

CHILDREN

a film by Jaro Vojtek



cast: Éva Bandor, János Gosztonyi, Vlado Zboroň, Roman Bubla, Martin Horváth, Richard Felix, Arnold Nagy and others, directed by: Jaro Vojtek, written by: Marek Leščák, director of photography: Tomáš Stanek ASK, edited by: Maroš Šlapeta, music: Michal Nejtek, title song: Jana Kirschner, sound: Dušan Kozák, first assistant director: Juraj Baláž, production manager: Martina Agricolová, co-producer: Pavlína Kalandrová, producer: Mátýás Prikler

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www.filmchildren.sk

CHILDREN

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English title: **Children**
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Premiered in Slovakia: **25. 9. 2014**
Production Countries: **Slovakia, Czech Republic**
Copyright: **2014**
Screening Format: **DCP, Blu-ray, DVD**
Original languages: **Slovak, Hungarian, Roma, Czech**
Subtitles: **English**
Runtime: **100 min.**
Genre: **Social Drama**
Producer: **Mátyás Prikler, MPhilms (Slovakia)**
Co-producer: **Pavína Kalandrová, Duracfilm (Czech Republic), Radio and Television Slovakia**
Film Website: **www.filmchildren.sk**

Directed by: **Jaro Vojtek** / Written by: **Marek Leščák** / Director of Photography: **Tomáš Stanek ASK** / Edited by: **Maroš Šlapeta** / Music: **Michal Nejtek** / Sound: **Dušan Kozák** / First Assistant Director: **Juraj Baláž** / Production manager: **Martina Agricolová** / Co-producer: **Pavína Kalandrová** / Producer: **Mátyás Prikler**

Cast: **Éva Bander, János Gosztonyi, Vlado Zborož, Roman Bubla, Martin Horváth, Richard Felix, Arnold Nagy.**

SYNOPSIS

The first feature film by celebrated documentary filmmaker, Jaro Vojtek, presents an authentic picture of damaged family relations, while illustrating that we are indeed closest with our closest ones, although the relationship may sometimes be too much to handle.

Son, Marathon, Canary, and Father – four short films create together one, compact view of the diverse relations between parents and children. A father trying to cope with the inaccessible world of his autistic son, a young man who cannot bear the separation from his family, a boy living with an insensitive and tyrannical stepfather, a betrayed woman taking care of her dying father – each character copes with their difficulties in their own way. They choose to visit to a healer, escape from prison, go to a canary exhibition, take a trip to the sea. Are the characters trying to escape their problems, or are they trying to find a way of coming to terms with them?

Each of the four short films is set in a different season. They offer a multilayered mosaic of relationships, reflecting hopes, disappointments and decisions that we inevitably have to make. Only one thing is certain – life is what we get, not what we want...

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JARO VOJTEK

directed by



"The subject of my film concerns relationships. Those that are given to us by fate and we cannot just abandon them all of a sudden. The relationship between parents and children that impacts our whole life, has always been an interest of mine. It is given, we are born into it and there is nothing else we can do about it than to live it, feel it, experience it and take care of it or not. For example I am contemplating the relationship of a sick boy living in his own world and his father, who despite his efforts cannot reach him, or I try to capture a boy's delicate world which is disrupted by an inconsiderate taunting by his stepfather. I intended to talk about different forms that relationships may take. Therefore I chose four stories that together bring a certain emotion – an emotion of identity. I'm asking myself, what does shape us? How can we escape the predetermination of these relationships and find personal freedom? Are we capable of achieving this?"

Jaro Vojtek (1968, Žilina) graduated in directing of documentary films from Academy of Performing Arts Bratislava (1994-1998) at Professor Dušan Hanák. He currently teaches at the department of documentary film directing. Since 1993 he has directed several short and mid-length documentaries. His feature debut *Here we are* (2005) was introduced at IFF Karlovy Vary and several others, collecting many awards, e.g. main award at international human rights documentary film festival One World in Prague in 2006. His second feature documentary film *The Border* was premiered in 2009 and won Between the seas Award for the best Eastern European documentary film at IDFF Jihlava and was even featured at prestigious Spectrum section at IFF Rotterdam. His TV series *Children* about children (2011) received a nomination for Prix Jeunesse award at IFF Munchen. His other documentary *The Gypsy Vote* (2012) was introduced at international festivals in Warsaw, Jakarta and Minsk and received a special Silver eye award at IDFF Jihlava. He received Crystal Wing award for audiovisual production in 2012.

