

CZECH the NEWS

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Vol. 2, 2011

President Obama Welcomes Ambassador

Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States Petr Gandalovic presented his credentials to U.S. President Barack Obama during a ceremony at the White House on July 7, 2011.

In a short discussion with the Ambassador, President Obama said that he appreciated the alliance between the Czech Republic and the United States and asked the Ambassador to convey this message to Czech government officials. Ambassador Gandalovic mentioned that the Czech Republic also highly values

this alliance and appreciates the fruitful cooperation with U.S. Ambassador in Prague Norman Eisen.

From 1997 to 2002, Gandalovic was appointed as the first Consul General of the Czech Republic in New York. In 2002, he was elected as Mayor of the City of Usti nad Labem. From 2006 until 2011, he was a Member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. He was appointed as the Minister of Regional Development in 2006 and the Minister of Agriculture from 2007-2009. 🇨🇪



Ambassador Gandalovic and his wife Pavlina meet U.S. President Obama at the White House.

Photo courtesy of the White House

Embassy Launches Festival Website: www.mutualinspirations.org

The Embassy of the Czech Republic announces the launching of the *Mutual Inspirations Festival* website www.mutualinspirations.org, featuring over 20 upcoming events, musical

samples, and stories honoring the 170th birthday of composer Antonin Dvorak. The festival begins on September 8, 2011, and ends on October 28, 2011. On the website, viewers can take a sneak peak at the calendar of events which highlights local and international artists coming to the Washington, DC, community this fall.

The Mutual Inspirations Festival is an initiative spearheaded by the Embassy of the Czech Republic, under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and



Maestro Jesus Manuel Berard conducts the DC Youth Orchestra.

Photo courtesy of DC Youth Orchestra

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Karel Schwarzenberg, focusing on

the mutual inspirations between Czech and American cultures.

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Foreign Minister Visits U.S.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Karel Schwarzenberg conducted a working visit to the United States from May 27 through June 4, 2011. A delegation consisting of representatives of Czech IT, film industries, and scientists focusing on the field of civil nuclear energy accompanied the Minister.

Travel Timeline

May 28, 2011

The delegation first stopped in Ennis, Texas, where Minister Schwarzenberg met with Mayor Russell Thomas and Rep. Joe

Barton. The Minister then spoke at the city's 45th Annual National Polka Festival. While in Ennis, Minister Schwarzenberg decorated World War II veterans with the Cross of Merit of the Minister of Defense First Class.

May 29, 2011

Minister Schwarzenberg and his delegation attended a Catholic Mass and then met with the business community and Czech compatriots of the Forth Worth area. Following the meeting, the Minister traveled to Houston in order to attend a program at the Czech Center Museum Houston. In the evening, Czech nuclear scientists associated



Minister Schwarzenberg meets with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Photo courtesy of Tamki Nemeš

under the umbrella of Czech Nuclear Education Network (CENEN), signed a Letter of Intent for Cooperation with their counterparts from Texas A&M University. The Minister

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Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fetzko

Dear Friends,

I am deeply honored and humbled to serve as the newly appointed Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States of America. I recently officially presented my credentials to President Barack Obama on July 7, 2011, expressing my appreciation for the gracious hospitality that the United States affords our mission and the core values that our countries share.

I take my duties and obligations over from Charge d' Affaires, ad interim, Daniel Kostoval, who has led the Czech mission since last summer. Thus, I would foremost like to express my sincerest thanks for all the work he and the Embassy staff accomplished in that time frame to further enhance the relations between the Czech Republic and the United States, especially in regards to intensifying bilateral economic cooperation. The Czech-US Economic Dialogue was launched late last year in order to increase mutual commercial exchange and investments.

I will continue to emphasize this cooperation as one of the three pillars of our countries' relationship focusing on fostering scientific and research development. Further, as the Czech Republic and the United States are reliable allies in NATO, I am committed to work with our American partners to further deepen our ties in the field of security and defense. Last but not least, I remain devoted to the vision shared by our two countries to preserve and promote democracy and human rights around the world.

