

# V4

The Embassies of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia  
present the film project  
**HUMOR AS RESISTANCE: LIFE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN**

## History of Visegrad Four (V4):

The Visegrad Group, also known as the Visegrad Four or simply V4, is an alliance of four Central European countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia – created in 1991. These countries have always been part of a single civilization sharing cultural and intellectual values and common roots, which they wish to preserve and further strengthen. Its activities aim at fostering stability in the region, presenting common ideas at various international fora, and encouraging optimum cooperation among them as well as with other countries. The Czech Republic is currently holding the rotating presidency of the V4.

V4 presents the film project *Humor as Resistance: Life Behind the Iron Curtain*. Each embassy will feature a film that uses humor shaped by the cultural and political elements of the country's history as an outlet of expression. The films explore such themes as the conflict between the idealism of the West, depicted through cool, carefree, rebellious characters, contrasted against the backdrop of the overbearing communist regime, presented as boring, too structured, and oppressive. Rock 'n' roll music, an American accent, boots from the West, music legends such as Elvis and Buddy Holly, all serve as a means to rebel against the system. These stories depict characters yearning to break out of the mundane, find love, and realize their dreams. However, the watchful eye of the communists looms in the background...

The project incorporates a short introduction explaining key cultural and historical elements of the film presented by an Embassy representative. The film screenings are followed by Q&A sessions and a reception.

## FILM SCREENINGS:

May 17, 7 pm: *Cosy Dens* (*Pelišky*) at the Embassy of the Czech Republic

May 22, 7 pm: *Made in Hungaria* (*Made in Hungária*) at the Embassy of Hungary

May 31, 7 pm: *Kingsize* (*Kingsajz*) at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland

June 7, 7 pm: *Music* (*Muzika*) at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic



## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

*Cosy Dens* (*Pelišky*)

Directed by: Jan Hřebejk

1999, 116 min., in Czech with English subtitles

**Synopsis:** The film centers on the lives of two families living side by side, the Šebeks and Krauses. As the film opens, it is Christmas 1967, only months before Soviet tanks roll into Czechoslovakia. Mr. Šebek is a loyal supporter of the regime, while Mr. Kreus, a decorated World War II resistance fighter and Czech nationalist, is staunchly anti-Soviet. The two men constantly argue and their wives try to keep the peace. The children regard the heated arguments as boring and predictable and attempt to get on with their lives. Mr. and Mrs. Šebek's contemplative teenage son Michal becomes infatuated with Mr. and Mrs. Kreus's expressive and euphoric daughter Jindriska, who is more interested in the much cooler Elian, who has long hair, loves the Beatles, and wears American boots. In the end, each member of both families must live out his own story in his own "cozy den" until the Soviet invasion of August 1968 violently disturbs their world.

For a preview of the film, please visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YWpcGkmZAY>

Location: Embassy of the Czech Republic, 3900 Spring of Freedom Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008

RSVP: [czech\\_events@yahoo.com](mailto:czech_events@yahoo.com) | Please put "Cozy Dens" in the subject line.



## HUNGARY

*Made in Hungaria*

Directed by: Gergely Fonyó, 2009, 109 min., in Hungarian with English subtitles

**Synopsis:** Miklós Fenyő's parents returned to communist Hungary in the mid sixties—when everyone else was fleeing to the West. For young Miki, arriving from America sporting a Hawaiian shirt, a perfect quiff and a rebellious streak, life under dictatorship was going to be tough. Miki's old friends don't know what to make of his outrageous clothes, flawless American accent, and collection of original Buddy Holly 45s. His childhood sweetheart is cold and distant while local tough guy Róné is unmoved by the challenger to his rock 'n' roll crown. But that's not all. When the authorities see the effect Miki's gyrating hips and lewd music have on teenage girls, they won't stand for it. His father's job is on the line, and, for the first time, Miki must play by the rules. He has no choice but to enter the local talent show—and the rest is rock 'n' roll history.

For a preview of the film, check out: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiDULNFpagg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiDULNFpagg)

Location: Embassy of Hungary, 2950 Spring of Freedom Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008

RSVP: [rsvp.was@mfa.gov.hu](mailto:rsvp.was@mfa.gov.hu)



## POLAND

*Kingsize (Kingsajz)*

Directed by: Juliusz Machulski, 1988, 105 min., in Polish with English subtitles

**Synopsis:** This fantasy film follows a young scientist living in Poland of the 80s, who actually came from the world of dwarves, thanks to a magic potion held by the Big Eater, ruler of the dwarves. The dwarf kingdom, Shuflandia, exists in the cellar of the Quaternary Research Institute, and only the most obedient dwarves get the chance to grow to king size and inhabit the larger world. "Kingsajz" is a name of a world of human-sized men in opposition to the

Shuflandia where everything is miniature and mediocre. For Shuflandia's dwarves, the Kingsajz world is like an unreachable dream of a free, colorful, happy, rich and fun country of king-sized dimension. Once there, nobody wants to return to Shuflandia's authoritarian regime. *Kingsajz* is considered to be one of the best Polish comedies and also one of the socially significant pictures of the 80s. The movie is a strong and evident allegory of the communist regime imposed in Poland.

For a preview to the film, please visit <http://film.onet.pl/wideo/kingsajz-zwiastun-2,32048,w.html> (The preview is in Polish only.)

Location: Embassy of the Republic of Poland, 2640 16 Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009

RSVP: [washington.culture@msz.gov.pl](mailto:washington.culture@msz.gov.pl)



## SLOVAKIA

*Music (Muzika)*

Directed by: Juraj Nvota, 2007, 99 min., in Slovak with English subtitles

**Synopsis:** This tragicomic story about a man's quest for freedom takes place in the 1980s. Martin, a young man, feels a gnawing frustration with his life. He is manipulated by his wife's family and his thick coworkers at the water company. The dullness of everyday life brings him down and this existential feeling gets stronger when he hears good jazz music. He yearns for it and believes that he would be good at it if it were not for the iron curtain. Meanwhile, his wife is pregnant and his mother-in-law thinks he is an incompetent fool that should have better use for his time than playing jazz on his saxophone at the family house, which drives his brother-in-law crazy. His wife fears for him because the communists arrest long-haired musicians. Martin leaves his job after playing his saxophone at a family wedding, even performing a wedding church song for his wife which surprises everyone. Although it is not jazz music, he sets out to earn money playing at weddings and other parties. Then, he meets and falls in love with Anca, a rebellious seventeen-year-old girl, and his dream of jazz music and playing in night clubs is reignited.

For a preview of the film, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jld64MngDNc> (The preview is in Slovak only.)

Location: Embassy of the Slovak Republic, 3523 International Court, NW, Washington DC 20008

RSVP: [emb.washington@mzv.sk](mailto:emb.washington@mzv.sk)