

# CZECH the News

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Vol. 3, 2007

## Contents:

Message from the Ambassador.....	2
Visa Waiver Program Modernizing.....	2
Bush Unveils Victims of Communism Memorial.....	3
Embassy Adopts Animals.....	3
Czech Republic Ranks High in World Democracies.....	3
Wilson Monument Returning to Prague Train Station.....	3
Prague and Chicago Celebrate Czech Culture.....	4
Say It in Czech—Czech Festival in Nebraska.....	4
Czech Students Intern in Washington.....	5
Czechs and Americans Cooperate on Nanospider Research.....	5
New Diplomat Welcomed.....	5
Did You Know?.....	5
Transformation—The Making of an Artist: Marta Topferova.....	6
Plastics Return, Rendezvous at the Black Cat.....	7
Bengas Blends Romany Music in Eclectic Soup for the Soul.....	8
Czech Organist Plays Dvorak for Czech National Day.....	8
Czech Wins Art Fellowship.....	8
Academy Award Winning Czech Director to Present Washington Premiere.....	9
Avalon Theatre Partners with Embassy for Second Season.....	10
Czech Photographer Opens Panorama Exhibition.....	10
Upcoming Czech Events in the U.S.....	10
Fall Fashion Show at Embassy.....	11
Embassy Announces Fall Cultural Season 2007.....	11
Newsletter Goes Electronic.....	12

## Holocaust Rescuers Recognized in Congress

On July 31, 2007, the Office of Congressman Tom Lantos conducted an open forum in the U.S. Congress to honor Nicholas Winton and Raoul Wallenberg, two men who saved the lives of thousands of European Jews before and during World War II. Mrs. Annette Lantos, wife of Congressman Tom Lantos, herself a Holocaust survivor saved by Wallenberg, moderated the event.

Sir Nicholas Winton was a 29-year-old English stockbroker when he saved the lives of 669 Jewish and non-Jewish Czechoslovak children during the months before the outbreak of World War II. Mr. Winton recently celebrated his 98th birthday in his native England where he lives today. Raoul Wallenberg, a Swede, saved an estimated 100,000 Hungarian Jews over the course of the war, and subsequently perished in the Soviet prison system during the

Cold War era.

The Forum included a 20-minute screening of the documentary “The Power of Good” which chronicles the story of Nicholas Winton saving the 669 Czechoslovak children and highlights the lives some of them went on to live. It also featured a 7-minute clip from the television show “60 Minutes” about Wallenberg’s rescue efforts that included Mrs. Lantos recounting her personal story and discussing Wallenberg’s post-war fate. Several guest speakers discussed their personal experiences with the two rescuers.

Mr. Peter Rafaeli, Honorary Consul General of the Czech Republic in Philadelphia, PA, spoke of Winton’s extraordinary



Deputy Chief of Mission Jaroslav Kurfurst and Czech Honorary Consul General Peter A. Rafaeli speak at the forum.

accomplishments achieved through Winton’s personal philosophy that anything can be accomplished as long as it is not absolutely impossible.

Jaroslav Kurfurst, Deputy Ambassador of the Czech Republic, spoke of Winton’s heroism and compassion toward humanity despite that Winton does not consider himself a hero. Mr. Kurfurst attended the event on behalf of Czech Ambassador Petr Kolar who was unable to attend.

*Continued on page 12*

## Bush Visits Prague

On his way to the June G-8 Summit in Germany, U.S. President Bush spent 2 days in Prague this summer meeting with President Vaclav Klaus, Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, and other Czech government officials. In discussions at Prague Castle, both Czech leaders reiterated their support for the U.S. missile defense system and the plans, currently under negotiation, for the Czech Republic to host a radar component of that system. They also urged Bush to do away with the visa requirement for Czech citizens wishing to visit the United States. Bush pledged to continue working with the U.S. Congress to remove the visa



U.S. President George W. Bush at Prague conference

requirement, which Topolánek called “unjust.”

Following his meetings at Prague Castle, President Bush delivered a speech at the Democracy and Security Conference, attended by dissidents, academicians, and politicians. There he defended U.S. efforts to encourage

democracy around the world saying that “every time people are given a choice, they choose freedom.” He praised the Czech Republic and other countries that have “recently felt the shadow of tyranny” for supporting the cause of freedom. In recognition of the successful return of government control to the Czech people, Bush highlighted the Czechs’ historical appreciation of democracy, saying “People, your government has returned to you,” recalling the quote attributed to the 17th century Czech philosopher Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius), and echoed by both Tomas Garrigue Masaryk and Vaclav Havel when they assumed presidency of a newly free Czechoslovakia. 🇨🇪

Photo courtesy of John Cooper

Photo courtesy of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Photo courtesy of Chad Wyatt

## Message from the Ambassador

### Dear Friends,

With summer vacations behind us and many interesting fall activities starting to demand our attention, I would like to reflect briefly on some of the summer highlights in Czech-U.S. relations. As many of you know, visa equality with the United States has been a top priority of Czech foreign policy and an ongoing issue during my tenure as ambassador. Over the last year, through a campaign conducted by American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR), many of you contacted your members of Congress asking them to include the Czech Republic and the other new European Union member states in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Your efforts have helped. In August 2007 President Bush signed new legislation that changes the requirements for VWP inclusion (see full story below). The majority of these changes involve modernizing and standardizing travel security measures between countries, although

certain stipulations that previously kept some of the closest U.S. allies out of the VWP unfortunately still remain. Overall, this new legislation is a step in the right direction and I am grateful for your ongoing support.

Other good news from the U.S. Congress is a congressional resolution to honor Nicholas Winton, the Englishman who saved 669 Czechoslovak children before the outbreak of World War II. Resolution 583, introduced by Congressman Ron Klein of Florida and backed by Congressman Tom Lantos of California, was approved in July by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and will go to the House floor for debate this fall. The same day, Mrs. Annette Lantos, wife of Congressman Lantos and a Holocaust survivor herself, chaired a forum to honor both Mr. Winton and Raoul Wallenberg, the Swede who saved over 100,000 Hungarian Jews during World War II. (see story page 1). Mr. Peter Rafaeli, the Czech Honorary Consul General in Philadelphia, was pivotal in introducing the Winton story to the U.S. Congress and I am grateful for his efforts. Other summer highlights include the unveiling of the Memorial to the Victims of Communism in June attended by President George Bush and Czech Senator Martin Mejstrik, who came to Washington especially for the unveiling and its related events (see story page 3). Prague Mayor Pavel Bem also visited the United States this summer to support and attend the Prague Days in Chicago festival (see story page 4).

Looking ahead, our fall cultural season has many wonderful events to offer. Among the highlights are a September concert by the legendary Czech rock band Plastic People of the Universe, and a November concert by the Czech-born, New York-based singer and musician Marta Topferova. Plastic People, who symbolized resistance to Czechoslovakia's communist regime, will perform their unique style of rock, while Topferova and her band will bring a Latin flavor to the Embassy. Ms. Topferova, described as a "leading light" of the *nueva canción* movement of Latin America, personifies a bridge between the cultures of the Americas and Europe. She and her band will perform a mix of original songs in Spanish combined with selections from her Czech folk music CD, *Homage to Homeland* (please see Ms. Topferova's story on page 6). Also this fall, the world-renowned Czech film director Jiri Menzel will attend the European Film Showcase in the Washington metropolitan area to screen his latest film "I Served the King of England." For a full list of fall cultural events, please see page 11. I look forward to seeing all of you this fall.