I have already had the privilege to join First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Karel Schwarzenberg in his week long U.S. visit, during which he met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington, led a trade mission of Czech company representatives to California, and attended an annual Czech heritage festival in Texas. I very much valued meeting Czech compatriot communities around the United States.

This fall, I welcome all to engage in the celebration of this year's Mutual Inspirations Festival to honor the close cultural ties between our countries through the work of famous Czech classical composer Antonin Dvorak. For information about the numerous events of the festival, please visit www.mutualinspirations.org.

For now, I wish everyone a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

Yours truly,

Petr Gandalovič



Honorary Consuls Meet in Washington



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fetzko

Honorary Consuls and Honorary Consuls General meet the Ambassador.

Ambassador Petr Gandalovic met with the Honorary Consuls General and Honorary Consuls serving on behalf of the Czech Republic at the Embassy on June 10, 2011. At this year's annual meeting, the Honorary Consuls were briefed on political, economic, cultural, and consular

matters regarding Czech-US relations. The Ambassador moreover emphasized that the Czech Republic deeply values the Honorary Consuls' support and work. A roundtable discussion regarding the Consuls' experiences and input closed the meeting.

RFE Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Radio Free Europe (RFE) commemorated its 60th Anniversary of its first broadcasts to Czechoslovakia, at John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on June 2, 2011.

Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg opened the event, which also included a discussion on "No Freedom Without Media Freedom." Among other notable members present were Petr Gandalovic, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States; Walter Isaacson, president of the Aspen Institute and chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors; His Excellency Husain Haqqani, Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States; David



Photo courtesy of Janki Nema

Minister Karel Schwarzenberg

Kramer, executive director of Freedom House; and Thomas A. Dine, president of the American Friends of the Czech Republic and former president of RFE/RL, Inc.

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Czech Software Company Opens in U.S.

Ambassador Gandalovic was honored to open in June the North American headquarters of Javlin, a leading IT and data software company from the Czech Republic. Several high level attendees, including Secretary Juan Verde from the Department of Commerce's Office for

Europe and Eurasia, joined the Ambassador to celebrate the company's transatlantic expansion and cooperation with key customers such as IBM, Cisco, and Sungard. Javlin is an innovative champion in data software and high tech data solutions.

Filmmaker Brings Burma to the Forefront

Ambassador Gandalovic welcomed documentary filmmaker Jeanne Hallacy to the Embassy on June 23, 2011, to present the film *Into the Current*, which tells the story of Burma's unsung heroes—its prisoners of conscience and the price they pay for speaking the truth to power in a military dictatorship.

The film follows Bo Kyi, once a political prisoner in Burma who now lives in exile just across the border in Thailand. His life remains bound to his more than 2,000 prisoner colleagues who are still behind bars. Some are his close friends, including the poet and inspirational leader Min Ko Naing, comedian Zarganar,

and musician Win Maw. As his friends have fallen silent in remote jails, Bo Kyi has taken on the dangerous work of operating a secretive yet enormously effective underground network of practical supports for them and their families, taking their stories to the international arena.

A reluctant leader, Bo Kyi is a hard man to know. The winner of many human rights awards, he dislikes the limelight. A friendship spanning a decade allows filmmaker Jeanne Hallacy to follow the man, his motivations, and his cause.

"[In the film,] I wanted to portray not only that they [political prisoners such as Bo Kyi] have endured, but also that they continue to love. They never talk of vengeance and have completely let go of anger," stated Hallacy.

The film utilizes rare archival footage filmed by the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) and historical scenes of Aung San Suu Kyi as the visionary leader of the country's non-violent movement. It depicts exiles who are continuing the political struggle; songwriter Khun Saing's bittersweet refugee life, Zarganar's vaudeville troupe,



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fetzko

and other former prisoners whose humor, courage, and refusal to be silenced remain little known. While they and countless others fight on, the dream of a free Burma remains alive.

