

CZECH the NEWS

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Vol. 1, 2009

Schwarzenberg, Czech EU Ministers Visit Washington

The Czech Embassy in Washington is handling one of the highest priorities of the 6-month Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), that of maintaining strong EU-U.S. relations. The onset of the Czech EU Presidency coincided with the transition of the U.S. presidency, and the Embassy's top priority has been to ensure continuity in close transatlantic relations with the new Obama administration.

To that end, the Embassy has organized numerous visits of Czech government officials to Washington including that of Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg who came in February to meet with his counterpart Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Top on their discussion agenda were the future of the missile defense program, priorities of the Czech EU Presidency, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Russia. At a post-discussion press conference with Minister Schwarzenberg at the State Department Secretary Clinton said, "The Czech

Republic is an important ally of the United States and our two nations share a strong commitment to defense, development, and human rights." She also affirmed that, "The U.S. and Europe have great responsibilities in the world, especially at this time of global challenges and opportunities. And the United States appreciates Czech leadership on such key issues as Afghanistan, energy security, and the Middle East."

At a talk cohosted by the Brookings Institution and the Heinrich Böll Foundation North America, Minister Schwarzenberg spoke on a range of topics including energy independence, the financial crisis, the proposed American missile defense shield, the situation in Gaza, relations with Iran, the war in Afghanistan, and the future of NATO. He noted that the Czech EU Presidency's motto "Europe without barriers" also entails transatlantic relations without barriers and expressed the readiness of the EU to work closely with the United States on all issues of interna-



Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during a press conference at the State Department

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of State

tional importance. In his closing remarks, Minister Schwarzenberg declared that the EU did not have a closer friend than the United States and emphasized that the EU is eager to cooperate with the United States. "We're ready" he said, "Let's get working, let's change the world."

While in Washington, Minister Schwarzenberg also met with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator John Kerry,

and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Carl Levin.

Other U.S. visits of Czech EU officials include Czech Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs Alexandr Vondra, who conducted meetings with representatives of the new U.S. administration on behalf of the European Union, and Czech President Vaclav Klaus, Deputy Prime Minister Martin Bursik, and Minister of Interior Ivan Langer.

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Obama Visits Prague, Meets with Czech and EU Leaders

During his first visit to Prague in early April, President Barack Obama met with Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek to discuss updates on U.S. plans to build a missile defense radar base in the Czech Republic and other international issues.

While in Prague, Obama addressed the public in front of Prague Castle and attended a summit organized by the Czech European Union (EU) Presidency where EU and U.S. leaders convened to discuss the global financial crisis and security issues. The Prague EU Summit was the first meeting of all 27 EU heads of state with the new U.S. president. In advance of the meeting, Topolánek said he expected the Prague Summit to "address issues of global financial architecture and consequences of the financial crisis, as well as issues of



Arrival of U.S. President Barack Obama in the Czech Republic

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

transatlantic safety and military cooperation."

President Obama's Prague visit and attendance at the Prague EU Summit immediately followed the G20 meeting in London and the NATO Summit

in Strasbourg at the start of April. The G20 meeting convened leaders of the industrialized and emerging market countries and the NATO Summit marked the 60th anniversary of the NATO alliance.



Photo courtesy of Chad Wyatt

Dear Friends,

Since January 1, the Czech Republic has held the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). We set as the priorities of our presidency three issues: energy, external relations, and the economy. From the very beginning, dramatic world events unfolded—the conflict in Gaza and the gas supply crisis in Ukraine—that illustrated how timely our priorities were and meant that Czechs had to work quickly to engage the EU community in addressing these issues. Close cooperation among global partners is essential in today’s political environment and the Czech EU Presidency motto, “Europe without barriers” applies equally to our transatlantic relations.

The onset of the Czech EU Presidency also coincided with the beginning of President Barack Obama’s term in office. Here in Washington the main goal of the Czech Embassy is to maintain close ties between the EU and the United States by establishing solid relationships with the new administration. To that end, I have the pleasure of hosting the 27 EU and European Commission Heads of Mission at lunchtime gatherings with U.S. officials for face-to-face discussion. These ongoing meetings allow us to discuss pertinent transatlantic and international issues with key U.S. policy makers (see Czech EU Presidency highlights on page 3). Several officials from the Czech government also are visiting Washington during the EU presidency to ensure open dialog between Europe and the United States. Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg met with his U.S. counterpart Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in February and will be followed by other ministerial visits throughout the spring (see EU Ministers article on the front cover). Likewise, President Obama visited Prague in April to meet with Czech government officials and to address the EU Summit there.