Warmly,

Petr Kolar



## Visa Waiver Program Modernizing

On August 3, 2007, President George Bush signed Homeland Security Bill H. R. 1, "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007" that contains new legislation for Visa Waiver Program (VWP) participation and increases U.S. security. Specifically the legislation establishes a new electronic travel authorization system to improve security for visitors from countries participating in the VWP as well as those awaiting participation. While H.R. 1 potentially enables inclusion of the Czech Republic in the VWP, some new European Union member states will still have to wait to qualify for visa equal-

ity with the United States. President Bush has said he will continue to work with Congress to provide more flexibility to bring these closest U.S. allies into the program.

In response to the new legislation, the Washington embassies of six members of the Coalition for Visa Equality released the following joint statement:

The Embassies of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia appreciate the bipartisan efforts of the U.S. Administration and Members of both chambers of Congress to modernize and expand the United States Visa Waiver Program through provi-



sions in H.R. 1, "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007," recently signed by President Bush.

We believe that these provisions are a step in the right direction. Nevertheless, the legislation does not fully meet our expectations due to its reliance on visa refusal rates as a criterion for program participation. As a result, some of America's closest allies will still be subject to artificial barriers that do not reflect their deep level of commitment and engagement in enhancing transatlantic and

global security.

We will continue to work for a visa policy that recognizes our common security, economic, and foreign policy goals. As members of the European Union and firm allies of the United States, we believe that success in this endeavor is a critical tool in strengthening our transatlantic alliance without differentiating between EU member states. We are committed to working with the U.S. Administration and Congress to achieve a solution that will allow for visa-free travel to the U.S. for our citizens.





## Bush Unveils Victims of Communism Memorial

U.S. President George Bush officially dedicated the Victims of Communism Memorial at an unveiling ceremony in Washington, DC, on June 12, 2007. The memorial, a statue of the “Goddess of Democracy,” modeled on the statue created by Chinese students during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, was partially funded by the Czech government. Ambassador Petr Kolar and Czech Senator Martin Mejstrik, who came from Prague especially for the event, represented the Czech Republic at the unveiling.

The goal of the memorial is to remind the public of the

atrocities committed by the world’s communist regimes, to honor those who resist these regimes, and to inform future generations about the threat of tyranny. In his dedication speech, Bush referenced Czech literature saying, “the Czech writer Milan Kundera once described the struggle against communism as ‘the struggle of memory against forgetting,’” and added, “Communist regimes did more than take their victims’ lives; they sought to steal their humanity and erase their memory. With this memorial, we restore their humanity and we reclaim their memory.”

The number of victims

of communism is estimated at more than 100 million worldwide. The Czech Office for the Documentation and Investigation of the Crimes of Communism (UDV) documents 234 executions for political reasons under the communist regime in Czechoslovakia (1948–89) and another 4,000 deaths in concentration camps and prisons. Several hundred died attempting to leave Czechoslovakia illegally and thousands more were interned in Czechoslovak communist jails

and labor camps. In total, nearly 250,000 Czechs and Slovaks left the country and 300,000 others were subjected to persecution at work or in their studies. For more information, go to [www.victimsofcommunism.org](http://www.victimsofcommunism.org).



U.S. President George W. Bush at the Victims of Communism Memorial dedication

Photo courtesy of Daniel Nony

## Embassy Adopts Animals

As part of its ongoing campaign to promote democracy and human rights around the world, the Embassy of the Czech Republic adopted two animals, both reptiles,



The Burmese python and the Cuban crocodile

Photos courtesy of the National Zoo

at the Washington National Zoo, in Washington, DC. The Cuban crocodile, an endangered species, and the Burmese python are indigenous to countries where the Czech Republic is actively involved in improving quality of life and returning full human rights to citizens. By adopting and

supporting these animals, the Embassy of the Czech Republic strives to raise awareness of the international effort to return free will and self-governance to the people of Burma and Cuba, and to show solidarity for the stewardship of all their inhabitants.

## Czech Republic Ranks High in World Democracies

The Czech Republic ranks number 18 on the World Democracy Index just behind the United States at number 17. Each year, the London-based Intelligence Unit of The Economist surveys the world’s democracies and ranks them based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. The condition of having free and fair competitive elections and satisfying other related aspects of political freedom are the basic requirements to be considered a true democracy. The World Democracy Index, which provides an overview of the current state of democracy worldwide, surveys 165 independent states and 2 territories and covers almost the entire population of the world (27 micro-states are excluded).

For more information and to view the full index, go to [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com).



## Wilson Monument Returning To Prague Train Station

A monument to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson will return to the main Prague train station that bears his name. The Prague City Council approved the restoration plan in August 2007 and the monument is slated to be unveiled in 2009. “We want to rebuild the monument for many different reasons. Firstly, because of our respect for Woodrow Wilson, and, secondly, because of respect for our friends in the United States and for our emigrants,” said Prague Mayor Pavel Bem.

The original Wilson Monument, which stood facing the Wilson Station, was dedicated on July 4, 1928. Albin Polasek,

the Moravian-born sculptor who later headed the sculpture department at the Art Institute of Chicago, created the larger-than-life-sized bronze. Its granite base was inscribed with the Wilson quote, “The world must be made safe for democracy” in both Czech and English. The first statue of an American president in Prague, it was destroyed by the Nazis in 1941 during their occupation of Czechoslovakia. The original site of the monument also was altered by construction during the communist era. The Prague City Council is considering three alternative locations near the train station for the new statue, which will be an exact replica of



Wilson Railway Station in Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1928

Photo courtesy of the Prague City Council



Original Wilson Monument dedicated on July 4, 1928

Photo courtesy of Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Garden in Winter Park, FL

the original.

American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) is leading the Wilson Monument effort as a followup to their initiative that erected the Tomas Masaryk Memorial in Washington, DC, in 2002. Robert Doubek, project director of the Wilson Monument and

AFoCR director, summarized the initiative, “The Wilson Monument in Prague, as the counterpart of the Masaryk Memorial in Washington, will complete the symbolization of the long-standing ties of friendship and joint democratic values shared by the American and Czech peoples.”



## Prague and Chicago Celebrate Czech Culture

During June 2007 Chicagoans were treated to “Prague Days in Chicago,” a month-long festival of Czech culture that celebrated the importance of Czech historical contributions to the city of Chicago. Numerous venues in the metropolitan area hosted events showcasing Czech music, fine arts, film, business, tourism, and the history of Czech immigrants in Chicago. The festival included concerts, exhibitions, screenings, and seminars by celebrated Czech artists and musicians as well as noted business and governmental leaders. Among the honored guests who attended festivities throughout the month were Czech Ambassador to the United States Petr Kolar, Prague Mayor Pavel Bem, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and his wife Maggie Daley, and former Illinois State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka.

