

Berlinale  
68 <sup>■</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Berlinale Special

# THE INTERPRETER

A FILM BY  
MARTIN ŠULÍK

Starring  
PETER SIMONISCHEK  
& JIŘÍ MENZEL

## MAIN CAST

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GEORG GRAUBNER  
ALI UNGÁR  
EDITA  
BERTA  
TRUDA  
YOUNG KYSEL  
OLD KYSEL  
JOLA  
VERONIKA  
PEČNER

Peter Simonischek  
Jiří Menzel  
Zuzana Mauréry  
Eva Kramerová  
Anna Rakovská  
Attila Mocos  
Igor Hrabinský  
Anita Szvrcsek  
Réka Derzsi  
Karol Šimon

## CREW

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Director  
Written by  
Director of Photography  
Original Music  
Costume Designer  
Production Designer  
Sound

Martin Šulík  
Martin Šulík, Marek Leščák  
Martin Štrba  
Vladimír Godár  
Katarína Hollá  
František Lipták  
Klaus Kellermann  
Pavel Rejholec  
Olina Kaufmanová  
Titanic s.r.o., In Film Praha s.r.o.  
Coop 99 filmproduktion GmbH  
Martin Šulík  
Rudolf Biermann  
Bruno Wagner  
Garfield Film  
Bioscop

Editor  
Production

Producers

Slovak Distribution  
Czech Distribution

The film was co-produced by RTVS – Radio and Television of Slovakia,  
ČT – Czech Television

The film was created with the support of the Slovak Audiovisual Fund and  
the Czech State Cinematography Fund, Film Fonds Wien and Film Institut.

The film was created in cooperation with ORF.

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FILM | PRESS | PLUS  
www.FilmPressPlus.com  
E IntlPressIT@aol.com  
T +33-9-7044-9865

WORLD SALES  
CELLULOID DREAMS  
2 rue Turgot – 75009 Paris  
E: info@celluloid-dreams.com  
T: +33 1 4970 0370



# THE INTERPRETER

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Starring  
**PETER SIMONISCHEK**  
& **JIŘÍ MENZEL**

## **SYNOPSIS**

80-year-old interpreter Ali Ungár travels to Vienna in search of the former Nazi officer who might have executed his parents in Slovakia. He finds only his son Georg, a bon vivant retiree who has distanced himself from his father's past. But Ali's visit awakens his interest, and the two men take off on a journey across Slovakia in search of surviving witnesses of the wartime tragedy. Their different views and life experiences result in both tensions and comic moments. For the two men, it's a bittersweet road trip on which they discover deep unresolved conflicts being washed ashore in new forms.





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*THE INTERPRETER* is a look back; an attempt to understand facts and events shaping the decisions of war and post-war generations. We are also interested in how these decisions are reflected in the present. On their journey, our characters encounter individuals of different generations, professions, and of diverse opinions. Step by step, they put together a mosaic picture of a dynamically changing country, however, a country with unresolved conflicts, hiding somewhere deep and being washed ashore time to time, affecting the present. The connection of two opposed characters enables us to perceive events from different perspectives. Good and evil stand next to each other and a bad decision can turn a good intention into a tragedy. We do believe that our characters, engaging in a permanent dialogue between each other, will provide audiences not only with an emotive experience but also with new insights. Thus, they will give them the opportunity to look at the complicated relationship between the past and the present from different perspectives and, in spite of the serious topic, with a certain humour.



## MARTIN ŠULÍK (screenwriter, director, producer)

(20 October 1962 Žilina). The most awarded and most prolific Slovak film director of the past 20 years. He is perhaps best known for his much awarded feature, the poetic, philosophical and humorous *The Garden* (Záhrada, 1995) which has reached cult status. Šulík won two Czech Lions for directing and for the screenplay for *The Garden*, and a four-time laureate of the annually awarded Igric awards of the Slovak Film Union. His film *Gypsy* (Cigán, 2011) was the Slovak Republic's entry to the Academy Awards.