MAREK LEŠČÁK

written by



"Film Children comprises of four stories on the fragility of human relationships, insecurity and decisions. The main subject concerns the relationships between parents and children or children and parents with their purity and sincerity or, on the other hand, loneliness and inner insecurity. Each of the stories was inspired by something else. Some originated during works on other documentary films that I did with Jaro Vojtek, others are personal. Our ambition was to tell the stories with the authentic power and emotional urgency as to create a unit that forces the spectator to think on how they would react in situations that the protagonists of each of the stories are incapable of solving. Because being in a relationship, be it given or not, it brings not only the joys but also many headache-inducing situations when we never really know what the ideal solution is. Yet the closest relationships and our roles in them determine who we are in the end."

Marek Leščák (1971, Bratislava) graduated in dramaturgy and screenwriting from Film and Television Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts Bratislava where he currently works as a lecturer. As a screenwriter he participated on films that received numerous awards in Slovakia and abroad, e.g. *The Garden* (directed by Martin Šulík, 1995), *Orbis Pictus* (directed by Martin Šulík, 1997), *The City of the Sun* (directed by Martin Šulík, 2005), *Here We Are* (directed by Jaroslav Vojtek, 2005), *Blind Loves* (directed by Juraj Lehotský, 2008), *The Border* (directed by Jaroslav Vojtek, 2009), *Fine, Thanks* (directed by Mátyás Prikler, 2013), *Ilja* (directed by Ivan Ostrochovský, 2010), *Gypsy* (directed by Martin Šulík, 2011), *Made in Ash* (by Iveta Grófová, 2012), *Miracle* (directed by Juraj Lehotský, 2013) and a film project *Slovakia 2.0* ("President's funeral" story, directed by Martin Šulík, 2014).

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MÁTYÁS PRIKLER

producer



"There is this story that maybe even isn't real. Monty Pythons were getting Life of Brian ready and BBC halted the project at the last instant. The film saw the light thanks to ex-Beatle George Harrison financing it and so he became its producer. When they asked him why he had dared such insanity he said that he just wanted to see the film. And I wanted to see film Children. But I am not George Harrison and so it took us three years to get enough finances for the film and make it a really happen. I hope that others will also want to see this film."

Mátýás Prikler (1982, Bratislava) graduated in film directing from Film Faculty of Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava in the class of Stanislav Párnický. In 2005-2006 he studied at Drama and Film Academy in Budapest in the class of János Szász and Attila Janisch. He shot several short and mid-length films. His graduate's short film Thanks, Fine (2009) was selected for the competition in the Cinéfondation section at IFF Cannes in 2010. His feature debut of the same title had its world premiere at IFF Rotterdam in 2013. In 2005 he has founded a production house MPhilms which he leads since then. In 2014 he produced the film Slovakia 2.0 and Children and is a co-producer of the film Mirage, directed by Szabolcs Hajdu.

PAVLÍNA KALANDROVÁ

co-producer



"In 2011 I received a screenplay by Mátýás Prikler that got my attention with its lifelikeness and artistic shortcut at the same time. As a producer of documentary films in main I was drawn to the project by the fact that Jaro Vojtek is a great documentary filmmaker, that the story of film Children draws on human fates that he knows personally and that the film as a project was created as an intimate one, be it the size of the creative team or the production team. After a test screening of the raw edit I was thrilled by the expression of the film that I just wasn't completely able to imagine emerging from the screenplay. It showed that the documentary effectiveness of Jaro Vojtek in collaboration with Tomáš Stanko led to a simple expression that could carry a lot of meaning. All four of the stories feel like they reach an impasse, which is what I realized at the fifth viewing where also my young nephews living in USA were present. With the sincerity that the children possess they labeled the film as "something different than the Disney movies" and they asked why is it all so sad. I re-played each of the stories in my mind and I had to admit that not one of them had a happy ending. Despite that the movie doesn't ring as a depressing one to me. How so? There is contemplation, open spaces, grand camera-work and simplicity of the situations in their everyday form – so there is not some staged tragedy or fear. The characters each fight their small battles and we contemplate it all. It was an honor to me to be a part of this project."