Prague Days in Chicago commenced on June 5, 2007,

with Czech Day on Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago. Opening with a Czech flag-raising ceremony, Czech Day featured free performances by Czech pop-rock superstar David Koller and the Robert Balzar Jazz Trio. During the month-long celebration, thousands of guests attended more than two dozen events, which featured violinist Silvie Hessova, pianist Daniel Wiesner, painter

Jan Grimm, movie director Jan Hrebejk, sculptor David Cerny, graphic artist Oldrich Kulhanek, classical guitarist Vladislav Blaha, Ondrej Havelka and his Melody Makers, and many others. Prague Days culminated with the Golden Prague Gala on June 29 and the rededication of Cermak Road on June 30. Cermak Road, named for Czech-born Chicago mayor Anton Cermak, is only one example of the rich historical ties between Czechs and Ameri-



From left: Edward Dellin – Prague Committee Chair of Chicago Sister Cities International Program, Pavel Bem – Mayor of Prague, Petr Kolar – Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Washington, Marek Skolil – Consul General of the Czech Republic in Chicago




David Cerny's sculpture "Man Hanging Out" in Chicago

Photo courtesy of the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago

cans in the Chicago area. Other famous Czech Chicagoans are football pioneer and Bears icon George Halas, former Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, astronaut Eugene Cernan, movie star Kim Novak, and McDonald's founder Ray Kroc.

Prague Days in Chicago co-sponsors and organizers include the City of Prague, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago, the Prague Committee of the Chicago Sister Cities International Program, and the Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events. Numerous other partners, among them the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and Czech-American organizations in the Chicago area, also contributed to the festival's success.

To read more about the Prague Days in Chicago festival, please go to [www.mzv.cz/chicago](http://www.mzv.cz/chicago). 



Ondrej Havelka and His Melody Makers perform at Prague Days in Chicago.

Photo courtesy of the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago

## Say It In Czech – Czech Festival in Nebraska

The aroma of kolache, traditional Czech pastries, was not the only palpable pleasantry in the air at the 46th annual Wilber Czech Festival, held in Wilber, Nebraska, August 3–5, 2007. Czech pride also could be felt in abundance as the town's population of 1,700 swelled to nearly 50,000 attendees who came to the “Czech Capital of the USA” to celebrate their Czech heritage and enjoy Czech culture, food, and drink. “The people here are more aware of their roots, and more aware of the beauty of their traditions,” said Nora Jurkovicova who traveled from Washington, DC, to represent the Czech Embassy at the Wilber festival this year, “Sometimes you have to travel very far from your homeland to learn more about yourself, your country, and your culture.”




Students in Nebraska celebrate the Czech Festival by dancing a polka.

Photo courtesy of Nora Jurkovicova

This year's festival theme “Say it in Czech” or “Rekni to Česky” celebrated the 100th year that the Czech language has been taught at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In addition to the Czech language, the festival also celebrated the 1,000-year history of the Czech lands with the Historical Pageant of the Czech People, a theatrical multimedia reenactment of Czech history. Another festival focus was

the annual Miss Czech-Slovak USA pageant, which Ms. Jurkovicova described as “something extremely unique. There were competitors from 10 States; the State queens were from all over the United States. They were wearing  *kroje* , or Czech national costumes, and were just beautiful. Of course they had to prove their intelligence, their knowledge, and their knowledge of Czech history as well.”

Nebraskan State Senator Russ Karpisek, one of the festival co-organizers and a member of the alumni band that marches in the festival parade each year summarized the festival saying, “There are lots of polkas, and fun and dancing. Just everything that you could want to do, there's everything going on.” Sheryl Kastanek, also a co-organizer and the secretary of the Nebraska Czechs of Wilber, was ready to plan the next festival before the dust from this year's had settled. “When Monday morning comes, when the festival is over, we start taking new notes for the next year and try to decide how to make the next festival better,” she said. The 47th Wilber Czech Festival will take place August 1–3, 2008.

For more information, go to [www.ci.wilber.ne.us](http://www.ci.wilber.ne.us). 



## Czech Students Intern in Washington



Photo courtesy of Nora Jurkovicova

From left to right: Alexander Raiman, Petra Bartakova, Tereza Burianova, and Jiri Skoupy

Four Czech university students from Prague proved that they can compete and succeed in the international environment. All four attained highly prestigious internships in Washington, DC, through The Fund for American Studies (TFAS). Each year TFAS brings together students from around the world for an intensive academic and cross-cultural experience designed to instill an appreciation for the American form of government and free enterprise. Participants in the Washington internship choose from four TFAS Institute specializations—Political Journalism, Business and Government Affairs, Comparative Political and Economic Systems, and Philanthropy and Voluntary Service.

Tereza Burianova and Jiri Skoupy from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles

University in Prague, and Petra Bartakova and Alexander Raiman from New York University in Prague participated in the 8-week internship program in Washington, DC, during summer 2007. “We all attend different Institutes according to our majors and interests. The content of classes and the type of internship depend on our Institute,” said Tereza Burianova who interned at WAMU Radio in the newsroom. Jiri Skoupy interned at the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Alexander Raiman at the Travel Industry Association, and Petra Bartakova at the Contract Services Association of America. In addition to their internship work, the students attended classes at Georgetown University and lived together in its facilities.

For more internship information, go to [www.tfasinternational.org](http://www.tfasinternational.org).

## New Diplomat Welcomed

Major General Emil Pupis is the new Defense, Military, and Air Attaché at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, DC, and the new Head of the Military Section. Prior to coming to Washington, Pupis served as Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic and as the Joint Operations Center Director. As a fighter pilot, his career includes commanding several fighter and fighter-bomber regiments and the Detached Air Reconnaissance Regiment of the Czech military. He also served as Chief of the Air Force Inspectors Section. A graduate of the Military Air College in Kosice, Pupis earned a postgraduate degree from the Military Academy in Brno, and studied at the Air War College



Photo courtesy of Major General Pupis

Major General Emil Pupis

in Alabama in 1999–2000. Major General Pupis holds a number of awards and decorations including the French Chevalier de la Legion D'Honneur, the State of Texas Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal, and the Cross of Merit of the Minister of the Czech Republic, among others. Pupis is accompanied in Washington by his wife Erika.

## Czechs and Americans Cooperate on Nanospider Research

The Liberec-based company Elmarco, the Czech leader in nanofiber technology and a member of the North Carolina Nonwoven Cooperative Research Center, will take part in a 6-month research program at North Carolina State University (NCSU), in Raleigh, NC. The joint project is planned to begin in fall 2007 at NCSU, which is ranked in the top 10 of U.S. universities in nanotechnology.

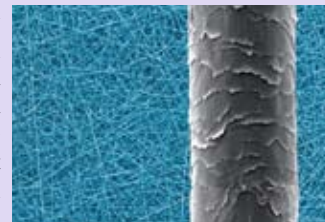


Photo courtesy of Elmarco

Nanofibers with human hair

Nanofibers, defined by the U.S. National Science Foundation as having at least one dimension of 100 nanometers (nm) or less, are microscopic fibers used to make nonwoven textiles widely utilized in filtration, healthcare, cosmetics, and the building and automotive industries, among others. The name derives from the nanometer, a scientific unit of measurement representing a billionth of a meter, or three to four atoms wide. The nonwoven textile industry considers nanofibers as having a diameter of less than one micron.