In regards to obtaining some of the footage she used for her film, she said, "It's hard to explain how scary it is to be out on the street hiding a camera and then lifting that camera to your eye to steal your shot ... One of the cameramen from DVB was just sentenced to 65 years in prison."

The screening was followed by a panel discussion, moderated by David Kramer (Executive Director, Freedom House), which included: Tom Malinowski (Washington Director of Human Rights Watch), Aung Din (Executive Director, U.S.



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fetzko

Ambassador Gandalovic opens the event.

Campaign for Burma), Benedict Rogers (Christian Solidarity Worldwide), and Jeanne Hallacy.

This event concludes the Embassy's project "*Democracy and Human Rights: Lessons from the Past for the Current Czech Foreign Policy*." The various events put together within this project focused namely on the country's totalitarian past, its current human-rights-promotion priorities and, topically, on the rights of women and children. 🇵🇸



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fetzko

Tom Malinowski and Jeanne Hallacy



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fetzko

Aung Din and Benedict Rogers



Photo courtesy of Tomki Nemec

Minister Schwarzenberg and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice



Photo courtesy of Tomki Nemec

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Minister Schwarzenberg

Minister's US Visit

(Continued from pg. 1)

also visited the NASA Johnson Space Center and learned about U.S. space exploration.

May 31, 2011

In San Francisco, CA, Minister Schwarzenberg attended a seminar on the *IT Business and Investment Climate in the Czech Republic*, and led the delegation for meetings at the Plug and Play Technology Center. After visiting the Hoover Institution, Minister Schwarzenberg met with former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The Minister then traveled to Los Angeles to meet with representatives of the film industry and local Czech compatriots.

June 1, 2011

Minister Schwarzenberg met with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio



Photo courtesy of Tomki Nemec

(Left to right) Ambassador Eisen, CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment Michael Lynton, Minister Schwarzenberg and Ambassador Gandalovic meet outside Columbia Pictures in Los Angeles, CA.

Villaraigosa and Arnold Schwarzenegger, former Governor of California. The Minister later attended discussions at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum.

June 2, 2011

Upon arriving in Washington,

DC, Minister Schwarzenberg met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to discuss the broad range of bilateral as well as global issues. He then visited with experts of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

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Embassy Launches Festival Website: www.mutualinspirations.org

(Continued from pg. 1)

The festival is founded on the idea of giving rise to an “all American community project,” taking place at cultural, religious, and educational community centers through a variety of forms, such as music, art, dance, film, and literature. Through the celebration of the work of many famous personalities and the creations of individuals they in turn influenced, the festival aims to depict this long tradition of transatlantic inspiration and interpretation. Each year, the festival focuses on a new personality. For example, the this year’s festival showcases Antonin Dvorak; however, next year the embassy will highlight Milos Forman.

Antonin Dvorak was one of the most prominent Czech classical composers. Due to his revolutionary thinking of the time, Dvorak left a legacy through his students who would later instruct American legends George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, and Aaron Copland. Moreover, taking in the sounds of America, Dvorak was inspired to create his most famous piece—*Symphony No. 9 in E Minor*, “From the New World,” which was listened to by U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong during man’s first landing on the moon.

Eva Velicka, from the National Museum in Prague, will join him for a discussion, “Manuscripts as Storytellers.” A lecture-recital with tenor Reginald Bouknight follows the symposium. The event includes a display of fac-similes of Dvorak’s *New World Symphony* and other artifacts.

Additional events include the Catholic University of America orchestra, under the direction of conductor Murry Sidlin, performing the *New World Symphony* at the National Museum of the American Indian, and the talented DC Youth Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Jesus Manuel Berard, presenting this popular symphony in a special concert at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater.

The festival also incorporates important spiritual centers. The Archbishop of Prague will celebrate Mass with the Choir of the Basilica performing works by Dvorak at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Furthermore, the Cathedral Choral Society will feature Dvorak’s renowned *Te Deum* at the Washington National Cathedral.