Pavlína Kalandrová (1980, Prostějov) graduated in theatre studies and Czech studies from Palacký University Olomouc and in film and television production from Film and Television School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. For almost a decade she has been working as a producer in the fields of theatre and cinematography, e.g. for a famous Prague theatre Archa, student film projects for Film and Television School of the Academy of Performing Arts intended as bigger productions. She collaborates with documentary film festivals and Czech Television. She produced the documentary film Tripoint (directed by Klára Řezníčková, 2011) which earned Pavel Koutecký Award in 2012. As an executive producer she worked on four documents from a Czech-Slovak television cycle Customs Office. She is a founding member and one of the independent producers of Duracfilm production house (started in 2003). She ranks among the "Emerging Producers 2014" of the IDFF Jihlava.

CHILDREN

TOMÁŠ STANEK ASK
director of photography



"It was during our previous collaboration that Jaro Vojtek contacted me for the film Children. We talked a lot during the preparations and it was a challenge to me to shoot the individual stories as to give each of them a special artistic spirit and to deal with the specific properties of this project. Thanks to the team being small and adaptable we could improvise and fully utilize also the documentary method of shooting. Some of the principles of shooting and working with non-actors we have already tried during some of our past projects. Film Children is a feature debut for me as well and Vojtek's work has been a great experience for me."

Tomáš Stanek (1980, Bratislava) graduated in DOP studies from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. As a DOP he focuses mainly on documentary films, feature films, advertisements and music videos. Since 2014 he is a member of the Association of Slovak Cameramen. He collaborated with Jaro Vojtek on feature documentary films like Back Passing (2008), The Border (2009), The Gypsy Vote (2012) and on short documentary Invisible hero from Slovak Cinema cycle (2014). He currently works on a film called Agave (directed by Ondrej Šulaj). He took part in films such as A Step Into Darkness (directed by Miloslav Luther, 2014), The Exhibition (directed by Peter Begányi and Andrej Kolenčík, 2012), Lost Holiday (directed by Lucie Králová, 2007). As a DOP he shot music videos for music groups Korben Dallas (Beh/Run), Lavagance (Blood) and singer Celeste Buckingham (Nobody Knows).

MAROŠ ŠLAPETA
edited by



"A film should evoke laughter, fear, anger or sadness in the spectator – or move them to tears. I believe Children to be the last case. It tells of things that all of us know. Everyone is someone's child or has their own child or children. Film Children is essentially a collection of four simple film ballads about parents and children. Besides moving the spectator they also have the power to make them think. Despite the fact that little is spoken during the film, it is highly communicative. I think that there are several scenes or images that will stay in the spectator's mind: the sea at the coast of an abandoned beach in Bulgaria with a yellow inflatable floating there and forth in it, a chimney looming above disintegrating Dobšiná cloaked in autumn colors, a small paper airplane flying over Sandberg in Devínska Nová Ves and then crashing into it, a small black form running across a white snow-covered silent plain and knee-deep in pure snow and many other images featuring great actors, e.g. János Gosztonyi. Even though the ballads end in a sad fashion, they have a liberating quality to them."

Maroš Šlapeta (1972, Bratislava) graduated in architecture from Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and later graduated in editing from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava where he also teaches since 2004. He collaborated with Jaro Vojtek as an editor on feature documentary films Here we are (2005) and The Border (2009). Among his filmography we also count documentary films as Little Mad Robinson (directed by Tina Diosi, 2010), Ilja (directed by Ivan Ostrochovský, 2010), The Edge – 4 films about Marek Brezovský (directed by Partik Lančarič, 2014) and feature films as The Return of the Storks (directed by Martin Repka, 2007), The Great Thaw (directed by Viktor Tauš, 2008), Fine, Thanks (directed by Mátyás Prikler, 2013), Visible World (directed by Peter Krištúfek, 2011), Made in Ash (directed by Iveta Grófová, 2012), The Only Known Photography of God from the Slovakia 2.0 film project (directed by Peter Krištúfek, 2014). He works as a dramaturg and a producer.

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MICHAL NEJTEK

music



"I got to composing music for this film via Pavlína Kalandrová, a co-producer I have already worked with before on a performance at Prague Archa Theater. Marek Leščák's screenplay already caught my attention even before Jaro Vojtek materialized it in the actual picture. It was the beauty of the ordinary, the appeal of non-staged and true situations, pseudo-documentary view without pretense. It is because I value all of this in literature (Raymond Carver, Jan Procházka) and films (Mike Leigh) that I am glad I could participate on this project. Composing music for such a film is no simple task. It is pretty clear it shouldn't compliment the picture element so far as to follow it too closely, and that it should create a counterpoint, a different voice to it, but it also shouldn't catch too much of an attention to itself by being too complicated. My intention was to compose several simple and distinct themes that we could work with in different contexts and situations. Because the music was supposed to be simple and true-sounding, I used acoustic instruments (clarinet, bass-clarinet, saxophone, cello, piano, accordion) almost exclusively, although often in peculiar tones or slightly electronically processed. I like when the music breathes, gives space to time, silence and the listener. That way the beauty of the ordinary may come to the fore in a different and surprising way. I certainly hope that with my music I contributed to the impact of this silent and at the same time very emotional film."