In cooperation with the Technical University of Liberec in the Czech Republic, Elmarco developed Nanospider technology, a modified electrospinning system which processes a wide range of polymers into nonwoven webs made of fibers 50–300 nm in diameter. During the electrospinning process, high voltage electricity is used to create and electrically charge a stream of polymer solution. The fibers are formed by an electrostatic field from a thin film of an aqueous or solvent solution and a wide range of other polymers. The advantages of Nanospider technology are the quality of its nanofiber material, its ease of servicing and cleaning, and its high production capacity. Elmarco already has supplied the Nanospider technology to several U.S. customers ranging from universities and commercial partners to the military. The goal of the joint project is to develop nanofiber materials using new polymers.

## Did You Know?

### • THE FIRST NANOFIBERS

Professor Oldrich Jirsak and his team from Liberec's Technical University were the first in the world to create a machine for the industrial production of nanofibers. Nanofibers are 1,000 times thinner than a human hair and are used in filtration systems, for hygienic purposes, and for sound absorption.

### • CZECH MUSIC ON THE MOON

American Neil Armstrong, the first man to step onto the surface of the moon as part of the 1969 Apollo mission, carried with him on the voyage a recording of Antonin Dvorak's 9th Symphony.

### • EINSTEIN AT CHARLES UNIVERSITY

Albert Einstein worked as a professor at Charles University in Prague at the turn of the 20th century.

### • CZECH PUCKS AT THE OLYMPICS

The Czech company Gufex was the exclusive supplier of ice hockey pucks for the 2006 Olympic Games in Turin and the 2006 World Championship in Latvia. The company sent upward of 10,000 hockey pucks to Turin, and was also the supplier of pucks for the Olympics in Nagano and Salt Lake City. Gufex owes its success to a unique technology and composition used in manufacturing—the pucks don't leave black marks on the ice.



Photo courtesy of Marta Topferova

Marta Topferova

## Transformation—The Making of an Artist: Marta Topferova

“Imagine your parents transform into other characters right in front of you,” says singer/songwriter and musician Marta Topferova remembering her upbringing in Czechoslovakia. The daughter of stage and film actors, Ms. Topferova’s early childhood was peopled with artists who counterbalanced the grayness of the Czech industrial cities where her parents worked in local theater with what Topferova describes as the “always somewhat strange and magical” world of rehearsals and performances. “I am grateful for growing up with art and a sense of creativity around me,” she says, “I also witnessed that it’s really hard work. And since my parents made a living doing it, I somehow had faith that I could do it too if I was dedicated.”

If her parents taught her artistic dedication, they also literally and figuratively set the stage for the transformative life that awaited her. When she was 6, they launched her into music with piano lessons, but Marta recalls, “I didn’t connect so well with the piano at that age, so nothing much came of it.” She studied languages—Russian then English, and when she was 8, her parents found a choir in Prague for her, which



Photos courtesy of Marta Topferova



she joined and discovered that she loved to sing and make music with a group. Her earliest musical influences were the Czech and Slovak folk songs she sang in choir, the occasional concert, and the artists in her parents’ record collection. Though small, it included the Beatles and an early favorite of Marta’s, the Chilean group Inti-Illimani, which instilled in her an attraction to Latin American and Spanish music. (Editor’s note: Inti-Illimani was a leading member of the *nueva canción* movement, started in the 1950s and 60s, which blended traditional Latin American folk with popular rock music and had progressive, sometimes politicized lyrics. In 2007, the BBC called Topferova “a leading light” of the *nueva canción* movement of today.)

During the years of Marta’s musical awakening, her parents divorced. She, her mother, and older sister moved into one room in her maternal grandparents’ home. Both of her grandmothers had worked for Czech radio writing plays and stories. Marta’s maternal grandfather was a dancer and choreographer who had immigrated to Los Angeles in 1969. Her grandmother’s second husband, a historian and dissident, was not allowed to work in his field. The majority of her father’s family perished in Terezin and Auschwitz concentration camps. Although

her paternal grandparents survived the war, neither was in her life past age 8. In her new home, her maternal grandparents helped soften the edges of these turbulent years in Marta’s life, infusing it with some of the more idyllic trappings of Czech childhood—mushroom and berry picking in the forests, summer

**“As an adolescent in the United States, the one thing I felt strongly about was to take advantage of the freedom I was given,” Topferova says.**

trips in nature, and night time fairy tales. Then in 1987 when Marta was 11, her mother—spurred by the desire to see her own father whom she had not seen in nearly 20 years—moved her daughters to the United States. They stayed briefly in New York, but settled in Seattle, convinced by friends that it was “an easier place for a single mother with two kids who don’t speak English to restart their lives,” Topferova recalls.

In Seattle Marta studied English before transferring to a public middle school, where she says, “The real culture shock came.” With no direct relationship to her homeland and no Czechs to help her assimilate, she could not find a widespread community where she fit in. But her new life wasn’t all isolation. “As an adolescent in the United States, the one thing I felt strongly about was to take advantage of the freedom I was given,” Topferova

says, “I searched for things that were meaningful to me. I found myself gravitating toward other immigrants and making Hispanic friends. The Spanish language, music, and culture became my main interest which offered me tremendous richness, and a community with which I felt a great affinity.” She taught herself

Spanish and soaked up as much Hispanic music as she could. She also joined the Seattle Girls’ Choir where she received ear training and music coaching, then entered Nova, an alternative high school in Seattle, that allowed her to include musical studies in her curriculum. Later, she followed her older sister to Bard College but left early because she says, “I felt pulled toward other ways to learn what I was interested in.” Her musical passion led her to Spain where she studied guitar and different song forms. Along the way she found many musical influences including Camaron de la Isla, Paco de Lucia, Pepe de la Matrona, Celia Cruz, Joao Gilberto, Mercedes Sosa, Atahualpa Yupanqui, and numerous others. In 1994 she returned to Prague for a year, then moved to New York and started playing professionally.

Topferova has performed in

Europe, Latin America, Thailand, and across the United States. She recently wrapped up a European tour that included the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, and Switzerland. To date, Marta has released four CDs—Flor Nocturna, 2006; La Marea, 2005; Sueno Verde, 2003; Homage To Homeland, 2002; and is featured on a fifth—a 2007 Putumayo compilation titled Women of the World – Acoustic.

Topferova maintains a strong connection to her Czech origins, annually visiting her grandmother and father, the Czech actor and senator Tomas Topfer, who still live in Prague. “When I arrive, I get reminded of how deep my roots go there. All my ancestors were Czech—on my father’s side we have a family tree which traces back the whole family in the Czech lands to the 1600s. On my mother’s side, we are all Czechs for at least the last four generations.” But Marta appreciates aspects of all three cultures which have influenced her life—Czech, American, and Hispanic—and admits that assigning an identity can be difficult, “I feel very mixed,” she says, “I guess I’m more interested in staying open culturally than in trying to have my identity all figured out. Perhaps this is because my

*Continued on page 7*





Photo courtesy of Gilles Larrain

Marta Topferova

Continued from page 6

destiny has asked me to continue to examine my values and what I care about in the different cultures."

