from his strong social sense and intense personal experience of life on the margins of society.

Tales of Garfield's uncommon talent quickly traveled west, and it was Jack Warner who signed him to a seven-year contract; the charismatic young actor was a good fit alongside the studio's remarkable list of acting talent (Humphrey Bogart, James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, Bette Davis). He was an immediate hit, with his debut performance as the bitter charmer Mickey Borden in Michael Curtiz's **Four Daughters** (1938) earning Garfield an Oscar nomination.

Thanks to sophisticated screenplays and excellent directing, even the assembly-line approach to filmmaking in Hollywood's dream factory occasionally produced intelligent and captivating films that won critical recognition, such as **They Made Me a Criminal** and **Dust Be My Destiny** (both 1939). In crime films with a socially conscious subplot about young people's painful search for their place in Depression-era society, Garfield fully developed his natural ability to express an uncommon level of authenticity and truthfulness in any activity.

In late 1941, the United States entered World War II, and the 28-year-old Garfield's bid to join the army was rejected because of a weak heart. His idealistic patriotism is palpable in the remarkable wartime drama **Pride of the Marines** (1945). One of Garfield's most important films, though also one of his lesser known titles, it is an empathetic and dignified take on the timeless tale of an injured soldier's return home and his attempt at adjusting to everyday life.

Garfield was an actor known for his wide range, capable of a disarming naturalness and with a capacity for carefully nuanced gestures. He could portray charming and elegant characters possessing both steeliness and vulnerability, who mixed charm and a sense of humor with bitterness and (self-)destructive rage. Thanks to his ability to truthfully portray any situation, directors and screenwriters were not afraid to place Garfield's characters in extreme situations, as in the film noir classic **The Postman Always Rings Twice**, or **Humoresque**, a romantic melodrama about a violin prodigy (both 1946).



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Seeking greater creative control, at the end of his contract with Warner Garfield co-founded his own production company, Roberts Productions. Working with the independent The Enterprise Studios, he shot two of the most important films of his career and indeed of the noir genre. His second Oscar nomination came for the gripping drama **Body and Soul** (1947), which to this day is considered one of the greatest boxing films, with a clear influence on cult pictures such as *Rocky* and *Pulp Fiction*. Screenwriter Abraham Polonsky left the job of directing the film to Robert Rossen, but for the legendary **Force of Evil** (1948) he took the reins himself and created a timeless monument to his disarming idealism, which viewed capitalism as corrupting men's morals.

Garfield's career quickly took a downturn when his name appeared in Red Channels, a pamphlet fingering Communists and their sympathizers in the entertainment industry. The accusations had a fatal box office impact on one of his final films, **The Breaking Point** (1950), an adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's adventure novel *To Have and Have Not*, which the author himself considered the best film adaptation of any of his books.

In April 1951, Garfield was called to testify before Congress. Unlike others who collaborated with the authorities and denounced their colleagues in order to protect their own skins, the exhausted Garfield, already suffering poor health, did not "name names." The dark noir thriller **He Ran All the Way** (1951) would be the final entry in the filmography of an actor for whom it was as important to sacrifice everything for the work he loved as it was to unflinchingly express his political convictions and humanist ideals. In part because he was denied the chance to do either, John Garfield's heart gave out on 21 May 1952, when he was 39.

List of films featured in the tribute:

Four Daughters (dir. Michael Curtiz, 1938)
They Made Me a Criminal (dir. Busby Berkeley, 1939)
Dust Be My Destiny (dir. Lewis Seiler, 1939)
Pride of the Marines (dir. Delmer Daves, 1945)
The Postman Always Rings Twice (dir. Tay Garnett, 1946)
Humoresque (dir. Jean Negulesco, 1946)
Body and Soul (dir. Robert Rossen, 1947)
Force of Evil (dir. Abraham Polonsky, 1948)
The Breaking Point (dir. Michael Curtiz, 1950)
He Ran All the Way (dir. John Berry, 1951)



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VISUAL IDENTITY OF THE 59TH KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Author: Zuzana Lednická, Collaboration: Aleš Najbrt, Photographer: Václav Jirásek

Zuzana Lednická highlighted the dominant symbolism of this year's visual identity: "The main motif for the visual identify of the 59th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival is a simple human gesture: an embrace. An ordinary yet powerful moment, a symbol of closeness, friendship, love, and forgiveness. Photographed with various people in various situations then and now. Is it film? Yes, but mainly it is life!"