With this in mind, it may be hard for some to remember that just 20 short years ago, Czechs were sequestered behind the Iron Curtain, unsure of our future position in the global picture. Now in 2009, in addition to occupying the EU Presidency, we are celebrating 20 years as a free and open democracy, 10 years as a member of NATO, and 5 years as a member in the European Union. It is a great honor for me to serve as Ambassador to the United States during this historic time on both sides of the Atlantic.

I wish the new U.S. Administration great success and look forward to the continuation of strong transatlantic cooperation.

Warm regards,

Petr Kolar



Holocaust Education Outreach Activities

As part of its annual Holocaust Education Outreach program commemorating the United Nations Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, the Czech Embassy is conducting outreach designed to perpetuate the lessons of 20th century Czech and European history. For the second year running, the Embassy is going into area schools presenting the story of Holocaust rescuer Nicholas Winton with a screening of the documentary *The Power of Good*, which tells how the

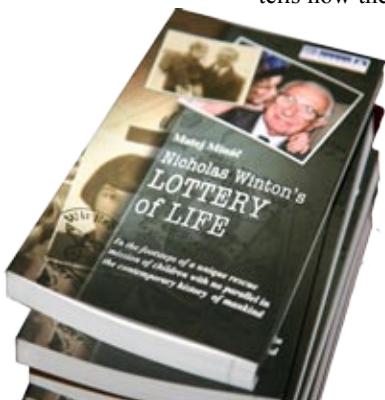
young Briton saved 669 Czechoslovak children just before the outbreak of World War II. Alice Masters, one of the children Winton saved, is again working with the Czech Embassy to present her experiences. On March 9, after a screening of the film, Mrs. Masters shared her story with approximately 300 students at the Boys’ Latin School in Baltimore and is scheduled to join the Embassy presentation at other area schools this spring.

Also for the second year, the Czech Embassy partnered with the British Embassy to promote the Winton story. British Deputy Ambassador Dominick Chilcott hosted a January reception at his residence to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day and to officially launch the English-language version of the book “Nicholas Winton’s Lottery of Life.” At the book launch Czech Honorary Consul General Peter Rafaeli, the book’s translator and former president of American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFO-



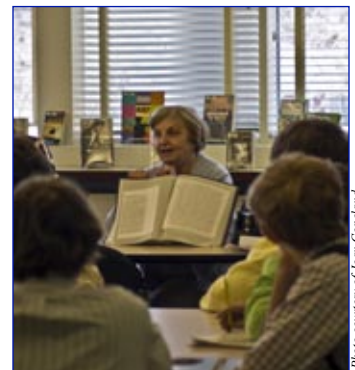
Alice Masters (left) and Peter Rafaeli (right) celebrated the launch of the English-language version of the book “Nicholas Winton’s Lottery of Life.”

Photo courtesy of Mary Fezko



CR), announced that the book, published in the United States by AFoCR, is available for free to schools and educators for the cost of postage.

The enthusiastic response by area schools to the Holocaust Education Outreach has led the Czech Embassy to offer the program year-round by request. For more information about the Holocaust Education program, contact JoAnn M. Cooper at (202) 274-9126.



Alice Masters met with students at the Boys’ Latin School in Baltimore, MD.

Photo courtesy of JoAnn Copeland

Czech Republic Assumes EU Presidency

Since January 1, 2009, the Czech Republic has held the rotating 6-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). The top priorities of the Czech EU Presidency can be summed up as “the 3 Es”: economy, energy, and external relations. The Czech Presidency motto, “Europe without barriers,” symbolically reflects the 20th anniversary of the 1989 dismantling of the largest European barrier, the Berlin Wall, and encompasses four basic freedoms that the Czech EU Presidency strives to uphold and perpetuate: free movement of goods, capital, workers, and services. The Czech EU Presidency comes just 20 short years after the Czechoslovak Velvet Revolution, 10 years after Czechs

joined the NATO Alliance, and 5 years after Czech accession to the EU.

