



Charter, Dinner in America, and Exile brought home the Prague IFF – Febiofest 2021 trophies

The closing ceremony on Thursday 23 September marked the culmination of the 28th Prague IFF – Febiofest. The Swedish film **Charter** about a mother fighting for her children won the **Main Competition**. The jury decided to award a Special Mention to the film **Listen**, which tells the story of a Portuguese family living on the outskirts of London. **Dinner in America** was selected by an audience jury as the best comedy in the **Comedy Competition**. The **Amnesty International Febiofest Award 2021** went to **Exile**, a film which reflects on issues around immigration and integration. The jury of this section was also impressed by the hopeful story of an Iranian family in Finland **Any Day Now**, and the jurors decided to award a Special Mention. The gala evening at Cinema City Slovanský dům ended with a screening of the Oscar-winning drama **The Father** with Anthony Hopkins playing the role of the protagonist.

"Prague IFF – Febiofest 2021 unambiguously showed that film fans love coming back to the cinemas, despite various restrictions, and that they want to have fun – our Comedy Competition was immensely popular this year. Many screenings were introduced personally by the creators of those films, and many were followed by Q&A sessions with the audience, who showed great perceptiveness and curiosity. We're very happy that we managed to keep the off-line version of the festival, because that is simply irreplaceable: the festival is not only about watching the films – the shared experience, the chance to meet the filmmakers, to reflect on the films together, are all also an integral part of what makes the festival great. And fortunately, we did have all of this in the end," said Marta Švecová Lamperová, the Executive and Artistic Director of Prague IFF – Febiofest.

The Prague part of this year's Febiofest is over, but the **Febiofest Regions Tour** is in full swing. Viewers in Prostějov, Hradec Králové, Olomouc, České Budějovice, Brno, Beroun, Děčín, Zlín, Liberec, and Ostrava will have further opportunities to experience the best of current cinema; the Regions programme will be closed at a Closing Ceremony in Ostrava on 8 October with a screening of **Karel**.

Main Competition

The jury, consisting of three seasoned professionals – Slovakian filmmaker Ivan Ostrochovský, whose *Servants* won the Main Competition last year, Iranian filmmaker Mahnaz Mohammadi, the director of *Son-Mother*, with which she won last year's Amnesty International Febiofest Award, and Czech actor and screenwriter Jiří Mádľ – chose the winner from seven selected contestants.

The winning film **Charter** is the second feature by Amanda Kernell. It was screened at Sundance, before winning Swedish Guldbagge Film Awards for direction, cinematography and best actress for Ane Dahl Torp. *Charter tells a common story with*

unmatched mastery. The tension never drops, the film brings a new impulse, a new angle, at every step, driving the story forward until the very last moment," the jury stated. Jiří Mádl and Mahnaz Mohammadi added: *"Amanda Kernell knows what she wants to say and how to articulate it to the audience. The film is about a woman in a system that has its flaws; the system and rules we developed to help us, but at times they simply fail to treat us fairly."*

The jury awarded a Special Mention to the authors of ***Listen***, a social drama which won its Portuguese director Ana Rocha De Sousa the award for Best Debut at last year's Venice Film Festival, among many other awards. *"This film shows a serious clash of an individual with a system that works as a supernatural power in the Western world, which fancies itself just, fair and children-friendly. It reveals a hidden evil born out of good intentions. It is very important to make films which hold the mirror up to our society without holding back, even if it might be painful,"* Jiří Mádl commented.

"No matter where in the world one is, whether in the Middle East, where religion and politics dictate what you do with your body, or in Scandinavia among the most fortunate people in the world – being a woman is agonizing when you cannot be yourself," concluded Mahnaz Mohammadi, an acclaimed filmmaker and prominent women's rights activist.

Comedy Competition

The thirty-three members of the audience jury, presided over by honorary chairman Michael Kocáb, chose the funny yet sensitive portrait of two uprooted souls ***Dinner in America*** as the best among the six competing films. *Dinner in America* is only the fourth film directed by the experienced cameraman Adam Carter Rehmeier. The jury appreciated his original, dynamic take on the topic of social outsiders, difference and superficiality, as well as excellent acting by the cast.

Amnesty International Febiofest Award

For the sixth time already, films dealing with freedom, human rights, freedom of expression and the struggle for a life lived in dignity have been selected across all Febiofest programme sections to compete for this award. This year's jurors – cellist Terezie Vodička Kovalová, film director Vít Klusák, and head of human rights education at Amnesty International Czech Republic Jiří Bejček – took a joint decision on the winner: Visar Morina's ***Exile***, a film which was seen at Sundance, had a successful show at the 2020 Berlinale, and represented Kosovo at the Academy Awards. The jury appreciated the way this psycho-social horror, sophisticated in the best sense of the word, leads viewers from the topic of social prejudice to individual responsibility. *Exile* is an experience on all levels: fantastic in terms of acting, visuals, music, cinematography, directing.

The jury of the Amnesty International Febiofest Award 2021 also decided to award a Special Mention to *Any Day Now*. Finnish-Iranian director Hamy Ramezan's feature



debut is inspired by his own experience of an Iranian family living in Finland. *"This is a tender, even intimate film, which I intend to use to open up the topic of refugees with my children – that is, the topic of the power and powerlessness of those who come to our comfortable continent, Europe, in the hope of building a dignified life for themselves, and still we don't welcome them, even though we have all the means to do so,"* noted Vít Klusák, one of the jurors.

You Are the Filmmaker

The topic for this year's amateur short film competition was "My City". The winners were chosen by a panel of five jurors: Honza Mikulka, Jan Faltus, Janek Rubeš, Jitka Kotrlová and Andrea Vohralíková. The jury was impressed by the amateur filmmakers' efforts to overcome the difficult situation – the pandemic made collective work nearly impossible, yet they managed to find creative ways of capturing their hometowns.

In the individual category, the first place, with a 20 000 CZK prize, was won by Sofie Mayorga for her film **Homemade**. The jury appreciated its playfulness, attention to detail, and captivating portrayal of loneliness and separation. The second place went to Lenka Štěpánková and Lucie Mandová and their **My Town – Prague's 6th District**, an innovative and open take on the positives as well as negatives of public space. The duo won a prize of 10 000 CZK. František Šusta won the third place and 5000 CZK for his witty portrait of his hometown **Senohraby**. Finalists in the individual category also had the opportunity to attend a documentary filmmaking workshop by the My Street Films platform.

In the category of student teams, the first place and 30 000 CZK for educational activities in internet and media literacy went to the Kolín V. elementary school and its humorous film **The Kolín Dragon**, whose balanced play with cinematic form impressed the jury. The second-place winners were a team of students from the Osmička elementary school, who produced a visually strong tour of their city called **Frýdek=Místek**. The Ostrava Secondary School for Arts won third place for their imaginative teamwork on **My City Is...**

The winners of the You Are the Filmmaker competition were announced on Wednesday 22 September at Cinema City Slovanský dům, where a screening of all winning films also took place. The competition is sponsored by O2 Smart School.

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