



Karlovy Vary  
International Film Festival

# SILENT DAYS



# BASIC INFORMATION

ORIGINAL TITLE	Hluché dni
ENGLISH TITLE	Silent Days
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	Slovakia Czech Republic
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	2019
RUNNING TIME	81 min.
GENRE	hybrid
LANGUAGES	Romani Slovak
COLOUR	colour
PRODUCTION	partizanfilm (SK) Radio and Television of Slovakia (SK) kaleidoscope (SK) školfilm (CZ)
SUPPORT	Slovak Audiovisual Fund
DIRECTOR	Pavol Pekarčík
STORY	Pavol Pekarčík
SCRIPT	Pavol Pekarčík
CINEMATOGRAPHY	Pavol Pekarčík Oto Vojtičko
SOUND	Pavol Pekarčík Tomáš Vojtičko
EDITING	Pavol Pekarčík Ondrej Lehocký
PROTAGONISTS	Sandra Siváková Marián Hlaváč Alena Červeňáková René Červeňák Karmen Balogová Roman Balog Kristián Gaži

P  
R  
E  
S  
S  
K  
I  
T

S  
I  
L  
E  
N  
T

D  
A  
Y  
S

P  
R  
E  
S  
S  
K  
I  
T

THE PROJECT HAS TAKEN  
PART IN THE FOLLOWING  
INDUSTRY PLATFORMS

Docu Talents from the East  
(Karlovy Vary IFF 2016)  
Meeting Point Vilnius  
(Vilnius IFF 2017, receiving  
the Vilnius Goes to Cannes  
Award)  
Works in Progress  
(Febiofest IFF 2017)

S  
I  
L  
E  
N  
T

WEBSITE

[www.hluchedni.sk](http://www.hluchedni.sk)

D  
A  
Y  
S

# ABOUT

## TAGLINE

Those who cannot hear listen to dreams

## LOGLINE

Four stories about hearing-impaired children from Roma settlements who inhabit an environment they cannot completely understand and dream their own world.

## SYNOPSIS

Four stories about hearing-impaired children from Roma settlements who inhabit an environment they cannot completely understand and dream their own world. Sandra, who loves football and Ronaldinho; Marian, who wants to become a train conductor and idolises JC Van Damme; Alena and Rene, who fear that they'll have a deaf child; and siblings Roman, Kristian and Karmen, who dream about having a proper toilet and living room.

## AUTHORS' STATEMENT

The idea for SILENT DAYS came to me while I was working on my doctoral thesis. I was hoping to find a space where the visual worlds of film and photography coexisted, a kind of hybrid sphere between the two forms, where they influenced and overlapped with one another.

I was just on a research trip around Roma settlements, sorting through my photographs, when my wife asked me who that little boy with the gentle eyes was. Until then, I had only considered him to be one of the many children living in Slovak settlements. But this boy was special – he had a hearing impairment. I began to think about what his life was like. He was an outsider in a community that is itself on the extreme margins of the wider society. It occurred to me that it would be interesting to watch how the boy

coped with his handicap. His name was Marian. After that, the other subjects came easily – hearing-impaired children can be found in every Roma settlement.

By delving into the everyday reality of my protagonists, I understood that all children experience the world through dreams, regardless of whether they can hear or speak. To penetrate these dreams, to expose and explore them, that is the important part. We live in a time when people have fewer and fewer opportunities to meet people from the opposite end of the spectrum, and fewer opportunities still to comprehend their inner worlds. In consequence, we know less and less about those who live outside of our social group, our part of town or our economic class. We do not understand their motivations and concerns.

It was very interesting to peek into the lives of people about whom we know so little, and to learn that they experience the same joys and harbour the same dreams and worries as ourselves. And that is precisely what the film hopes to highlight. It should connect people, or at least help them to connect. I therefore chose to paint a portrait of a minority within a minority.

As a documentarian, I know that life can often conjure situations that we would otherwise consider to be quite unlikely – situations that simply cannot be thought up from behind a computer keyboard. During the long hours and days I spent in the Roma settlements, I began to elaborate my observations, compiling little details and cataloguing nuances that determined the mood of the film. I still had to work with them and assemble them into a more complete and cohesive story. That is why I decided to include live action sequences in the film, giving it a somewhat hybridised genre feel.

Initially, there were more children. I only focused the cast gradually, prioritising characters who did not lose their authenticity in the live-action sequences, and who had the potential to carry a more complex narrative. Eventually, I decided on four stories.