With the global economy in dire straits, the Czech Presidency immediately began conducting EU meetings on potential improvements to the economic situation. The second priority, energy security, cuts across a number of global issues, among them the economy, the environment, geopolitics, and development. The January 2009 gas supply dispute between Russia and Ukraine illustrated the overdue need for more secure and diversified energy sources as well as reliable transportation routes for gas and oil to all EU countries, which the Czechs are actively seeking.

The focus on external rela-

tions is multifaceted, with emphasis on four primary areas: the Middle and Near East, especially the situations in post-conflict Gaza, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; EU relations with Russia; the Eastern Partnership—a new project stressing cooperation with countries on the eastern EU borders; and strong transatlantic relations with the United States.

The Czech EU Presidency welcomed President Obama’s first visit to Europe in April 2009 when he attended the G20 Summit in London, the NATO 60th Anniversary Summit in Strasbourg-Kehl, and an EU-U.S. Summit hosted by the Czech government in Prague. 

EU2009.CZ

Czech EU Presidency Highlights

Working to maintain continuity in strong transatlantic relations and open dialog with the new presidential administration, Ambassador Petr Kolar hosts an ongoing series of Czech EU Presidency lunch discussions between U.S. government officials and the Ambassadors of the European Union. Highlights include:



Photo courtesy of Christophe Avril

January 14, 2009

Farewell luncheon for outgoing Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

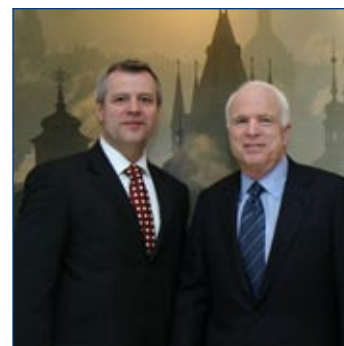


Photo courtesy of Maro Fezko

February 2, 2009

Luncheon discussion with Senator John McCain

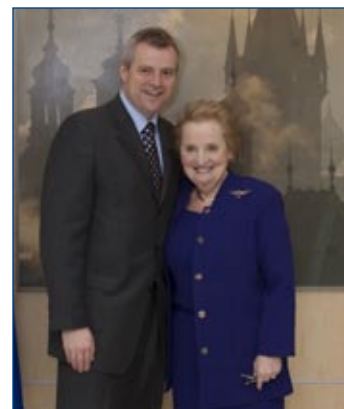


Photo courtesy of Christophe Avril

February 26, 2009

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright addressed EU Ambassadors.

EU Open House and Europe Week

On May 9, 2009, from 10 am until 4 pm, the 27 Embassies of the European Union (EU) and the European Commission (EC) Delegation to the United States will open their doors to the Washington public for a day of enjoying the unique treasures and diversity of EU society. Each Embassy will present activities and offer a rich and unique program featuring highlights from its culture, commerce, cuisine, and tourism along with entertainment for the whole family.

2009 marks the third year that the EU and EC Delegation Embassies have conducted the EU Open House, hosting the public for a rare inside look at their chanceries and even some Ambassador residences, many of which are among Washington’s historic and architectural treasures. The first year 35,000 visitors participated in the EU Open House. In 2008 the number jumped to approximately 55,000, with just as many expected to turn out in 2009. The EU Open House promotes EU unity while showcasing the diversity and richness of European society. It is also the single largest celebration of the EU in the world.

The EU Open House is followed by Europe Week, a 7-day celebration of European culture in Washington. From May 9–May 16, 2009, the public will be treated to concerts, exhibitions, performances, and other activities presented by all the Embassies of Europe that showcase the full spectrum of European culture. From fine art and photography to music and acting, Europe Week will offer gems of European culture that span its rich artistic history while presenting the latest works of its fresh new artists. All cultural events will be hosted by the European Embassies or by cultural organizations in Washington, DC.

Please visit www.europe-in-dc.com for a listing of events. For additional details on the EU Open House and Europe Week, please contact Nora Jurkovicova at (202) 274-9114 or at nora_jurkovicova@mzv.cz.