Other key events include the world premiere of *Dvorak Jazz Dances* by Charley Gerard performed by Washington Musica Viva at the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the American premiere of contemporary composer Miroslav Srnka’s *Engrams* at the Phillips Collection, the American premiere of the



Murry Sidlin



Solomia Gorokhivska will perform in a concert of Young Artists at the Embassy of the Czech Republic on October 7 at 7:30 pm.

Western musical *Tony D* at the Kennedy Center Millennium stage, and more.

The Embassy has a fall season packed with events, accentuating the talented composer and the mutual inspirations that have ensued between

the United States and the Czech Republic through the world of music.

For additional information about the festival including event logistics and artist information, please visit www.mutualinspirations.org.

Key Festival Events

**September 17, 7 pm
New World Symphony**

Under the direction of Maestro Murry Sidlin, the Catholic University of America Orchestra will present the *New World Symphony* at the National Museum of the American Indian. The event highlights the Native American inspiration for Dvorak’s most popular symphony.

**September 25, 10 am
Commemorative Mass**

Archbishop of Prague Dominik Duka will celebrate a special Mass in honor of Dvorak and the 200th birthday of St. John Nepomucene Neumann in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

**October 1, 10 am
Dvorak Symposium with Lecture-Recital**

Musicologist Michael Beckerman will lead a symposium at the Library of Congress, followed by a lecture-recital with tenor Reginald Bouknight.

**October 28, 7 pm
Te Deum and Glagolitic Mass**

The Cathedral Choral Society will present Dvorak’s world-famous *Te Deum* as well as Janacek’s *Glagolitic Mass* at the Washington National Cathedral on Czech National Day.

www.mutualinspirations.org



Michael Beckerman

As one of the highlights of the festival, a special Dvorak Symposium lead by musicologist Michael Beckerman will be presented at the Library of Congress. Beckerman will speak on the role of African American sources in the composer’s conception of an American music.

Archbishop of Prague to Celebrate Mass in DC this Fall

Archbishop of Prague Dominik Duka will celebrate a special Mass on September 25, 2011 at 10 am, in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Mass will honor composer Antonin Dvorak as well as the 200th birthday of Saint John Nepomucene Neumann. As a special addition to the Mass, the Choir of the Basilica will perform Dvorak's *Mass in D Major, "Luzanska."* The event is part of the *Mutual Inspirations Festival* which showcases the long tradition of transatlantic inspiration between the Czech Republic and the United States.

Although Antonin Dvorak is the main personality of this year's festival, the Mass also will recognize the contribution that

Saint John Nepomucene Neumann gave to the United States. John Nepomucene Neumann (1811–1860), born in Prachatitz, Bohemia (part of modern-day Czech Republic), served as the fourth Bishop of Philadelphia. He was named after the holy Bohemian martyr and patron of the confessional seal, Saint John Nepomucene. During his time as Bishop of Philadelphia, he founded the first Catholic diocesan school system in the United States and increased the number of Catholic schools in his diocese from two to one hundred. In addition to his work in the schools, he also established 80 churches and founded hospitals and orphanages. He was the first American bishop to be canonized in 1977.

Following his canonization, the National Shrine of Saint John

Neumann was built at the Parish of St. Peter the Apostle in Philadelphia, PA. The remains of St. John Neumann rest under the altar of the shrine.

His Excellency Dominik Duka is the thirty-sixth Archbishop of Prague, appointed by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. In 1975, he was deprived of the state authorization for the sacred ministry and worked in a Skoda factory in Plzen as a designer until the fall of the Iron Curtain. While under the communist regime, he worked in secret in the Order as a teacher of theology. From 1981–82, he was jailed in Plzen. He was a member of the Provincial of the Dominicans in Bohemia and Moravia (1986–1998) and the



Archbishop Dominik Duka



Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

twenty-fourth bishop of Hradec Kralove (1998–2010.) In 2010, he was elected the chairman of the Czech Bishop Conference.