After graduating, he directed several short films, documentaries and the television feature *The Death of Paľo Ročka* (Skon Paľa Ročku). He directed his first feature film *Tenderness* (Neha) in 1991. With this film, he started a very successful and prolific decade. Since 2000 he has focused more on documentary and television production. His first documentary *The Key for Determining Dwarfs or The Last Travel of Lemuel Gulliver* (Klíč k určování trpaslíků aneb Poslední cesta Lemuela Gullivera, 2002) on the life of the Czech director Pavol Juráček, was highly acclaimed. Also, the documentary series for the Czech Television *Golden Sixties* (Zlatá šedesátá, 2009), mapping the most successful era of Czech cinematography, gained fair attention. As a documentarist, Šulík likes most to deal with the field most familiar to him – the domestic cinematography and its creators. Following a long break, in 2006 he returned to feature film in the comedy laced with a social undertone *The City of the Sun* (Sluneční stat aneb hrdinové dělnické třídy). In this feature, he abandoned his typical poetics and added the realism of contemporary life. The feature received not only two Czech Lions (for editing and original music) but also six Slovak annual film awards *The Sun In A Net*, including the most important categories Best Film and Best Director

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*Marek Leščák and I were fascinated by the idea of a son who tries to understand the dark past of his father. We liked the idea that he was an Austrian, thus enabling us to look at our reality through the eyes of a foreigner. We thought that through a story built this way we would be able to reflect on events dividing Slovakia until today. Were we only victims of the fascist aggression during the war, or were we murdering, too? What is our responsibility for what was happening during the war in our country? How do we perceive it today? Are we interested in it at all? Why do we accept neo-fascist tendencies in the society? Have we lost our memory? We wanted to have a look at the whole problem from two perspectives. Thus we created a counterpart to the Austrian teacher - an interpreter who lost his whole family during the war.*





## **MAREK LEŠČÁK (screenwriter)**

Screenwriter, playwright, and one of the closest associates of M. Šulík. They met at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava where Marek studied and Martin just started his teaching career. Rather than at the campus, they kept meeting in a nearby cafe where their teacher-student relationship gradually turned into a personal and soon after a professional friendship. It was already their very first collaboration on the film *The Garden (Záhada, 1995)* that resulted in a great success. There were practically three generations of authors involved in writing the screenplay for it. The newly formed duo Šulík - Leščák was joined by the experienced ace screenwriter Ondrej Šulaj who had already worked with Šulík on his previous film *Everything I Like (Všetko, čo mám rád)*. As the same team, they continued while writing the next feature *Orbis pictus (1997)*. In the peculiar road movie of a fifteen-year-old girl travelling across the country, they reflected upon the situation back then in Slovakia during the infamous era of Mečiarism (under the rule of the then Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar, Slovak: Mečiarizmus). In the film *The City of the Sun (Sluneční stat aneb hrdinové dělnické třídy, 2005)*, Leščák and Šulík focused on four friends and their entrepreneurial attempts in the developing market society. Their last joint film achievement was *Gypsy (Cigán)*. While working with Šulík, Marek started to work also with his contemporaries who have been earning great successes at home as well as abroad. His signature is also attached to the awarded documentary *Blind Loves (Slepé lásky)* by Juraj Lehotský, as well as to Lehotský's other features *Miracle (Zázrak)* and *Nina*. Together with the director Jaro Vojtek, he collaborated on the features *The Border (Hranica)*, and *Here We Are (My zdes)*. Apart from that, he is, just like M. Šulík, a lecturer at the Academy of Performing Arts where he teaches screenwriting.