Volunteers Needed for EU Open House

The annual EU Open House, the largest celebration of the European Union in the world, is seeking volunteers to help host the approximately 60,000 visitors expected this year. On Saturday, May 9, 2009, from 10 am until 4 pm, the 27 EU member state Embassies and some of the Ambassadors’ residences will be open to the public. Volunteers are needed to assist with all aspects of the day’s events. Come enjoy the rich program and activities while helping to showcase the diversity of the EU. To volunteer at the Embassy of the Czech Republic, or any other EU chancery, please contact Nora Jurkovicova at (202) 274-9114 or at nora_jurkovicova@mzv.cz.





Dr. Gunther Kletetschka

Dark Matter: A Czech Scientist at Goddard Space Flight Center

When Gunther Kletetschka was a boy growing up in Czechoslovakia, he wanted to be an astronaut. He had never heard of the concepts of dark matter or dark energy but he remembers that being raised an only child by a widowed mother, with strong influences from a Catholic nun, allowed him “to become independent and interested in the worlds’ wonders early on.” In high school he discovered biology, math, and physics and was drawn even more to the stars. That boy who dreamt of being an astronaut is the astrophysicist Dr. Gunther Kletetschka whose work at the Goddard Space Center in Beltsville, MD, today helps explain some of those mysteries that intrigued him in his youth.

As a young man, Kletetschka entered Charles University to study the physics of solid matter, transferring to theoretical physics and earning a masters in geophysics. In 1991 he was accepted to the University of Minnesota, where he went to study rock magnetism but expanded his scope to include petrology, the study of rocks and how they form. He graduated in 1998 with a Ph.D. in geophysics. “Geophysics has the advantage that it lies between physics and geology and extends to many areas including astrophysics, astronomy, astrobiology, biology, and even engineering,” he says.

It is no surprise then, that while presenting his thesis on satellite magnetic anomalies at the American Geophysical Union in Baltimore, Kletetschka attracted the attention of NASA scientist Patrick Taylor, who suggested that he apply for post-doctoral studies at the Goddard Space Flight Center outside of Washington, DC. He did and got started “just in time for the successful mission to Mars by the Mars Global Surveyor, whose main task was to study magnetic anomalies on Mars,” he recalls, “I was intrigued by the possibility and discovered a close relationship between Mars’ magnetic anomalies and the origin of life and tectonics on Mars.” At Goddard Kletetschka expanded his sphere of study in numerous directions to include meteorites and comets; magnetism in mineralogy, trees, and organic matter; the role of magnetism in gerontology, medicine, and engineering; the use of magnets in large telescopes; nanoengineering; and robotics. During this time Kletetschka also began close collaboration with the Geology Institute of the

Academy of Science in Prague, Czech Republic, which continues to this day.

When Kletetschka came to Goddard, the Hubble Space Telescope, launched in 1990, had been beaming hundreds of thousands of images to the Goddard Space Flight Center, shedding light on many of the great mysteries of astronomy including the age of the Universe, the identity of quasars, and the existence of dark energy.

“The Hubble Space Telescope revealed much denser space and many more galaxies than were expected. It also made discoveries of energy sources, microwave radiation, and early Universe conditions allowing for the formulation of new ideas about string theory and the origin of the Universe.”

Dark matter and its counterpart dark energy are unseen to the naked eye but their presence can be inferred from gravitational effects on visible matter. Scientists postulate that dark matter explains the flat rotation curves of spiral galaxies that are inexplicable using Newtonian dynamics. Dark matter and dark energy are believed to account for the vast majority of the mass in the observable Universe (which appears to the eye as dark space). “The human eye can only see electromagnetic radiation frequencies associated with visible light,” explains Kletetschka, “There are many more frequencies that the Universe shines on us and development of detectors of such frequencies open our eyes



Kletetschka and his colleagues in front of the James Webb Space Telescope at the Goddard Space Flight Center.

Photo courtesy of Gunther Kletetschka

such that our minds are spinning with the vastness of knowledge that comes from understanding the light that is invisible to the human eye,” he says.