Antonin Dvorak

Antonin Dvorak is one of the most prominent Czech classical composers of all time. It was his remarkable creativity and progressiveness which gained him fame even in his own lifetime, eventually bringing him for several years to the United States, where he also left an enormous musical footprint. While working in New York City, the composer, coming from humble beginnings in the Czech lands of Central Europe, took in the sounds of Native and African Americans and produced one of the most listened to symphonies on Earth called *From the New World* in 1893. Seventy six years later, this beautiful piece inspired in yet another new world as U.S. Astronaut Neil Armstrong took man's first steps on the moon.

Composer

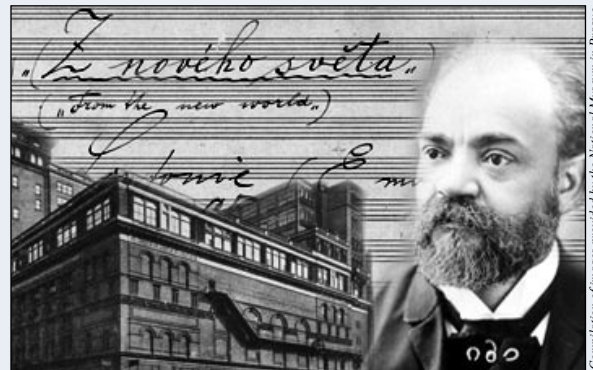
Born in Nelahozeves near Prague to a village innkeeper and butcher, Dvorak defied following in his father's footsteps and went on to pursue a career in music. Thanks to the influence of his teacher, Antonin Liehmann, he became an accomplished violinist, organist, and violist, playing viola for the Czech National Theater Orchestra. Dvorak also struggled to become a recognized composer. Through his trials and will to succeed, Dvorak became friends with celebrated composer Johannes Brahms, who greatly influenced him and also connected him with his own publisher. Dvorak's compositions became a sensation. Among them were his most memorable pieces, the *Slavonic Dances*, which incorporated the rhythms of Slavic folk dances, demonstrating Dvorak's passion about his Czech homeland and reflecting his heritage and humble origins. His most renowned works include the *New World Symphony*, the "American" *String Quartet*, and the *Cello Concerto in B minor*. He also composed operas, symphonic, choral, and chamber music.

Mutual Inspiration

Antonin Dvorak's fascination with his ethnic roots and folk melodies gained him the attention of the founder of National Conservatory of Music in New York City, Jeanette Thurber, who was paving the way to capture and develop an American music style. Offering him handsome pay, Thurber persuaded the Czech composer to become the director of the conservatory for three years, beginning in 1892. Being greatly inspired by the sounds of America, Dvorak left a great legacy through his music and students in the US, before returning to Prague to subsequently direct the Music Conservatory there from 1901 until his death on May 1, 1904. Today, a statue of Antonin Dvorak stands in Stuyvesant Square Park, near where he resided on 327 East 17th Street, thanks to the Dvorak American Heritage Association, in cooperation with the New York Philharmonic and the Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Association.

Teacher

Beyond composing and directing, Antonin Dvorak left an enormous legacy through those he taught at the National Conservatory in New York in his three years there. Dvorak's students, Henry Burleigh, Will Marion Cook, Rubin Goldmark, Harry Rowe Shelly, and Edwin Franko Goldman, all eventually made meaningful contributions to musical life and literature. They carried the torch of American music to those who would become great American legends. Goldmark taught George Gershwin and instructed Aaron Copland in the fundamentals of counterpoint and composition; Shelly instructed Charles Ives on the organ; and Cook became a pioneer of black musical theater and a mentor to the great jazz composer and performer, Duke Ellington.



Compilation of images provided by the National Museum in Prague

Read more about Antonin Dvorak and his mutual inspirations by visiting www.mutualinspirations.org.