Michal Nejtek (1977, Litoměřice) graduated in musical composition from Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and finished his doctor's degree at Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno. His graduate's opera *Dementia Praecox* earned him the festival director's award at Opera 2003 festival. The recording of the composition *Ballo Nella Notte* was chosen by Czech Radio for International Rostrum of Composers at UNESCO in Paris. His music was played e.g. at Klangspuren festival, Wien Modern in Austria, Festiwal Muzyki Nowej in Poland, Forum Neuer Musik or Artacts '04 – Festival für Jazz und Improvisierte Musik in Germany, Music Gallery in Canada, Trieste Prima in Italy or Prague Spring International Music festival. He also earned Generation award for composing in 1999, 2000 and 2001. For the last ten years he has also been composing scenical music. For his music in *Exit 89* performance (directed by Jiří Havelka, 2008, Archa Theatre in Prague) he received a nomination for Alfréd Radok Award in 2009. As a pianist, composer and dramaturg he has worked since 1998 in AGON orchestra, which introduced a profile concerto from his compositions in Archa Theatre in Prague in 2002. He also performs as a solo artist, focusing on contemporary classical music, having also performed in various Prague jazz bands. As a pianist he is a part of David Koller's band.

DUŠAN KOZÁK

sound



*"Sometimes people meet and beautiful things happen. More than you can imagine. And that's how film Children came to be. Four stories for you to discover something in each of them. Maybe that... which you cannot voice you can feel.
...which humbles you doesn't have to be competed against.
...which you cannot grasp can set you free.
...which you cannot change you can accept."*

Dušan Kozák (1963, Šaľa) graduated in sound studies from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. He also teaches there. For two decades he has been working as a sound master in Radio and Television Slovakia. He participated in several documentary films: *The Journey of Magdalena Robinson* (directed by Marek Šulík, 2008), *Afghan Women Behind the Wheel* (directed by Sahraa Karimi, 2009), *Cigarettes and Songs* (directed by Marek Šulík, 2010), *Protected Territory* (directed by Adam Hanuljak, 2010), *Bells of Happiness* (directed by Marek Šulík and Jana Bučka, 2012), *The Grasp of the State* (directed by Zuzana Piussi, 2012) and on actors film *Fine, Thanks* (directed by Mátyás Prikler, 2013).

CHILDREN

MARTINA AGRICOLOVÁ

production manager



"The Children was not only my first feature film that I worked on but also my first film experience in my career life. I was lucky to work with a team of such great people, not only from the professional point of view but also from the human side. They helped me a deal and I learned a lot from them."

Martina Agricolová (1987, Martin) graduated in theatre management from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and also studied at Goldsmiths University in London. In 2010-2013 she was the head of production at Four Elements Film Seminar. Since 2012 she works as a production manager at production house MPhilms. The Children was her first film experience and since then she worked as a producer on the film Second Chance (part of Slovakia 2.0 film project, directed by Peter Kerekes, 2014) and Mirage (in post-production, directed by Szabolcs Hajdu). She works as an account executive in event agency Bubble Production House. Before that she had worked as account manager in event agency Fresh Agency and in designer studio Milk.

CHILDREN



ÉVA BANDOR

Éva Bandor (1971, Štúrovo) started her acting career in 1990 in Thália Theatre in Košice. In 1996 she graduated in acting from Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and after finishing her studies she returned to Thália Theatre, where she performed until 2001. She is currently in her ninth year of acting at Jókai Theatre in Komárno. She performed as Helena in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, as Masha in Chekhov's *Seagull* and as Lady Milford in Schiller's *Intrigue and Love*. She received an award at Kisvárdá Festival of Hungarian Theatres in 1996, 1998 and 2003. She began her career in films in 2003. She collaborated with Peter Kerekes on a documentary film *66 seasons* (2003). She performed in short films *They Are Not Your Husband* (directed by Mátyás Prikler, 2005), *Standard Bastard* (directed by Milan Balog, 2005) and *Minus* (directed by Áron Mátyássy, 2007). Her first performance as main protagonist in earnest was in the film *Love Me or Leave Me* (directed by Mariana Čengel-Solčanská, 2013) and she also made an appearance in *Fine, thanks* (directed by Mátyás Prikler, 2013) and short film *Honorary Citizen* (part of film project *Slovakia 2.0*) (directed by Juraj Herz, 2014). In *Children* she appears as the main protagonist in the story called *Father*.