Recent developments in nanotechnology, robotics, and detectors of electromagnetic radiation have resulted in a whole new world of small smart devices. The newest space telescope technologies, in addition to not having to filter out distortions caused by the Earth’s atmosphere, include large mirrors that can capture more light and send it to detectors that read its different frequencies. The successor to the Hubble Space Telescope, the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) is a large, infrared-optimized space telescope, designed to work primarily in the infrared range of the electromagnetic spectrum, with some capability in the visible range. The central piece of the James Webb Space

Telescope is its so-called microshutters—millions of tiny doors that open the space to the detector system inside the JWST. The doors block the light from everything but the subject of interest, thereby obtaining unique information from objects at the edge of the Universe. “Such knowledge will lift the curtain on unknown conditions of the Universe where no one knows what exactly to expect,” says Dr. Kletetschka as he explains what NASA hopes to gain from the new telescope, “The James Webb Space Telescope will allow seeing further into space, will recognize the specific origin of very old galaxies, will recognize the origin of dark matter, and will expand our ability to explore the Universe.” In short, Dr. Kletetschka summarizes, “NASA expects that JWST will bring many more new mysteries when trying to solve the existing ones.” It is scheduled for launch

continued on page 5



Kletetschka and his son Karel at the Tunguska explosion site, Russia

Dark Matter: A Czech Scientist at Goddard Space Flight Center *(Continued from pg. 4)*

in 2013.

At the urging of Kletetschka's friend and fellow Czech colleague at Goddard, Vilem Mikula, the Goddard Space Center bestowed one of these microshutters on Czech President Vaclav Klaus during a recent visit to the United States. The shutter contained the image of the Czech coat of arms on it. Of the gift, Dr. Kletetschka says it "demonstrates that even though I work hard to advance science in the United States, I am proud to be of Bohemian origin, a citizen of the Czech Republic, who wants to share his success with his country of origin."

When he's not studying the stars, Dr. Kletetschka looks for clues to the wonders of the Universe closer to home. On a scientific expedition to the Tunguska explosion site in

Russia, his studies of the local geology led him to develop theories that explain the mysterious explosion, which he believes the JWST will help support. "The James Webb Space Telescope is also about the origin of dark matter of the Universe. Dark matter may exist in our solar system. There are indicators that dark matter may have been involved in the Tunguska explosion 100 years ago and for this reason I went to Siberia and searched for dark matter signatures."

Charles Darwin, another scientist interested in furthering human understanding of the Universe once said, "A scientific man ought to have no wishes, no affections—a mere heart of stone." Kletetschka has his own take, "Humans are born for science," he says, "Our evolution



Kletetschka (far right) and his son Karel (center right) at the Tunguska explosion site, Russia

is driven by knowledge. No breakthrough in science can be made without artistic vision combining the chaos of art with the facts of science." Through his own work, Kletetschka hopes to contribute to medical advances that will enable scientists to focus more on discovering the Universe and not worrying about health issues during space

exploration. "I want to improve human survivability in space by designing ways to enhance radiation protection from within the organism using the latest tools of nanotechnology and genetic manipulations." More information about Dr. Kletetschka's work can be found at <http://lep694.gsfc.nasa.gov/gunther/gunther/gunther.html>.

Prague to Host Nanotechnology Forum



Photo courtesy of EuroNanoForum 2009 Brochure

The Technological Center of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague will host upward of 1,000 nanotechnology experts at the EuroNanoForum 2009. Nanotechnology, or nanotech, works with matter on an atomic or molecular scale with one nanometer measuring 100,000 times thinner than a human hair.

With "Nanotechnology for Sustainable Economy" as its theme, the 4-day June forum will address the role and challenges of nanotechnology research. Forum attendees will

be offered a complete overview of current nanotechnology and its industrial applications. Specific discussion topics will include how nanotechnology can address carbon emissions and fossil fuel dependence, increase in energy demand, pollution control, clean water management, and sustainable quality of life.

EuroNanoForum 2009 is the largest meeting of experts organized under the aegis of the Czech European Union Presidency and is cosponsored by the Czech Ministry of Education. The forum will offer researchers and industrial experts from diverse fields of science and technology the opportunity to contribute to the definition of a future European nanotechnology strategy. The European Commission will use conference output to draft a new action plan for Europe in the nanosciences and nanotechnologies.

To learn more, please go to www.euronanoforum2009.eu/.