American Contemporary Composer to Premiere New Work

Composer and saxophonist Charley Gerard will present the world premiere of his new piece *Dvorak Jazz Dances* with Washington Musica Viva (WMV), a DC-based nonprofit group comprised of professional musicians, at the Embassy of the Czech Republic on September 21, 2011 at 7:30 pm, as part of the *Mutual Inspirations Festival*.

When asked to describe the new piece, Gerard said,

“Just as Dvorak was inspired by the American landscape to compose some of his finest works, I have written *Dvorak Jazz Dances*, inspired by the Czech composer’s two series of *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46 and 72.*”

Gerard further described the new piece saying,

“Each of my *Dvorak Jazz Dances* begins with a short

excerpt of a *Slavonic Dance* and is followed by an original theme in which a kernel of the Dvorak theme is reinterpreted.”

He also discussed how both Duke Ellington and George Gershwin both received musical direction from musicians who were students of Dvorak at Jeanette Thurber’s National Conservatory. In regards to jazz, he said,

“Jazz was a musical genre that itself was inspired by Dvorak’s American legacy...”

Concerning his new work, he said that jazz improvisation is an important element of the piece.


“Rhythmic invention and humor are key elements of my music. I hope that these *Dances* are rhythmically compelling and sometimes funny.”



Charley Gerard

Photo courtesy of Charley Gerard


The quintet that will perform with Gerard include Washington Musica Viva Founder Carl Banner (piano), Herman Burney (bass), Lenny Robinson (drums), and Syberen van Munster (guitar).

Tickets for the concert are \$20 and can be reserved by emailing reservations@mutualinspirations.org (with “WMV Jazz” in the subject line) or calling 202/274-9105. 

Famous Mole Rides to Space

Landing back on Earth on June 1, 2011, the NASA space shuttle Endeavour had an unusual passenger during its last mission into space. It was the plush version of Krtek or the “Little Mole,” a children’s beloved cartoon character animated by Zdenek Miler in 1956. Astronaut Andrew Feustel—whose mother-in-law is from the Czech Republic—packed a stuffed Krtek along with him as one of his personal items.

Feustel stated, “It is our hope that with Krtek’s help, our mission inspires students and adults to excel in the study of science, technology, engineering and mathematics that will be essential to future space exploration and beneficial to human kind.”

To learn more about Krtek’s spaceflight, read more at www.dokosmuskrtkem.cz. 

80s Party Celebrates Freedom

Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel Kostoval greeted over 400 guests at the Embassy’s 80s Party on June 24, 2011. The evening event celebrated and remembered the fall of the Iron Curtain and called attention

to the exhibition *The Stories of the Iron Curtain*, which focused on those who tried to escape Czechoslovakia through varied means, such as hot air balloons, tunnels, creating their own tanks, among other inventive ways.

Public Relations Officer Andrea Pohl spoke of her escape when she was only 8 years old, and how her grandmother cried

when she was saying goodbye at the bus station. At the time, she did not understand why her grandmother was crying so much. With her four-year-old brother and mother, she spent



Pictured from left to right: Ezree Mualem, AU Professor Gail Humphries Mardirosian, Zach Cohen, and Michael Poandl.

four months in a UN refugee hotel filled with mice and bugs.

“When we arrived at the camp, I remember a man standing there who told me that I could never go back home to see my grandmother.”

Pohl arrived in the United States Thanksgiving day 25 years ago. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, she was reunited with her grandmother.

Following her presentation,

actors from American University (AU)—Zach Cohen, Michael Poandl, and Ezree Mualem (AU Alum)—brought to life short scenarios of what it was like to live under the Communist regime.

Actor Michael Poandl pounded on the piano, yelling, “That’s the sound of freedom!” Poandl, dressed in the underground musician style of all black, spoke about the imprisonment of the Plastic People of the Universe, an iconic band of the revolution. He also stressed what it was like to be a musi-

cian who did not have the freedom to play in public.

“If you take away the arts, you take away hope,” said Poandl.