JÁNOS GOSZTONYI

János Gosztonyi (1926-2014, Budapest) was a Hungarian actor, director, playwright and lecturer. In 1945-1949 he graduated in acting in Budapest and spent another decade as an actor in Hungarian National Theatre. Since 1950 he had taught at Drama and Film Academy. In 1962-1976 he was the head of the Thália Theatre in Budapest. During his career spanning over half a century he performed in over 60 roles on the theatre floor, over 40 in films, including international films such as *Jakob the Liar* (directed by Peter Kassovitz, 1999) or *Rasputin* (directed by Uli Edel, 1996) and directed over 40 theatre productions. His role in the story called *Father* in film *Children* was his last.

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VLADO ZBOROŇ

Vlado Zboroň (1960, Námestovo) studied in the 1980s at the Faculty of Theology for three years. Currently he works as a waiter in Prašná Brána restaurant in Bratislava. In 1991-2000 he was a member of Stoka Theatre and co-creator of many of their productions. He would host in Disk Trnava Theatre. Since 2004 he works as an actor and co-creator in Skrat Theatre productions – Central Europe loves you (2004), Paranoia (2004), Snuff, croak and die (2005) and Inside of the inside (2013), a part of international project Parallel Lives – 20th Century through the Eyes of Secret Police. He appeared in episode roles in films such as The Last Bus (directed by Martin Snopek and Ivana Laučíková, 2010), Music (directed by Juraj Nvota, 2007). His role in the story called Son in film Children is his first main protagonist role in his career.



ROMAN BUBLA

Roman Bubla (2002, Bratislava) attends primary church school in Vrakuňa in Bratislava. His favorite pastime is soccer. Besides that he also loves his brother Thomas. He is a lively boy, always in motion, although in the story called Son in film Children he played the role of an autistic boy. As an extra he played in TV shows Wine of Passion and Supernetwork.

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MARTIN HORVÁTH

Martin Horváth (1989, Spišská Nová Ves) lives in Vilčurna town part in Spišská Nová Ves and is a father of a daughter and two sons. He works at the airport in Spišská Nová Ves. He is glad of having a job, especially when he can dig some earth or help out the bricklayers. In the story called Marathon in Children he played the role of the main protagonist. He was found in a Roma settlement where also a part of the story took place by assistant director Juraj Baláž who invited him for the casting where Jaro Vojtek chose him.



RICHARD FELIX

Richard Felix graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Since 1991 he performs for the Radošiná Naïve Theatre as an actor, a dancer and a musician. He plays in productions such as Out of the air, Jááánošíík after three hundred years and Chance of clouds. He performed in a TV show called City of Shadows and a feature film The Evil (directed by Peter Bebjak, 2012). In the story called Canary in film Children he performed a role of one of the main protagonists.

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ARNOLD NAGY

Arnold Nagy (2003, Šahy) starts his eight-year term at the Dobšiná High School. As it is with all boys his age, the thing interests him the most is his tablet device. Provided he doesn't play some game on it at the moment, he likes to ride a bike. In the story called Canary he played the main role and he would certainly love to repeat the experience and become a full-time actor in the future.

CHILDREN



MPhilms, Ltd. is a film production company based in Bratislava, Slovakia. It was established in 2010 by Mátyás Prikler with a special focus on feature film production. In 2013 first feature film *Ďakujem, dobre/Fine, Thanks* (directed by Mátyás Prikler) was released for Slovak theatrical distribution with its international premiere at IFF Rotterdam. This was followed by two other feature films released in 2014 - *Slovensko 2.0/Slovakia 2.0* film about 20 years of independent Slovakia as seen from the perspective of 10 film director, and *Deti/Children*, directed by Jaro Vojtek. MPhilms is a coproducer of Hungarian-Slovak feature film *Mirage* (directed by Szabolcs Hajdu) which was internationally premiered at Toronto IFF, 2014. While developing a new fiction film, which will be directed by Mátyás Prikler and produced together with Zora Jaurová, MPhilms plans to release a middle-length film *Asistenti/Assistants* in 2015. MPhilms has its NGO branch (MPhilms, civic association) focusing on production of artistic creative workshops for young people taking place every year since 2008.

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