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KVIFF PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO CZECH CINEMA TO BE PRESENTED TO EDITOR JIŘÍ BROŽEK

At the closing ceremony of this year's Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, the President's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Czech Cinema will be presented to editor Jiří Brožek.

A nine-time winner of the Czech Lion Award, Jiří Brožek has worked on more than a hundred Czech films, television productions and series. He is the absolute record holder in terms of the number of annual Czech Film and Television Academy awards for one profession across all categories.

After graduating from FAMU in Prague in 1973, Brožek joined Barrandov Studios, where he worked for the next twenty years. Editor Jiřina Lukešová, under whom he gained experience as an assistant editor, recommended him to directors Jiří Menzel and Jaroslav Papoušek, and Brožek's first independent work as an editor was on Papoušek's *Finally We Understand Each Other*.



Photo Credit: Film Servis Festival Karlovy Vary



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During his time at Barrandov, he applied his editing skills to a number of major films and worked with leading Czech directors such as Jiří Menzel (*Cutting It Short*, *The Snowdrop Festival*, *The End of Old Times*, *I Served the King of England*, and the Oscar-nominated comedy *My Sweet Little Village*) or Věra Chytilová (*Story from a Housing Estate*, *Calamity*, *The Jester and the Queen*). He also was a longtime collaborator of Karel Kachyňa (*Love Between the Raindrops*; *Nurses*; *The Train of Childhood and Expectation*; *Golden Eels*; *The Death of the Beautiful Deer*; *Watch Out, the Doctor Is on His Round!*), Ladislav Smoljak (*Ball Lightning*; *Waiter, Scarper!*; *Uncertain Season*; *Jára Cimrman Lying, Sleeping*), Dušan Klein (*How the World Is Losing Poets*, *How Poets Are Losing Their Illusions*, *How Poets Are Enjoying Their Lives*, *Good Pigeons Return*), Jaroslav Soukup (*Wind in the Pocket*, *Love from the Arcade*, *Fists in the Dark*), and Karel Smyczek (*Snowdrops and Daredevils*, *Landscape with Furniture*).

Since the early 1990s, following his departure from Barrandov Studios, Brožek has regularly collaborated with the new generation of directors. He earned his first Czech Lion in 1993 for his work on Jaroslav Brabec's *Horror Story*, worked on various films and series directed by Vladimír Michálek, including the award-winning drama *Sekal Has to Die* (1998 Czech Lion) and *Angel Exit* (2000), and collaborated with Vladimír Morávek (2003 Czech Lion for *Boredom in Brno*) and Petr Nikolaev (2007 Czech Lion for *It's Gonna Get Worse*). He has also worked repeatedly with Martin Šulík (2005 Czech Lion for *The City of the Sun*). Brožek collaborated with Šulík and historian Jan Lukeš on *The Golden Sixties*, an extensive documentary project about Czechoslovak cinema of the 1960s. His final collaboration with the legendary Věra Chytilová (the bitter comedy *Pleasant Moments*, 2006) earned him another Czech Lion. More Czech Lion Awards for his editing work came with Václav Havel's film debut *Leaving* (2011) and Tereza Nvotová's *Filthy* (2017).

Jiří Brožek's creative personality has had a lasting and indelible influence on Czech cinema. "Editing is a very intimate affair," he once said in an interview about his work. "The important thing is the content of the film I am editing. You have to listen and understand the message so that the audience can understand it as well. It's like football – we're all on one team."

As a tribute to Jiří Brožek, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival will present *The Death of the Beautiful Deer*, on which he collaborated with director Karel Kachyňa.