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*Distortion of history has always been one of the simplest tools of societal manipulation. If we lose our memory, we do not know who we are; we become fools who can be manipulated easily. We have no idea what to fear, but at the same time, we do not know which values to identify with. Uprootedness and ignorance of our past have already reached tangible dimensions in Slovakia: people from villages that were burnt down by Nazis vote for fascists, and they do not care about it at all.*

## **PETER SIMONISCHEK as Georg Graubner**

Peter Simonischek is a leading Austrian actor who has appeared in more than 60 films. He has worked with prominent European theatres and film directors and has received numerous prestigious awards. His last film *Toni Erdman* was nominated for the Academy Awards in 2017 and received all five main European Film Awards of the European Film Academy, including Best Film. Peter Simonischek himself won the European Film Award for his acting performance; apart from that, he received many other awards, like the German Film Award Lola and the Austrian Romy. He will soon be seen in Thomas Vinterberg's *KURSK*, also starring Colin Firth, Lea Seydoux, Matthias Schoenaerts and Michael Nyqvist.

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*My character Georg is more careful with the guilt of his father, although he was suppressing it for a long time and rather preferred to slide on the surface in his life to come to terms with it somehow. However, he has been caught up by the truth now, and, finally, he wants to learn more about his father's lies.*





## **JIŘÍ MENZEL as Ali Ungár**

Jiří Menzel is one of the most successful Czech film directors and also a frequently cast actor. He made his debut as a director with the feature film *Closely Watched Trains (Ostře sledované vlaky)*, for which he won the Academy Award already as a 29-year old. The works of Jiří Menzel represent the top of the Czechoslovak cinematography, and the films *Larks on a String (Skřivánci na niti)*, *Capricious Summer (Rozmarné léto)*, *Seclusion Near a Forest (Na samotě u lesa)* and *Cutting It Short (Postržiny)* formed the consciousness of whole generations. The comedy *My Sweet Little Village (Vesničko má středisková)* was nominated for the Academy Award in 1985. His film adaptation of Bohumil Hrabal's novel *I Served the King of England (Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále)* competed in the main Competition at Berlinale in 2007 and received the FIPRESCI Prize. His filmography as an actor counts more than 70 titles. His credits include Juraj Herz's *The Cremator (Spalovač mrtvol)* and *Ferat Vampire (Upír z Feratu)*, and the Czech-German film *When Grandpa Loved Rita Hayworth (Když děda miloval Ritu Hayworthovou/Ab ins Paradies)*. He also appeared in Martin Šulík's *Everything I Like (Všetko čo mám rád)*.

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*I was seven years old when World War II ended, but I did not know that the war would not last forever. My parents had withheld from me that there would ever be peace. When my mother told me that Hitler died – there was a headline in the newspaper “Hitler Fell” and I imagined him to be somewhere in the trenches, poor guy, shot in his uniform. I felt sorry for him because I had no idea what kind of a person he was.*

## CAST

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CAST	ZUZANA MAURÉRY ATTILA MOKOS ANNA RAKOVSKÁ EVA KRAMEROVÁ KAROL ŠIMON JUDITA HANSMAN IGOR HRABINSKÝ RÉKA DERZSI ANITA SZVRCSEK JOSEFÍNA BORECKÁ MIRKA GRIMALDI
PRODUCTION MANAGER	INGRID HODÁLOVÁ MARGARETA ABENA
CASTING	KLAUS KELLERMANN PAVEL REJHOLEC
SOUND	VLADIMÍR GODÁR KATARÍNA HOLLÁ
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY	LUCIE LIŠKOVÁ
COSTUME DESIGNER	OLINA KAUFMANOVÁ
MAKEUP	FRANTIŠEK LIPTÁK
EDITOR	MARTIN ŠTRBA
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	MAREK LEŠČÁK AND MARTIN ŠULÍK
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	RUDOLF BIERMANN
WRITTEN BY	MARTIN ŠULÍK BRUNO WAGNER
PRODUCERS	MARTIN ŠULÍK
DIRECTED BY	

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2018 | Slovak Republic-Czech Republic-Austria | 113 min  
HD QT / 2K DCP | sound 5.1 | in German & Slovak