## Transformation—the Making of an Artist: Marta Topferova (continued)

If her identity vacillates, music gives her constancy. "Music is like an anchor to me," she says, "a dear companion. Through all the changes in my life, it has always accompanied me." Music also helps Topferova connect to others, "It's a universal language humanity has developed to share all kinds of beautiful things, to tell stories...I strive to offer a sort of refuge with my work, a place to turn away from the noise, pollution, and ugliness of the modern world."

Topferova's hypnotic soulful voice belies her young age, sounding instead as though

it comes from an older woman who has learned repeatedly that love leads to heartbreak but dares to love anyway. Given the journey and the many transformations Marta Topferova has experienced, it is not so unusual that this Czech-born, New York-based musician writes and sings songs primarily in Spanish. For Topferova music is transcendent. "At its best, music can be a very soulful spiritual experience. There is something vital that music offers," she muses. Topferova feels she achieves artistic success when her voice communicates with the hearts of listeners. So whether it is Czech, English, or Spanish,

language and its attendant culture are not the focus, "It's a question of deep affinity," she says, "Music and poetry are a tremendous gift for humanity. I feel a calling to preserve music that is honest, beautiful, and poetic. I'm doing what is sincerely close to my heart."

Marta Topferova and her band will make their Washington, DC, debut at the Embassy of the Czech Republic on Thursday, November 15, 2007, at 7 pm. For more concert information, contact the Czech Embassy at (202) 274-9126.

To learn more about Marta Topferova and her music, go to [www.martatopferova.com](http://www.martatopferova.com).

## Plastics Return, Rendezvous at the Black Cat

Last time the Plastic People of the Universe were in Washington, they played at the Black Cat, a local indie rock club, to a diverse audience which included the former President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Why such an elite following? Unknown to many in the United States, the band became a legendary example of Prague's underground culture from 1968 to 1989 in then-Czechoslovakia. Formed in Prague by bassist Milan Hlavsa, the Plastics play avant-garde rock reminiscent of the Velvet Underground, the Doors, Frank Zappa, and Captain Beefheart. Paul Wilson, a Canadian, worked with the band for 2 years teaching them English lyrics for cover songs and translating their original songs into English. "I enabled them to build up a repertoire of cover songs, but I never really felt comfortable about the role, because I always felt that at some point they would have to get beyond that," said Wilson. He encouraged the band to sing in Czech, which the Plastics did, becoming legends in their own right.

Although the Plastics were not formed with the intent of creating political change, their non-conformist music went against the grain of the communist regime and the band often suffered serious problems such as arrests. "We didn't fight against the political power," said band saxophonist/singer Vratislav

Brabenec, "We just wanted to do what we liked doing. Because the state didn't allow us to, the whole thing turned political. We weren't a political band at all, we wanted to make music. We looked for new poetry and tried to live a free existence."

The Plastics began experimenting more, creating extraordinarily original songs influenced by experiments in electronic music and free-jazz breaking of stereotypes. In their songs they revived the lyrics of the important Czech poets and connected seemingly incompatible worlds of intellectuals and spontaneous rock outcasts. However, merely daring to play creative rock music in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s was a political act in a state where music generated without an official seal of approval was tantamount to rebellion. For their artistic ambitions, the Plastics may have endured more harassment than any other rock band in history. Banned from public performance, they had to resort to giving their concerts in secret, or using weddings as an excuse to air their songs in public. When they refused to cease playing, the band members were beaten and jailed.

In response to the difficulty faced while imprisoned, Brabenec said, "It is harder finding good poetry than being persecuted by the police. That phase lasted a few years, but making lyrics fit the music can sometimes take a whole lifetime."

The 1976 trial of the Plas-



The Plastic People of the Universe rehearse on stage in London.

tic People of the Universe band members brought international attention and led to the formation of Charter 77, kicking off the chain of events that would culminate in the Velvet Revolution of 1989, when Vaclav Havel became president. Former band leader Milan Hlavsa modestly said, "Historians see the Plastics' arrest and sentence in direct relation to the origins of Charter 77... Of course I also see the relations, but only in that the trial brought together people concerned about the fate of our country, so Vaclav Havel was the engine of the efforts. The band itself had no political ambition and we did not intend to destroy communism by our music, but if we helped it we are only glad."

In 1988, the band broke up with some members forming the group Pulnoc ("midnight" in Czech). At President Havel's suggestion, they reunited in 1997 in honor of the 20th anniversary of Charter 77, and subsequently were invited by President Havel to play at a party commemorating that anniversary in the Spanish Hall of Prague Castle—the



The Plastics met with Vaclav Havel along with documentary filmmaker Jana Chytilova.

very location where the conferences of the Communist Party took place.

Band members include Josef Janicek (electric keyboardist), Vratislav Brabenec (singer/saxophonist), Jiri Kabes (violinist), Joe Karafiat (guitarist), Ivan Bierhanzl (string bassist), Ludvik Kandl (drummer), and Eva Turnova (bass guitarist). The original founding member, Milan Hlavsa, died of cancer in 2001.

Check out the Plastics on September 22, at 8 pm, at the Black Cat, sharing the main stage with Macitajs on Acid. For more information about the band, visit [www.kandl.cz/plasticpeople/default.aspx](http://www.kandl.cz/plasticpeople/default.aspx).



## Bengas Blends Romany Music in an Eclectic Soup for the Soul

**B**engas, one of the most popular Romany groups in the Czech Republic, has performed with Perum, the oldest Romany folklore dance group in Europe, and with the renowned Gipsy Kings. Their instrumental cast includes four Spanish half acoustic guitars, bass guitars, percussion instruments and drums. On October 2, 2007, at 6 pm, they will bring their lively sound to the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, strumming their guitars to the Romany beats that have transported them throughout the world.

The group's members have known each other and jammed together since elementary school, but did not officially form a band until autumn 2001. During the 1990s, some of the group members had emigrated from the Czech Republic, but in 2000, at a festival, they reunited and decided to stay in the Czech Republic and play together.

Comprised of eight band members, each brings his own experience to the eclectic mix. Through their collaboration, they have created their own style



Bengas performs at an open air concert in Prague, Czech Republic.



Bengas sings at a concert in the Czech Republic.


of music which they call *dza*, also the name of their first album, which means "go" in Romany or quite literally "on the road."

Their music is influenced by Romany, funk, jazz, Spanish, and Russian rhythms, as well as rock. In many of their lyrics, they sing about God's word. Nine of the songs on their Dza CD, are original. The other five are Hungarian, Yugoslavian,

Eastern Slovakian, and Swedish folk songs of the Romany people.

Bengas performs regularly throughout the Czech Republic, Europe, and at Romany music and dance festivals, festivals against racism, international film festivals, international Gypsy festivals, and various performances at the National Theater in Prague, among others.

Don't miss this performance, an eclectic soup for the soul, that takes the audience on a voyage through the rhythms of music.

To listen to Bengas, please visit [www.bengas.cz](http://www.bengas.cz). 