Sporting a polyester blazer and spectacles, actor Zach Cohen sat on a small stage typing Samizdat publications and reciting lines from Charter 77, a document that criticized the government for failing to implement human rights provisions. Through his monologue, Cohen revealed the hardships of being a professor and standing up for his beliefs during the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia.

Passing out white carnations, actress Ezree Mualem explained how students during the Velvet Revolution gave flowers to the police as a sign of peace. During the event, she jumped up on a small stand waving a Czech flag and throwing the white carnations. She spoke of the Velvet Revolution and began the chant

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Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fezko

Daniel Kostoval



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fezko

Andrea Pohl

Czech Basketball Star Selected by the Washington Wizards

The Washington Wizards selected Czech basketball talent Jan Vesely for the No. 6 overall pick in the first round of the National Basketball Association's (NBA) entry draft.

This is the highest draft pick in which a Czech player has ever been selected in the history of the league. Vesely, who last played for Partizan Belgrade in Serbia, will be the first Czech player in the NBA since Jiri Welsch in 2006.

The 21-year-old, 6 foot 11 inch star hails from Ostrava, Czech Republic, and comes from an athletic family: his father was a former basketball player, while his mother played volleyball.

Borko Popic, lead scout and contributor to NBAdraft.net, lists many of Vesely's strengths on the



Embassy staff and friends met with Michal Neuvirth during his visit to the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

website stating that Vesely "possesses a terrific combination of size and length for the SF (Small Forward) position... If he catches the ball and his feet are set and pointed towards the basket, he usually will knock down shots."

After being picked by the Wizards in the first round, Vesely quickly became famous for kissing his girlfriend Eva Kodousova. In a video made by blogger Kylie Weidi from Truth About It, Weidi asks Vesely about the kiss

after being drafted. "This was a big moment for my family... So, I don't know. It was casual," Vesely said. During the brief interview, Vesely said that he met his girlfriend on the basketball court.

The Embassy would like to wish Vesely the best of luck in his career with the Wizards and welcomes him and his family to the Washington, DC, area. Fans can support Vesely by going to the Verizon Center next season to watch the only Czech NBA player in action.

Would You Like to Join Us?

SVU, the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (Společnost pro vědy a umění), is a 53-year-old global organization comprised of Czech and Slovak scholars, scientists, and artists. During the Cold War, SVU served as a platform for Czechoslovak scholars to meet and to maintain the cultural traditions of both Czechs and Slovaks in the free world. Today, SVU promotes Czech and Slovak science and culture in the world and maintains close ties with institutions of higher learning, science, and culture in the Czech and Slovak Republics. SVU publishes books devoted to Czech and Slovak history and culture, the peer-reviewed journal KOSMAS, and the bimonthly bulletin entitled ZPRAVY SVU. SVU organizes world congresses in the Czech and Slovak Republics and regional conferences in the United States or Canada and also maintains local chapters throughout the world.

SVU is now opening its membership to young professionals and students in North America and invites them to join.

Detailed information about SVU is available at www.svu2000.org. Also, you may contact the SVU President, Prof. Karel Raska, M.D., Ph.D. (kraska@saintpetersuh.com).

Avalon Remains Committed to Czech Films

The Avalon Theater, in its fifth year of collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic on the *Lions of Czech Film Series*, remains committed to bringing award-winning Czech films to the Washington, DC, community. The series runs once a month and gives the community an opportunity to view Czech films that are popular hits in Europe.

3 Seasons in Hell (Tri sezony v pekle)



August 10, 8 pm

Synopsis: Ivan Heinz has just turned 19 and runs away from home. He devotes himself to the revolutionary politics and poetry, throwing himself into a destructive romance with Jana. The two lovers lead a life peppered with inspiring erotic games, arguments, and laughter, against a backdrop of 1940s dance music and political change. As the new communist regime reveals its oppressive side, Ivan and Jana remain blind to the looming danger. They plan their escape to Paris, until they are confronted by the regime. (DIR: Tomas Masin, 2009, 110 min., in Czech with English subtitles)

The film was nominated for 12 Czech Lions Awards (2010) and received awards for Best Picture, Director, Actor, Screenplay, and Best Cinematography.