During the shoot, we used several types of camera. Roma

communities have notoriously bad experience with the tabloid press, and they are hence allergic to cameras and shooting. But when we started assembling our camera kit on location, they understood that we were after a completely different style of footage and narrative. They viewed our minimalist crew as a hang glider pilot who can put together a flying machine from a few metal rods and a piece of canvas.

For me, the guiding parameter for the film was authenticity – visual as well as narrative. The camera is mostly static and uses a majority of wide shots. It's a minimalisation of visual expression, basically reduced to just composition. This approach posed a significant challenge during the shoot: you cannot explain to a hearing-impaired child where the edge of the frame is, and so many authentic scenes were irrecoverably lost. As for the live-action sequences, we had to retake a few of them several times.

For the editing, I thought about blending the narrative styles of film and photography. I employed an analogical approach to how one views a photo exhibition: you spend as much time as you like in front of a picture and then move on to the next one. I wanted to approximate this principle in the composition. The film cuts between individual scenes, but the situations within the scenes are left unedited. We watch them just the way they unfolded in reality. This approach allowed me to accentuate the authenticity of the whole.

Basically, it was crucial for me to get as close to the protagonists as I could and to be sincere in my interest in them. Without that, the purpose of the film – to bring people together and to help them understand each other better – would not transmit on the big screen.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## PAVOL PEKARČÍK

Pavol Pekarčík (1972) is a director, cinematographer, 1st assistant director and producer. He has collaborated with several Slovak directors, e.g. Ivan Ostrochovský on his films ILJA (editor and cinematographer) and THE DISCIPLE (1st assistant director), Martin Šulík on his film THE GYPSY (1st assistant director) or Iveta Grófová on her film MADE IN ASH (1st assistant director, production manager, co producer).

His directorial feature debut, VELVET TERRORISTS (co directed by Peter Kerekes and Ivan Ostrochovský), was presented at the Karlovy Vary IFF in a world premiere (receiving the FEDEORA Award) and at the prestigious Berlinale in an international premiere (receiving the Tagesspiegel Readers' Award).

SILENT DAYS is Pekarčík's debut solo feature film.

### FILMOGRAPHY ///

2019: Silent Days (feature hybrid) - director

2013: Velvet Terrorists (feature documentary) - director

2012: Made in Ash (feature fiction) - 1st assistant director, production manager, co-producer

2011: The Gypsy (feature fiction) - 1st assistant director

2010: Ilja (short documentary) - editor, cinematographer

## KATARÍNA TOMKOVÁ

Katarína Tomková (1984) has worked in film since 2004, starting off as a film critic, production assistant on films and commercials, as well as film-oriented PR. During 2009 - 2015, she worked for the Slovak Film Institute as an international film promoter, attending the most important industry platforms and events.

At the moment, she is closely collaborating with Punkchart

films, for which she was associate producer on 5 OCTOBER (2016) by Martin Kollar (World Premiere at Rotterdam IFF), co-producer on HOTEL SUNRISE (2016) by Mária Rumanová (World Premiere at IDFA), producer on NINA (2017) by Juraj Lehotský (World Premiere at Karlovy Vary IFF and North American Premiere at Toronto IFF), executive producer on LITTLE MOSCOW (2018) by Grímur Hákonarson (International Premiere at Goteborg IFF), and co-producer on THE SOUND IS INNOCENT (2019) by Johana Ožvold (World Premiere at Visions du Reel).

She is currently delegate producing THE DISCIPLE by Ivan Ostrochovský, a Slovak-Romanian-Czech-Irish co-production, which she has presented at various industry platforms (Cottbus, Arras, Les Arcs). She's also collaborating with Juraj Lehotský on his upcoming project APPLAUSE, which is expected to go into production at the end of 2019.

Katarína is also working on Pavol Pekarčík's hybrid feature SILENT DAYS (2019).

She is a SOFA 2015 and EAVE Producers Workshop 2016 graduate.

#### FILMOGRAPHY ///

2019: Silent Days (by Pavol Pekarčík, feature hybrid)

2019: The Sound Is Innocent (by Johana Ožvold, feature documentary)

2018: Little Moscow (by Grímur Hákonarson, feature documentary)

2017: Nina (by Juraj Lehotský, feature)

2016: 5 October (by Martin Kollar, documentary)

2016: Hotel Sunrise (by Mária Rumanová, documentary)

# CONTACTS

CO-PRODUCER  
& DELEGATE FOR INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Katarína Tomková  
kaleidoscope  
katarina@kaleidoscope.sk  
+421 908 281 407

PR MANAGER SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Zuzana Kizáková  
zuzana.kizakova@gmail.com  
+421 908 663 903