## Czech Organist Plays Dvorak for Czech National Day

**P**avel Kohout, one of the foremost Czech and international concert organists of the younger generation, heads to Washington, DC, for his first U.S. concert. The musical program which includes Dvorak's famous *Symphony No. 9, Op. 95, From the New World*; *Preludium in D Major*; and *Humoreska, Opus 101, No. 7*, will pay tribute to Czech National Day. The concert will be held on October 28, 2007, at 2 p.m. at the Church of the Ascension and Saint Agnes.

In preparation for a career in music, Kohout graduated from the Prague Conservatory and the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague under the guidance of Professor Jaroslav Tuma. From 1999–2000, he continued his studies in historical organ technique at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam in the Netherlands with renowned




Internationally acclaimed Czech organist Pavel Kohout

specialist Professor Jacques van Oortmerssen.

Kohout has won a number of prizes at international organ competitions including the prestigious first prize and J. S. Bach Prize at the IOCM Musashino in Tokyo—one of

the world's largest international organ competitions. He also has garnered first prizes at international organ contests in Ljubljana and Vilnius and several other special awards including the "Dancing Angel" prize of the European Music Competition for Youth.

As a recitalist and soloist, Kohout performs with various ensembles and orchestras at international concert venues throughout Europe, Russia, Australia, and Japan. He also performs on live broadcasts for Slovak Radio and the European Broadcasting Union and cooperates with Czech National Radio on the ongoing "Historical Organs" project. Kohout presents international master classes and is currently studying for a doctorate in historical performance practice of baroque organ music at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. 

## Czech Wins Art Fellowship



Michaela Rygrova

Photo courtesy of Michaela Rygrova

Michaela Rygrova, an arts manager from Prague, Czech Republic, has been chosen as a 2007 Artslink Fellow. Every year CEC Artslink—an international arts service organization that supports the exchange of artists and cultural managers between the United States and Central Europe, Russia, and Eurasia—selects approximately 17 international Fellows to practice their art and expand their skills at a U.S. host site. One of 16 Fellows selected from over 75 applications, Ms. Rygrova recently worked on the 2007 Prague Quadrennial International Exhibition of Scenography and Theater Architecture which featured displays from 60 countries. She also has worked on theater production for the Academy of Performing Arts and for New York University in Prague. Ms. Rygrova will spend her 5-week fellowship at DiverseWorks, a nonprofit art center in Houston, Texas, where she hopes to gain insight into the structure of cultural organizations in the United States, including how not-for-profit arts organizations work, fundraising, and ticket sales and practices.


For more information on the fellowship, go to [www.cecartslink.org](http://www.cecartslink.org). 





Photo courtesy of Intermedia.net

## Academy Award Winning Czech Director to Present Washington Premiere of New Film

Czech film director Jiri Menzel became famous for his debut film *Closely Watched Trains (Ostre sledovane vlaky)*, winning an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 1967. He has made over 20 films, starred in more than twice that many, and has written books about Czech cinema and more than a dozen scripts. Menzel will present the Washington, DC, premiere of his new film *I Served the King of England (Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále, 2006)*, written by acclaimed scriptwriter Bohumil Hrabal, at the AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, MD, during the EU Film Showcase on November 12, 2007, at 7 pm. A 2007 Czech Lions winner for Best Film, Best Supporting Actor, Best Cinematography, and Best Director, *I Served the King of England* is the director's sixth adaptation of works by Bohumil Hrabal, and also recently won the International Federation of Film Critics Award at the Berlinale 2007 Film Festival.

Like his compatriot Milos Forman, Menzel was influenced by Czech novelists rather than by Western filmmakers. Therefore, it is no surprise that Menzel was a friend of the late Bohumil Hrabal, and collaborated with him on several occasions, turning his books into films.

Hrabal ranks among the most influential Czech authors of modern times. When he died in 1997, he had written approximately 50 books, 3 million printed in his native Czechoslovakia, and many translated into 27 languages.

In the mid-1960s, Hrabal's vision of the world so fascinated Jiri Menzel that Menzel and six other filmmakers of the Czech New Wave created *Pearls on the Bottom (Perlicky na dne)* from Hrabal's collection of short stories. However, it was not until the filming of *Closely Watched Trains (Ostre sledovane vlaky, 1965)*, which remains one of the most compelling films of the 1960s, that Menzel and Hrabal became closer friends. Menzel furthered his collaboration with Hrabal making *Cutting It Short (Postriziny, 1967)*, a film about a brewery and the beautiful wife of the owner. The director solidified this successful partnership with the writer in the 1970's with *Larks on a String (Skrivanci na niti)*, a film that was immediately banned by the communist authorities and remained shelved until 1990, after the revolution.

"For over 30 years my work has been interwoven with that of Bohumil Hrabal. The novel *I Served the King of England (Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále, 2006)* is for me one of

Hrabal's greatest achievements—a view of the modern world and a segment of 20th century history as reflected in the life of one man" said Menzel.

After taking a 12-year break from directing, Menzel returns to the director's chair with *I Served the King of England* which enabled him to use comedy in scrutinizing his country's past. The film is the story of a man whose irresistible charm and overriding desire to make it to

**I loved and admired Bohumil Hrabal's writing from the moment I first discovered it. But it was never my wish to bring to the screen a mere colored illustration of his epic stories. Instead, I attempted to express and preserve, as best I could, the spirit of Hrabal's narrative style and interpret his voice through the language of film.**

~ Jiri Menzel

the top let him wander unharmed through the political and social upheavals experienced by Czechoslovakia in the 1930s and 40s. It tells the tale of a quick-witted waiter who beds a string of beauties in pre-war Prague, marries an Aryan superwoman as the Germans march in, and finally settles down to reflect on his bizarre life after winning and losing a fortune.

"From the author himself we know the novel was written in a very short space of time as a spontaneous reaction to the constant pressure, emotional and social, under which the writer was forced to live in the period of 'normalization' (i.e., the post-1968 years) when he was not allowed to publish," said Menzel.

In an interview with the *Prague Post*, Menzel discussed the struggles of putting the book to screen. "It's a very rich novel. Whenever I return to

the text, I keep saying—this is terrible. I shouldn't have left this out or that out," he says. "Maybe some people will be disappointed when they see the film because they won't find the scene they were expecting."

In response to the pressure of making yet another successful adaptation of Hrabal's work, Menzel said, "With the making of every film, I am propelled by a fear of failure."

Menzel fought a 10-year-legal battle for the rights to *I Served the King of England*, which were sold more than once so that several names

were working on the project at the same time. At the 1998 Karlovy Vary film festival, an incensed Menzel took his stick to the film's then-producer, Jiri Sirotek, finding out that other people were planning to direct the film. When asked by *Variety Magazine's* Elizabeth Guider what was so special about directing this particular film, Menzel only replied: "What is special you have to find yourself—in the book and in the film."

On November 12, 2007, at 7 pm, Menzel will present the Washington, DC, premiere of *I Served the King of England* at AFI Silver Theatre. Viewers can see for themselves the beauty and mastery of Hrabal's work through the eyes of director Jiri Menzel.

For additional details, please visit: [www.afi.com/silver](http://www.afi.com/silver).