Czech Sound Editor Nominated for 2009 Oscar



Petr Forejt, Czech sound editor

Czech sound editor Petr Forejt was nominated for a Sound Editing Oscar this year for *Wanted*, a film by director Timur Bekmambetov that was shot in the Czech Republic and stars Angelina Jolie. The sound editing nomination went to Forejt and two other sound specialist colleagues with whom Forejt worked on the film, Chris Jenkins and Frank Montano.

"It would be a big success," Forejt commented before the award ceremony, "Both my own and of the Czech sound editing school. Nobody has ever achieved it." While a Czech has never

won an Oscar in the sound editing category, Czechs are no strangers to Oscar nominations. Last year, Czech actor, musician, and songwriter Marketa Irglova and her Irish partner Glen Hansard won an Oscar for best original song. This was the first Oscar nomination for Forejt, the fourth for his colleague Chris Jenkins, and the fifth for Frank Montano.

In addition to *Wanted*, Forejt has worked as a sound mixer on a number of films including *The Red Baron*, *Brothers Grimm*, *Van Helsing*, *Shanghai Knights*, and *Doom*.

Avalon Theater to Welcome Czech Director Olga Dabrowska

The Avalon Theater will present *Marbles* (Kulicky), with director Olga Dabrowska on May 13, 2009, at 8 pm.

Marbles is the directorial debut of Dabrowska, who teamed up with Czech producer Cestmir Kopecky to create the episodic film. While shooting the director had to triumph over many challenges. "The most difficult thing was to support two children as a single mother for those 2 years, when you cannot take a full-time well-paid job which would ensure you a decent living," she said. Her key to survival was to work overnight on other projects, such as writing screenplays.

During the film's production, Dabrowska endured financial limitations and grueling shooting hours, lacked quality catering for the crew, but managed to find a genuine group of people dedicated to filmmaking through the help of her producer Kopecky who had solid connections in the industry. "Shooting a debut with people who keep coming with new fresh ideas and good will is one of the basic things which leads to successful results and also it is a wonderful life experience," she said of the experience.

Marbles is a fresh humorous



Cast and crew on the set of *Marbles* (Kulicky)

film about women loving men and women loving themselves at the expense of men. The film, comprised of four short stories, takes place in various settings



I think that the art of manipulation with men is a discipline as old as mankind itself and this discipline is very useful for men and for women. I would say that men actually love it.

~Olga Dabrowska.

with heroines of different ages. The first short story, a prologue called *The Wedding*, describes a seemingly innocent game played by little children on a playground. The second story, *Mama's Little Angel*, portrays a group of adolescents at a techno party. The third story, *A Moral Imperative*, takes viewers to a Catholic parsonage, while the final story, *Slowly I am Fading*

Away, focuses on what is happening in a household of two pensioners.

As time goes by, a feminine mechanism of manipulation

begins to develop, transform, and ripen until it reaches perfection. The short stories about women of different ages and lifestyles create a picture of one complete human life which, thanks to the manipulation of others, was lived according to plan while at the same time wasting away.

"It is a film about self-love. About how we waste our life manipulating through it just

because of our selfish aims. Being a woman myself, I find it only fair to express these things in stories about women. Manipulation with men is our domain, we are capable of it and often we are exposed to a temptation to use it. *Marbles* may seem to be directed against ourselves because it portrays some means that women use because of their selfish manipulation. However, generally it refers to every human being, selfishness can take the edge off anybody's soul," said Dabrowska.

Dabrowska studied scriptwriting and dramaturgy, graduating from the Film and Television School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague, Czech Republic. She has created a host of documentary films and screenplays for television. Additionally, she collaborated on the film *Loners* (*Samotari*) as a screenwriter and as a producer on the romantic film *Cabriolet*. Today she works as a lecturer at the Film Academy of Miroslav Ondricek in Pisek, teaching scriptwriting and dramaturgy.

Washington, DC International Film Festival Presents Kinoautomat

The Washington, DC International Film Festival will present the American premiere of the world's first interactive film on Sunday, April 19 at 3 pm, at Regal Cinemas Gallery Place with Alena Cincerova, daughter of the late director Raduz Cincera.

