

A man in a dark blue uniform and cap, looking upwards with a slight smile, standing in a snowy environment. The background shows snow-covered trees and a wooden structure.

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# CALAMITY

FILM BY VĚRA CHYTILOVÁ

BACK ON SCREENS

Following an enforced seven-year hiatus and a period at Krátký film, Věra Chytilová was able to return to Barrandov at the end of the 1970s. She made two bitterly funny morality tales, *Panelstory aneb Jak se rodí sídliště / Panelstory or Birth of a Community* (1979) and *Kalamita / Calamity* (1980) at almost the same time. *Kalamita* focuses on a young university graduate, Honza (Boleslav Polívka), who starts working for the railway. He is not yet accustomed to the rules of his new environment, and his unpreparedness highlights the conformism and stereotypes around him. In the process, he reveals the lack of capable leadership, and so the dysfunctionality of the whole system. The culmination of the hero's initiation is his first train journey as the driver, during which the tracks are hit by an avalanche. A higher power intervenes in petty personal conflicts, forcing the complacent citizens to abandon their safe positions. A higher power also intervened during the filming of *Kalamita*, which took place under the watchful eye of the censors in five stages during the winter of 1978 and 1979. The flu epidemic and problems with the weather meant that filming had to come to a complete halt. Chytilová used the resulting free time to make *Panelstory*. Only afterwards did she return to *Kalamita*. While this biting parable on the moral apathy of Czechoslovak society was approved and released in cinemas after a number of edits were made, there was no advertising campaign for it. Audience interest was nevertheless so great that it led to screenings being prohibited in Prague.

Czechoslovakia 1980 • 96 min. • comedy • DCP, MP4, Bluray, DVD • accessible

Director	Věra Chytilová
Screenplay	Josef Šilhavý, Věra Chytilová
Photography	Ivan Šlapeta
Set designer	Bohumil Pokorný
Editing	Jiří Brožek
Cast	Boleslav Polívka, Dagmar Bláhová, Jana Synková, Zdeněk Svěrák, Václav Švorc and others

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