The Avalon Theatre is located at 5612 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. Tickets may be purchased at the box office or online at www.theavalon.org.

A Walk Worthwhile (Dobre placena prochazka)



September 14, 8 pm

Synopsis: Uli and Vanilka are getting a divorce. They are in the middle of sorting out snags in the divorce proceedings with their attorney when a postman delivers two mysterious telegrams from Liverpool. Vanilka's rich aunt has decided to bequeath to the couple's future child one million pounds. In the wake of this news, Vanilka, Uli, and the others engage in various wily amorous capers with the aim of securing this untold wealth for themselves. (DIR: Milos Forman, 2009, 85 min., in Czech with English subtitles)

The film premiered at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (2009) and screened at a number of international festivals.

Havel's Leaving (Odchazeni)



October 12, 8 pm

Synopsis: The film maps the last two days of Rieger's stay in a villa, before he is evicted. With each succeeding scene, the situation gradually goes from bad to worse. Irena loses her respect for Rieger, particularly after she catches him with Bea in the gazebo. Vlasta not only goes back on her proposal to offer a roof but even proposes a change to Rieger's will. The journalists turn out to be in the pay of the gutter press which won't print Rieger's replies to political questions, but focuses solely on his private life. Therefore, his departure from public life is cast into a disreputable light. (DIR: Vaclav Havel, 2011, 95 min., in Czech with English subtitles)

This new film is based on Havel's play by the same name.



RFE Celebrates 60th Anniversary

(Continued from pg. 2)

During the communist regime, listening to the radio or spreading information was a very dangerous act, punishable with prison sentences. Consequences also applied to children and relatives of those who did not abide by the regime's censorship.


Nevertheless, there was an immense number of listeners

who were not afraid and listened in secret.

Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic, congratulated RFE stating: "Its broadcasts have played an exceptional role in the modern history of Czechoslovakia. The radio belongs to institutions that have for several decades informed

truthfully about real and important events, and thus have helped to maintain continuous civic awareness under communist dictatorship."

The anniversary is not only celebrated in the Czech Republic, but also in Slovakia, and Munich, where similar commemorative events took place. The

Czech Republic has continued with the celebration, as Czech Radio and the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague initiated an exhibition displaying the Czechoslovak Service's history in the Gardens of the Senate which will last until the middle of September. 


80s Party Celebrates Freedom

(Continued from pg. 6)

"Uz je to tady!" (It is here!), encouraging others to join her and ring their keys.

The chant and the ringing of the keys was a symbol of the Velvet Revolution. When the DJ played *Prayer for Marta* by Marta Kubisova, a song that became the ballad of the revolution—black and white images of the revolution were displayed on the wall.

After the presentations, DJ Tom from Prague began

the 80s style disco with Pink Floyd's "We Don't Need No Education," from *The Wall*. The evening included songs from such iconic bands as Depeche Mode, Madonna, and the Bangles. Attendees to the celebration came dressed in their 80s regalia—jean jackets, jelly bracelets, big hair, and neon colors. The event celebrated this individual freedom and how the Velvet Revolution ended years of communist rule. 


Foreign Minister Visits the U.S.

(Continued from pg. 3)

led by Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski. Later, the Minister met with Rep. Dan Burton, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia in the U.S. House of Representatives. In the evening, the Minister spoke about the role of free media in free societies during an event commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Radio Free Europe's first broadcasts to Czechoslovakia at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

June 3, 2011

Minister Schwarzenberg opened a working breakfast on Czech-U.S. economic relations at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and met its CEO Thomas Donohue.

The Minister then traveled to New York City to partake in a reception at a conference of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences. He arrived back in Prague on June 4, 2011. 

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