Photo courtesy of http://www.afi.co.uk (I Served the King of England)

**I Served the King of England**  
(*Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále, 2006*)  
In Czech with English subtitles, 120 minutes

Young provincial waiter Jan Dite wants to become a millionaire, and he knows just how to do it: by hearing everything, seeing everything, and using what he heard and saw.

Armed with this knowledge, he soon leaves his first place of employment, a pub, for a luxury brothel and, finally, an elegant restaurant. But by now it is the late 1930s, and things are changing: Hitler has taken the Sudetenland and is breaking apart Czechoslovakia. Jan falls in love with Lisa, a Sudeten German proud of her Aryan blood. They marry, and when Lisa returns from the front, she has a fortune in rare stamps that Jews had "left behind." Jan sells the stamps, becoming a millionaire. He only has 3 years to enjoy his fortune: the new Communist regime puts him behind bars for 15 years, one for each of his millions.

Upon his release, Jan reflects on the life he led.



## Avalon Theatre Partners with Embassy for Second Season

The Avalon, a historic art house theater in the Nation's capital, brings the mastery of Czech filmmaking to the Washington, DC, area, offering the local community the special treat of seeing Czech films on the big screen with English subtitles. Audiences may already know such legends as Milos Forman and Jan Svankmajer, but this season promises a diverse blend of cinema, from the clay animations of Aurel Klimt and Vlasta Popisilova to the drama of Julius Sevcik and Michaela Pavlatova. The films at the Avalon not only give audiences an insight into Czech filmmaking, but also help support future artistic endeavors of the filmmakers.

October 10, 8 pm



### Faithless Games (Neverne hry)

Directed by: Michaela Pavlatova  
2003, 92 min., in Czech with English subtitles  
Starring: Zuzana Stivinova, Peter Bebjak, Jana Hubinska, Ady Hajdu, and Kristyna Svarinska

*Faithless Games* is the feature debut film of director Michaela Pavlatova. The story revolves around a pianist, Eva, who has followed her husband, Peter, a musician and composer, to a village near the Slovak-Hungarian border. As much as Peter finds this new environment peaceful for his composing, Eva, a musical performer, finds it difficult to expand her horizons. The film is a chamber piece about love, human failings, and finding one's self.

November 14, 8 pm



### Restart (Restart)

Directed by: Julius Sevcik  
2005, 85 min., in Czech with English subtitles  
Starring: Lenka Krobotova, Filip Capka, Anna Polivkova, and Vaclav Jiracek

Sevcik creates a blood-pumping drama out of the most common of circumstances well described by the film's jingle: "Did you ever wish to start again?" One sentence uttered by the main character, Sylva, out of complete boredom changes her life in a moment, and she only has one day to gain her lover back. What follows is a wild run through contemporary Prague and its night clubs in a refined visual style. Rumor has it that a Hollywood studio has acquired the original screenplay rights for an American remake.

December 12, 8 pm



### Fimfarum (Fimfarum)

Directed by: Aurel Klimt, Vlasta Pospisilova  
2002, 117 min., in Czech with English subtitles

Made over 17 years (on and off), the film is composed of a series of five fairytales based on the legendary book of the same name by Jan Werich. The beloved Czech storyteller's cautionary adult fairytales are brought to life with puppets and drawings in a gloriously twisted style. The short stories are stitched together by a jovial storyteller. *When The Leaves Fall from the Oak* finds a farmer worming his way out of a pact with a fussy devil, *Fearless Francis* tells of a pub full of dead card players, while *Stingy Barka* is about a frugal woman who saves old sausage skins to use as curtains.

## Upcoming Czech Events in the U.S.

### September 23 (Victoria, TX)

The 22nd Annual Victoria Czech Heritage Festival celebration will be held at the Victoria Community Center. The event features live bands, dancing, Czech food and crafts, and much more. For more information, visit [www.vchcs.homestead.com](http://www.vchcs.homestead.com).

### September 26 (Cleveland, OH)

Celebrate St. Wenceslaus Day with a concert and dance at Karlin Hall. The day will feature the Hronek Czech Band and traditional Czech food. For more information call (216) 581-4362.

### September 29 (Baltimore, MD)

Sokol Baltimore will hold their annual Vinobrani dinner dance at 6:30 p.m., at the American Turner's Hall in Baltimore. For tickets and information, contact Frank Huber at [frankh1228@aol.com](mailto:frankh1228@aol.com).

### September 30 (Houston, TX)

The 44th Annual Slavic Heritage Festival will be held at the SPJST Lodge Ball Room, located at 14th and Beal Streets. The festivities include Czech food, entertainment, and cultural exhibits. For more information, please contact [czech@czechcenter.org](mailto:czech@czechcenter.org).

### October 6 (Yukon, OK)

Come celebrate the 42nd annual Oklahoma Czech Festival. For more information visit [www.oklahomaczechfestival.com](http://www.oklahomaczechfestival.com).

### October 7 (Chicago, IL)

The Friends of the Bohemian National Cemetery will sponsor a walking tour of the cemetery's highlights. For information contact Anna Schnedorf at (708) 366-6564 or [aschnedorf@yahoo.com](mailto:aschnedorf@yahoo.com), or go to [www.friendsofbnc.org](http://www.friendsofbnc.org).

Continued on page 12



## Czech Photographer Opens Panorama Exhibition

On October 4, 7-9 pm at the Embassy, award-winning Czech photographer Veronika Lukasova presents her collection of Holga panoramas which delve into her memories of growing up in the Czech Republic, discovering New York City, and

the nuances of everyday life. Lukasova began experimenting with the panoramic format in 2005, and says, "Every impression and memory of a place is different, distorted by time that inevitably passes despite our best efforts. The singular image can hardly express my personal

impression as life itself is multi-layered, repetitive, juxtaposed, and chaotic." Her work has appeared in magazines and newspapers such as *The Washington Post Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and in solo and group exhibitions in the Czech Republic and the United States.



## Fall Fashion Show at Embassy

In spring 2007, Czechs Michaela Schwartz and Daniela Cermanova opened Green and Blue, a new women's clothing and jewelry boutique in Washington, DC.

On October 11, they will present the fashions of the new store at a fashion show at the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

Models, including Miss DC 2006 Kate Michael, will strut down the catwalk showcasing the clothing line ELA ELA designed by the store co-owner Daniela Cermanova, fashion from Czech designer Sona Hlavackova, and glass jewelry made by the Czech company Liglass.

Daniela Cermanova, born in Prague, trained in Bologna, earning a B.A. in Fashion Design. She moved to Naples in 1996 to open a boutique and develop her own brand of couture, often using fabrics designed and handpainted by Daniela herself. She moved to the United States in 1999 and returned to Prague to develop ELA ELA, her own clothing collection for Green and Blue. "I love to design clothes that I

would want to wear, clothes that are elegant as well as functional. (Green and Blue) will have clothes for every woman's working as well as casual wardrobe," she said.

Cermanova met her business partner and Czech native Michaela Schwartz in Washington, DC. Schwartz opened Green and Blue "to provide Washington women with an oasis in which to shop where every client is treated to a personal shopping experience. We wanted to open a clothing store where we would want to shop. We want every visit to the store to be a personal shopping experience for our clients," Schwartz said.

Schwartz has a degree in Business and worked in the business sector in Europe for a number of years before coming to Washington.

