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Uz Zase Skacu Pres Kaluze

("I'm Jumping Over Puddles Again")

Czechoslovakia : 1970 : dir. Karel Kachyna :

: 92 min

prod:

: scr: Ota Hofman & Karel Kachyna : dir.ph.: Josef Illik

[Vladimir Dlouhy](#)

Karel Hlusicka; Zdena Hadrbovcova; Vladimir Smeral

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
3510a	2.5	4	2	1,071	3	3	3	7	7	No	Pre 1990



Riding lessons sometimes come very dear Source: *Moving Picture Boy*

The Time Out Film Guide review:

"About a young boy's passion for horses, his paralysis from polio, and subsequent triumph over his handicap by learning to ride. Village life of the period (just before World War I) is well evoked, and the boy's relationship to his wastrel father, anxious mother, and the somewhat scornful village kids is treated with some feeling. It's a whimsical, rather drowsy film, overlaid with an unfortunate technical

tricksiness and an insistent music score. Unexpectedly, it improves enormously with the boy's illness and his feverish hallucinations in hospital. Later, treated with a nicely quirky sense of humour, neither his crippled state nor his determination to overcome it are trivialised. Altogether a bit of an oddity, pleasant and irritating in equal proportions as it avoids the obvious pitfalls and then falls flat where least expected."

NFT bulletin - August/September '72 - review:

“ **"JUMPING OVER PUDDLES AGAIN"** (Czechoslovakia 1970) is a heartwarming but unsentimental story about a boy living on a stud-farm during the Austro-Hungarian Empire days. Struck down by polio, he succeeds in learning to ride and eventually walk again through his intense desire to ride horses. Based on a book by Australian writer Allan Marshall and photographed in colour and wide screen.”

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Dlouhy:

“Vladimir is best remembered for his role as the polio-stricken boy who learns to ride horses, in a Czech version of *"I Can Jump Puddles"* by the Australian Allan Marshall. Although much of the film is dangerously sentimental, the boy's courage is touchingly rendered. Vladimir Dlouhy continued to win leading roles, in films like **"OSTROV STRIBRNYCH VOLAVEK"** (76), **"SESTAPADESAT NEOMLUVENYCH HODIN"** (77) and **"HOP... A JE TU LIDOO!"** (77).”

International Film Guide 1972 review:

“The director Karel Kachyna and the writer Jan Prochzka, who before his recent death belonged to the prominent personalities of “the Prague Spring”, were an inseparable team for many years. Therefore it seemed that Karel Kachyna would share the lot of those directors whose non-conformist past brought them banishment and unemployment. Already his **"MAN OF THE STREET"** (1969) has been accepted only grudgingly and his last but one film **"THE EAR"** (1970) has been swiftly banned. It was therefore quite a surprise that in the same year his name cropped up again.

He skirted official disapproval by choosing a juvenile theme for his new film. Even in the preceding years he often concerned himself with young or adolescent heroes (his greatest success having been **"STRESS OF YOUTHS"**, a Czech version of **"THE WHITE MANE"** by Lamorisse ¹), and now this previous rich experience proved useful to him: in co-operation with the best author of the juvenile stories, Ota Hofman, he re-shaped for the

screen a book by an Australian author, Allan Marshall, entitled *"I Can Jump Puddles"*.

Published in 1956, this is an autobiographical story of a little boy whose father is employed as a horse-trainer in a manorial stud-farm. The boy is afflicted with polio, after some time overcomes the illness, and finally “he jumps over the puddles again” - on horseback. The belle époque radiates from the costumes, the props and the supplementary art designs by Ester Krumbachová, while the social setting remains unchanged, only the South Moravian country replacing the Australian prairie. The film does not represent any new artistic achievement. Its main qualities lie in its universal ethical argument, in the non-sentimental approach to the subject, and in the colour camerawork of Josef Illík, especially excellent in the country scenes. Kachyna's direction gives the film the tone of a poetic memory. The enthusiastic management of Československý Filmexport offered the film to Cannes, but the French refused it; they wanted **"THE EAR"...**

[no listing in “Classic Foreign Films from 1960 to Today”, “Halliwell's Film Guide”, “Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001”, “Speelfilm Encyclopedie”, “The Critics' Film Guide”, “The Good Film and Video Guide”, “The International Encyclopedia of Film”, “Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89”, “A Pictorial History of the Talkies”, “Rating the Movies (1990)”, “The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television”, “TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995”, “Variety Movie Guide 1993”, “Video Movie Guide 1993” or “The Virgin Film Guide”]

¹ See **"CRIN BLANC"**



Source: indeterminate

Another fine film consigned to the wastebin of cinema history by the flood of inferior titles which has followed it. Note the profusion of approximated English titles – "I CAN JUMP PUDDLES", "JUMPING OVER PUDDLES AGAIN" etc. The one I've given is, if memory serves, the way the film itself is subtitled. Director Kachyna established a reputation – like Philip Leacock in the UK, Truffaut in France, or Spielberg in the States – for his empathy in working with children. The boy here (Dlouhy was 11) has extracted a promise from his father that he'll teach him to ride just as soon as he's old enough to spring up onto a paddock fence. Despite a ferocious beating from his virago of a mother, the boy dedicates himself to accomplishing this goal, and finally, in frustration at his smallness, rigs the test by raising the level of the paddock near the fence. Immersing himself in a lake in deep winter to escape a mob of local bullies, he contracts the paralysis which seems to defeat his horseriding ambitions for life but, as the title suggests, he surmounts this obstacle too with the support of his patient, matter-of-fact father. Other details are vague to me now, but it's a prime example of Czech children's cinema, and was widely praised abroad on its initial release.

Recommended.

Dlouhy's follow-up films – also courtesy of Holmstrom – were "**POCKAM, AZ ZABIJES**" ("I'll Wait, You Kill Him", 72), "**KVOCNY A KRAL**" ("Hens and a King", 73), "**OSUD JMENEM KAMILA**" ("Fate, alias Camilla", 73), "**ROBINSONKA**" ("Girl Crusoe", 74) and "**PLAVENI HRIBAT**" ("Foals in the River", 76).

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