Czech inventor Raduz Cincera created Kinoautomat, a system that enables interactive play between the audience, a live host, and the projected film. A host would come on stage at strategic points in the film and tempt the audience with two different choices for the story to continue. The audience would then use a remote control device to vote on how the story would unfold.

The Kinoautomat film *One Man and His House*, presented in the Czechoslovak Pavilion of Expo 67 in Montreal, Canada,

became an immediate success and was enthusiastically received both in the general public and by experts. The film was screened for the first time in former Czechoslovakia in 1971. The screenings were so popular that the film was shown twice a day. Less than a year later, the film was banned by the communist regime.

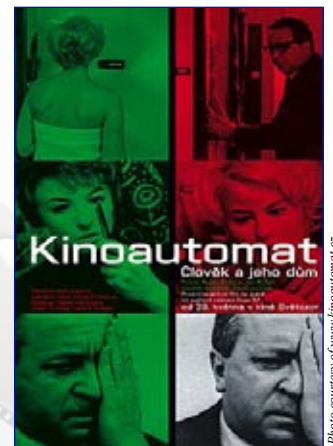
The New Yorker Magazine at that time wrote that it was the hit of Expo 67, and that Czechs should build a monument to Raduz Cincera, who invented the whole idea. In an interview with Radio Praha, Alena Cincerova said, "Unfortunately the monument was never built, as in those stupid communist times it was somehow hidden and forbidden. And now I am trying to build a monument to my daddy."

Now, 42 years later, the fully functional multimedia

Kinoautomat project of film director Raduz Cincera has returned, restored and directed by his daughter Alena Cincerova. As in the original version, audience members will be able to alter the trajectory of the film at key points by voting on what they want to happen next.

The black and white film *One Man and His House* is based on a character called Mr. Novak, who finds himself caught up in situations that present moral dilemmas. The film itself is an example of "Czech New Wave" cinema, while its setting in a theatrical format takes its inspiration from the Laterna Magika movement which developed in Prague in the late 1950s.

The film runs 63 minutes and has been dubbed into English. For more information on the screening of this film, please visit www.filmfestdc.org



This genuinely amusing comedy nicely embodies 1960s social mores, wringing "scandalous" slapstick out of situations that today hardly raise an eyebrow. A wild car chase through the beautiful medieval streets of Prague contrasts humorously with the once-fashionable ultra-modern apartment building as a delightful statement of changing tastes. ~Dave Nuttycombe, film critic

Czech National Theater Ballet to Make Washington Debut

The Czech National Theater Ballet from Prague will make its Washington debut, dancing the DC Premiere of *D.M.J. 1953–1977* and *Petite Mort*, as well as performing *Sinfonietta* in Sidney Harman Hall on April 25 at 7 pm, and April 26 at 2 pm.

As the cultural highlight of the Czech Presidency of the European Union, this event gives center stage to 20 top ballet dancers from the Czech National Theater Ballet with stunning choreography by internationally-acclaimed choreographer Jiri Kylian and renowned artistic director Petr Zuska, performed to primarily Czech classical music.

Under the artistic direction of Petr Zuska, the program incorporates both neoclassical and contemporary genres, and

provokes viewers to feel the enchantment and the inspiration of each masterpiece. The mystical yet powerful accord among the music, dancers, and the play of light and space, creates an artistic drama packed with emotion that evokes the human spirit.

This program is produced by the Embassy of the Czech Republic and presented in partnership with the CityDance Ensemble and the Washington Performing Arts Society, two of the leading arts organizations in the Nation's capital.

Tickets cost \$20–\$49 and are available online at www.harmancenter.org, by phone (202/547-1122), or at the Sidney Harman Hall Box Office located at 610 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20004-2207.



Czech National Theater Ballet from Prague performing *Sinfonietta*

Photo courtesy of Diana Zehner

The Program Includes:

D.M.J. 1953–1977 (Choreography: Petr Zuska, 27 minutes)

D.M.J. represents the initials of three great Czech composers, Antonin Dvorak, Bohuslav Martinu, and Leos Janacek. In this piece, Zuska uses the music of Dvorak's Largo from Symphony No. 9 in E Minor "From the New World," Martinu's second part of Symphony No. 2, and Janacek's "The Overgrown Path."