The boutique, although small, offers a range of attire. The front section is devoted to professional wear: Cynthia Steffe

safari-style suits, an assortment of neutral dresses in linen, chiffon, and cotton from Rebecca Taylor and Cynthia Rowley. The vibe in the back is weekend city chic: eye-popping graphic tunics, jeans from Citizens of Humanity, and Cermanova's ELA ELA-brand camisoles and skirts.



Left to right: Daniela Cermanova and Michaela Schwartz at their DC store Green and Blue.

Photo courtesy of Green and Blue

The Fall Fashion Show takes place at the Embassy of the Czech Republic. Admission is \$15. Reservations are required. Please call (202) 274-9105 to attend this event.

For more information about the Green and Blue, visit [www.greenandbluestyle.com](http://www.greenandbluestyle.com).

Photo courtesy of Green and Blue

Miss DC 2006, Kate Michael, wears a stunning evening gown created by Czech designer Daniela Cermanova.

## Embassy Announces Fall Cultural Season 2007

### September 25, 8 pm

Rock Concert: *Plastic People of the Universe*  
Black Cat  
Admission: \$15

Black Cat  
1811 14th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

### October 2, 6 pm

World Music: *Bengas*  
Kennedy Center Millennium Stage  
Admission: Free

The Kennedy Center  
2700 F Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20566

### October 4, 7-9 pm

Photography Exhibition  
*Veronika Lukasova*  
Embassy of the Czech Republic  
Admission: Free

### October 10, 8 pm

Lions of Czech Film Series  
*Faithless Games (Neverne hry)*  
Avalon Theatre  
Admission: Adult \$9.75/  
Senior, Student, or Military \$7

Avalon Theatre  
5612 Connecticut Avenue  
Washington, DC 20015

### October 11, 7 pm

Fall Fashion Show  
*Green and Blue*  
Embassy of the Czech Republic  
Admission: \$15, reservations  
required. Call (202) 274-9105.

### October 17, 7:30 pm

Classical Concert  
*Intimate Letters: Words and Music of Leos Janacek*  
Embassy of the Czech Republic  
Admission: \$15

### October 28, 2 pm

Czech National Day Concert  
*Pavel Kohout plays Dvorak's New World Symphony*  
Church of the Ascension and St. Agnes  
Suggested \$10 Donation

Church of the Ascension and St. Agnes  
1217 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

### November 7, 7-9 pm

Exhibition and Lecture  
*Czech Christmas Ornaments*  
Embassy of the Czech Republic  
Admission: Free

### November 12, 7 pm, 9:40 pm

EU Film Showcase with guest director Jiri Menzel  
*I Served the King of England (Obsluhoval jsem anglickeho krále)*  
Admission: Adult \$9.75 / Senior, Student, or Military \$8.50

AFI Silver Theatre  
8633 Colesville Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20015

### November 14, 8 pm

Lions of Czech Film Series  
*Restart (Restart)*  
Avalon Theatre  
Admission: Adult \$9.75/  
Senior, Student, or Military \$7

### November 15

World Music Concert  
*Marta Topferova and her band*  
Embassy of the Czech Republic  
Admission: \$20

### December 12

Lions of Czech Film Series  
*Fimfarum (Fimfarum)*  
Avalon Theatre  
Admission: Adult \$9.75/  
Senior, Student, or Military \$7


For up-to-date information on embassy cultural events, please visit [www.mzv.cz/washington](http://www.mzv.cz/washington). Click on "Culture" and then on "Calendar of Events."

If you have any questions about upcoming events, please call (202) 274-9105.





## Czech the News Goes Electronic


Starting with this issue (Volume 3, 2007), *Czech the News* (CTN) is available in electronic format. The new electronic version will be sent to all CTN subscribers via e-mail. Hard copies will be printed in limited quantities and mailed only to readers who request it. The electronic newsletter looks exactly like the printed version and can be read page by page on any computer without needing to be downloaded. No software applications are necessary. Shifting to an electronic newsletter reduces environmental impact, cuts costs, and allows for a wider readership. To request continuation of a hard copy subscription or to ensure receipt of CTN electronically, please e-mail Romana Lesakova at [ctn\\_washington@mzv.cz](mailto:ctn_washington@mzv.cz). For questions or more information on the electronic newsletter, please e-mail JoAnn M. Cooper, CTN Editor-in-Chief, at [jcooper@linguaboheemia.com](mailto:jcooper@linguaboheemia.com). 

## Holocaust Rescuers Recognized in Congress

*Continued from page 1*

Two of the children saved by Winton, Alice Masters of Bethesda, MD, and Dr. Benjamin Abeles of New Jersey, shared their personal stories of survival. Alice Masters, whose two sisters also were saved by Winton, pointed out that "The Power of Good" contains footage of her mother putting her little sister on the transport and taking her off three times before she was finally able to pull herself away from her girls. The three sisters never saw their parents again.

Ms. Kayla Kaufman of New York, who was saved by Wallenberg, spoke about post-traumatic stress syndrome and her personal struggle with the memories of her family's escape.

Concurrent to the Wallenberg Forum, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs unanimously approved House Resolution 583 to honor Nicholas Winton and those who helped with his rescue effort. Resolution 583 was debated by the House and adopted by the U.S. Congress on September 17, 2007. 

## Upcoming Czech Events in the U.S. (continued)

*Continued from page 10*

### October 7

#### (Green Bay, WI)

A Czech festival will be held at Ravine and will include Czech dancing, singing, and music by the OK Band and the Newtonburg Brass Band. For more information e-mail [Okkonop@aol.com](mailto:Okkonop@aol.com).

### October 14

#### (Cincinnati, OH)


The Dvorak Society of Slovak music will present *Jewels of Czech Piano Music* with Sonya Szabo Reynolds and Tiraje Ruckman (piano). Admission is free. For more information, visit [www.premierpianos.com/NewEvents.html](http://www.premierpianos.com/NewEvents.html).

### October 27

#### (LaGrange, IL)

The Prague Committee of the Chicago Sister Cities organization will give a lecture at the Czech and Slovak Americans Genealogy Society. For more information, please contact Marge Sladek-Stueckemann at [mdstueck@aol.com](mailto:mdstueck@aol.com).

### Czech Listings

For a listing of Czech events in the United States, please visit [www.mzv.cz/washington](http://www.mzv.cz/washington). Click on "Culture and Events" and then on "Czech Events." 

Embassy of the Czech Republic  
3900 Spring of Freedom Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Tel.: (202) 274-9100 Fax: (202) 966-8540  
[www.mzv.cz/washington](http://www.mzv.cz/washington)  
Editor-in-Chief: JoAnn M. Cooper, [jcooper@linguaboheemia.com](mailto:jcooper@linguaboheemia.com)  
Art Director: Mary Fetzko, [czech\\_events@yahoo.com](mailto:czech_events@yahoo.com)  
Writers: JoAnn M. Cooper and Mary Fetzko  
Circulation: Romana Lesakova, [pol\\_washington@embassy.mzv.cz](mailto:pol_washington@embassy.mzv.cz)  
Production Assistants: Pavel Mrazek, Katerina Dolzalova,  
and Lenka Fenclova