

CZECH – U.S. FILM FESTIVAL
Celebrating the Works of Jiri Menzel and Stanley Kramer

Czech-U.S. Film Festival

Location: American Center, 33B Homer Street

Opening: Wednesday, February 2nd 6:30 p.m.

Award-winning Czech director Jiri Menzel, whose films are being celebrated, will open the festival. The Festival will also celebrate the films of U.S. Director Stanley Kramer.

Schedule:

February 2: Capricious Summer (1968)

February 4: Closely Watched Trains (1966)

February 9: Larks on a String (1969)

February 11: My Sweet Little Village (1985)

February 16: Inherit the Wind (1960)

February 18: Judgment at Nuremberg (1961)

February 23: It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World (1963)

February 25: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967)

All Shows Start at 6:30 p.m.
FREE ADMISSION



JIRI MENZEL



World-renowned film and stage director Jiri Menzel is one of the most famous Czech directors, whose films have won numerous awards, including the Czech Lion Award, U.S. Academy Award and Golden Bear Award at the Berlin International Film Festival. Mr. Menzel's films present a special, poetic view of the world and are known for their unique juxtapositions between the tragic and the comic. He is also renowned for his acting after appearing on stage and in more than 40 films. Born in Prague on February 23, 1938, Mr. Menzel majored in directing at the Prague Film School FAMU, which gave birth to a generation of filmmakers who became known as the "New Wave" in Czech cinema.

February 2: *Capricious Summer* (1968)



Based on a novel by Jan Libora, this film follows three middle-aged vacationers at a summer resort. When a circus tightrope walker (played by director Jiri Menzel) and his captivatingly beautiful assistant arrive on the scene, the tourists' plans for rest and relaxation are thrown off course. An ode to lost innocence, this film won the Grand Prix award at the East European film festival Karlovy Vary.

February 4: *Closely Watched Trains* (1966)



Winner of the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1967, this film is based on Bohumil Hrabal's novel of the same name. This coming-of-age story follows a young Czech railroad station apprentice during the Nazi occupation who undergoes several philosophical changes as he becomes attracted to the Czech underground. A dark comedy, the film explores strategies for survival in the face of violent and repressive dictatorship.

February 9: *Larks on a String* (1969)



endured oppressive regimes.

The story focuses on two groups of prisoners incarcerated for such apparently minor crimes as inquiring after missing loved ones. From time to time, prisoners are spirited away in a mysterious black car, never to be seen again. The film captures the irrepressible goodness of people imprisoned by the government as they struggle against all odds to retain their humanity. Reviewers praised this film as funny, bitter, satirical, allegorical, and rich with imagery that is particularly meaningful to those who have

February 11: *My Sweet Little Village* (1985)



On the collective farm of the titular village, the farm's truck driver is the work partner and protector of Otik, a mentally retarded young man. Like everyone else in the village, the driver has watched out for Otik and covered up for his mistakes, but soon the situation becomes intolerable and the driver requests a new partner. As Otik prepares to be relocated to Prague, various subplots all lead to the same conclusion – the hapless Otik has always been the glue holding the community together. Nominated in 1986 for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Picture.



STANLEY KRAMER



Legendary U.S. director and producer Stanley Kramer used his films to directly confront some of the most difficult social issues of our times, including racism and genocide. In the words of director Steven Spielberg, he was “one of our great filmmakers, not just for the art and passion he put on screen, but for the impact he has made on the conscience of the world.” Mr. Kramer received the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award and was nominated three times for the U.S. Academy Award. Born in New York on September 29, 1913, Mr. Kramer passed away in 2001. His legacy lives on through the Producers Guild of America, which honors films that confront provocative social issues with the Stanley Kramer Award.

February 16: *Inherit the Wind* (1960)



When a southern schoolteacher dares to challenge the prevailing belief in Creationism and teach Darwin’s theory of evolution in his science class, he is arrested for violating state law. During the explosive trial that followed, based on the 1925 “Monkey Trial” of John Scopes, two of the most celebrated attorneys of the day argued head-to-head, pitting one man’s freedom of ideas against those of his fundamentalist community.

February 18: *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961)



A dramatization of the 1948 Nuremberg trial of Nazi officials for crimes against humanity. By the time of the trial, most of the major figures of the Nazi regime were either dead or missing, which forced the presiding judges to confront the question of how much responsibility someone held when they had “just followed orders.” As the trial goes on, both the visiting Americans and their reluctant German hosts find themselves facing the legacy of World War II.

February 23: *It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963)



With an ensemble cast of some of the most famous comic actors of the day, this film concerns the madcap pursuit of a hidden fortune by a diverse and colorful group of strangers. As the fortune hunters race to find the money, they are followed by the watchful eye of a police detective. This comedy marked a notable departure from Stanley Kramer’s other serious, socially conscious works.

February 25: *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967)



A white liberal upper-class couple raises their daughter to think for herself, but they are not prepared for the shock when she returns home from her Hawaiian vacation with a new fiancé, an African American doctor. The film confronts not only the prejudices harbored by the parents of the bride, but the groom’s family as well. Winner of two 1967 Academy Awards, for Best Actress and Best Screenplay.