Petite Mort (Choreography: Jiri Kylian, 17 minutes)

Kylian chose the slow parts of two of Mozart's most beautiful and popular piano concertos (the adagio section of Piano Concerto in A Major KV 488 and the andante section of the Piano Concerto in C Major KV 467). Captivating choreography takes the audience on a journey of emotion. Tenderness, fragility, aggression, sexuality, energy, silence and vulnerability all play a significant part. *Petite mort*, which literally means "little death," serves as a synonym for orgasm in French and Arabic.

Sinfonietta (Choreography: Jiri Kylian, 35 minutes)

Kylian was inspired by the music of Leos Janacek to create this romantic ballet which has become a milestone in contemporary choreography. *Sinfonietta* is a ballet in five movements. Each part has its own spirit and moves from folkloric moods to dream-like visions. The whole choreography is a brilliant harmony of dance and music which brings to life an image of a world somewhere between realism and abstraction. The forceful fanfares of Janacek's music are matched by an energetic and joyous display of movement, creating an image which carries through the composer's intention of evoking the spirit of the "modern, free Czech."



Photo courtesy of Diana Zehner



Photo courtesy of Ivo Dankovic



Photo courtesy of Diana Zehner

The National Theater Ballet was founded in 1883 as a three-ensemble theater (drama, opera, and ballet). Since 1883, its ballet ensemble has played in the development of Czech ballet art as one of the largest ensembles with the best dancers in the Czech Republic. The group has 65 dancers, headed by Czech leading choreographer and dancer Petr Zuska since 2002. The repertoire of the National Theater Ballet comprises classical, neoclassical, and modern works. Since its origination, the National Theater Ballet has performed in more than 60 countries worldwide. At present, it is considered one of the most artistic and prestigious ensembles in the Czech Republic. This ballet company combines brilliant technique with breathtaking energy, performing the great classics as well as works by contemporary choreographers. For more information, visit www.narodni-divadlo.cz.

Jiri Kylian is the most imitated choreographer of his generation. His work is admired, studied and revered across both the ballet and modern worlds.

To see his dances is to understand the majesty of the art, and the rare gift he has to marry music to movement. For those of us in Washington who have traveled hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles to see his ballets, the opportunity to experience his work on a world class dance company from his home country, and to see those dances interpreted by the people who truly understand his art and his experience is something to be treasured. Add to this the emerging brilliance of the company's own Artistic Director Petr Zuska and you have an evening that stands out even in the extraordinary season of dance in the Nation's capital.

~Paul Gordon Emerson,
Artistic Director, CityDance
Ensemble



The Czernin Palace
Award Medal

Czernin Palace Awards 2008

Ambassador Petr Kolar has granted the 2008 Czernin Palace Awards to four Americans whose work helps promote Czech-U.S. relations. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs is headquartered at the Czernin Palace in Prague, for which the award is named. Although the Ministry has a number of awards for achievement on behalf of the Czech Republic, none was specifically directed at Czech-American relations, prompting the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington to initiate this annual honor.

The Czernin Palace Awards are made on the basis of nominations from Honorary Consuls and Honorary Consuls General in the United States, who are entitled to make one nomination each year. The award, in the form of a medal, is then presented by the Consuls. In 2008 nominations were made by Joseph Mestenhauser, former Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic in consultation with Honorary Consul, Robert Vanasek, and by Honorary Consuls General Peter Rafaeli and Ray Snokhous. The 2008 Czernin Palace Award recipients are:

Georgiana Dolejsi, Eagan, MN, for her lifelong commitment and dedication to promoting and protecting Czech Heritage in Minnesota, and for her admirable activities in the Sokol organization.

Dr. Clinton Machann, College Station, TX, for his lifelong work promoting and protecting Czech heritage, and

for his work with the Czech Educational Foundation of Texas (CEFT), the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU), and the journal *Kosmas*.

Dr. Christopher Thomforde, Bethlehem, PA, 15th President of Moravian College, for his support of a student exchange program with Czechs, his endorsement of the Nicholas

Winton project, and for promotion of Czech science.

Dr. Kent Wilson, St. Paul, MN, for his dedicated efforts at the Vaclav Havel Civil Society Symposium, which became an actual educational center and a scholar-in-residence program that promotes Czech humanities and democratic traditions.



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