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**KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL TO PRESENT PREMIERE OF
DIGITALLY RESTORED ECCE HOMMO HOMOLKA**

The long-running tradition of premiere screenings of digitally restored Czech and Czechoslovak films continues at KVIFF 59 with a screening of screenwriter and director Jaroslav Papoušek's *Ecce Homo Homolka*.

This sarcastic 1969 comedy about the life of a multigenerational family has been called the final film of the Czechoslovak New Wave of the 1960s. Jaroslav Papoušek, who was originally active as a sculptor, artist, and cartoonist, worked as a screenwriter on Miloš Forman's seminal films *Black Peter*, *Loves of Blonde*, and *The Firemen's Ball* and Ivan Passer's *Intimate Lighting*. After Forman and Passer went into exile, Papoušek was the last member of this exceptionally talented creative trio to remain on the domestic film scene. And although, in terms of genre, *Ecce Homo Homolka* belongs to the category of so-called folk comedies, it clearly follows on his work with Forman and Passer and the poetic style of their previous collaborative efforts.



Photo Credit: Národní Filmový Archiv (NFA)



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An idyllic summer afternoon, when Grandma and Grandpa Homolka, their son Ludva, their daughter-in-law Heduš, and their twin grandchildren are on a trip to the countryside, slowly turns into an outlandish comic satire that reveals the pitfalls of living together in a small apartment, full of petty quarrels, grievances, and divergent ideas of what a happy family life should look like. The film's strength rests in its brilliant depiction of distinctive character types, its accurate portrayal of an ordinary Czech family in the 1960s, and the use of situational humor and extremely witty dialogue. Many of the film's lines have become so popular over the years that they have become unforgettable catchphrases for later generations of viewers as well.

When casting his film, the director relied mainly on the acting talents of Josef Šebánek, Helena Růžičková, František Husák, and Marie Motlová. The twins are played by Matěj and Petr Forman. Papoušek shot a loose sequel, *Hogo Fogo Homolka*, the following year, and the final part of the trilogy, *Homolka and the Purse*, was added in 1972.

Ecce Homo Homolka is another in a series of award-winning Czech films to be digitally restored thanks to financial support from Milada and Eduard Kučera.

The Karlovy Vary International Film Festival regularly includes re-release premieres of films whose digital restoration has been made possible by the Kučeras in its official program and as part of its special KVIFF Classics retrospectives.

The film was digitally restored by UPP and Soundsquare, working in collaboration with the National Film Archive and the State Fund for Cinema. The image was digitized from an original negative of the print and an original negative of the sound stored at the National Film Archive.



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FUTURE FRAMES CONTINUES ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH ALLWYN AND COLLABORATION WITH UTA AND RANGE MEDIA PARTNERS

Since 2015, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and European Film Promotion have organized *Future Frames – Generation NEXT of European Cinema*, a program aimed at helping talented European directors launch their careers in the film industry. For three years, Future Frames has been able to offer expanded opportunities thanks to a partnership with Allwyn – a lottery-led entertainment company, and by collaborating with American talent agency UTA and Range Media Partners, which provide young filmmakers with valuable expert guidance and give them the chance to make important contacts.



2024 Future Frames participants, Photo credit: Film Servis Festival Karlovy Vary

Every year, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival programming team selects ten film school students and graduates who have been recommended for Future Frames by member organizations of European Film Promotion. The participating filmmakers show their short and medium-length films at the festival and participate in a mentoring program that includes training, networking, and promotion. This year's Future Frames will take



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place from 6 to 9 July at the Hotel Thermal, which will once again host the creative and networking space that is the Allwyn Future Frames Lounge. Here, the participants will attend training sessions and one-on-one meetings with representatives from UTA and Range Media Partners, who will provide feedback on their work and then select one director to attend an Allwyn-sponsored residency in Los Angeles. Last year, this honor went to Danish director William Sehested Høeg. During his month-long residency, UTA and Range Media Partners arranged one-on-one meetings with distributors, producers, and other professionals from the U.S. film industry, with whom Høeg could consult his planned feature film and other projects.