



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: June 19, 2015

Prague Days Chicago culminates

Celebration of 25 years of Prague – Chicago Partnership and the great Czech history in Chicago

The “Prague Days Chicago” festival, the largest presentation of the Czech Republic in the United States this year, culminates. **The Mayor of Prague Adriana Krnacova personally opened a number of events.** Several of them will continue for few more weeks. The Prague Mayor also met with the Mayor of Chicago Rahm Emanuel as well as the Governor of Illinois Bruce Rauner. They discussed possibilities for further development of mutual cooperation, including the opening of a direct flight between Prague and Chicago.

Chicago has been a traditional center of Czech immigration since 1850s. The city also played a key role in the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The Velvet Revolution in 1989, the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia, opened the door to the reunion between Czechs in the homeland and Czechs and their friends in Chicago. Prague walked through the door immediately. The sister cities relationship was set up already in 1990.

The Mayor of Prague Adriana Krnacova brought to Chicago “a selection of the highly diverse Prague cultural scene.” **It features art exhibitions, film, different genres of music and a history exhibit.**

“We dedicate this festival to the great Czech history in Chicago and to its most famous representatives,” adds Borek Lizec, Consul General of the Czech Republic in Chicago. “We are very proud of the incredible achievements of the Chicago Mayor **Anton Cermak**, the founder of McDonald’s **Ray Kroc**, the actress **Kim Novak**, the astronauts **Eugene Cernan** and **Jim Lovell**, the rock musician **Jim Peterik**, the political lioness **Judy Baar Topinka** and many others.” All of those listed or their families became active supporters of the festival. They recorded video-invitations and the Czech Chicago legends are also part of the street pole banners, which can be seen downtown Chicago (along Ohio and Ontario from Michigan Ave. towards the lake).

Moreover, **Jim Peterik of the Ides of March** hosted Prague Rockfest on June 13. **Kim Novak hosts “Prague Days – Czech that film”**, a film festival that continues till the end of June at the Gene Siskel Film Center. After a special screening of one of Novak’s most famous movies Vertigo that took place on June 14, **Jiri Madl, one of the most popular Czech actors**, is going to present his debut as film director To See the Sea on **Tuesday, June 23 at 8 pm.**

The festival also **highlights Pilsen as originally a largely Czech neighborhood.** The opening event of Prague Days “This is Pilsen: Bohemian Past, Latino Present” took place at

the Thalia Hall, once founded by a Czech immigrant John Dusek. With the support of Alderman Danny Solís, a **presentation of a new mural dedicated to the victims of the Eastland steamship disaster** will take place on **Wednesday, June 24 at 6:30 pm**. July 2015, marks the 100-year anniversary of the 1915 tragic disaster which claimed 844 lives in the Chicago River. A large number of victims were Czechs and are buried at the Bohemian National Cemetery.

The “Treasured Legacy” exhibit features **highlights of Alphonse Mucha, a world-renowned, leading figure of Art Nouveau**, inspired by Chicago, and jewelry, glass and sculptures by his granddaughter Jarmila Mucha Plocková. The exhibit will remain on display at the Maya Polsky Gallery (215 W Superior Street #1E, Chicago) till the end of July. At the invitation of his patron, Chicago philanthropist Charles R. Crane, Mucha lived, taught, and worked in Chicago. Five large-scale paintings from Mucha’s monumental work, *The Slav Epic*, sponsored by Crane were on display at the Art Institute in 1920 to great critical and public acclaim. Mucha’s depiction of Crane’s daughter Josephine as the goddess Slavia was featured on the 100-crown note of the Republic of Czechoslovakia that is also a part of the exhibit. **“The depiction of a Chicago girl on a Czechoslovak banknote as the symbol of Slavic beauty was such a strong story that we decided to make it the logo of Prague Days,” adds Borek Lizec.**

Emil Viklický, “The Janacek of Jazz”, will present “modern jazz with a delicious Moravian flavor” on June 26, 7 pm at the Arts Center of Oak Park (200 N Oak Park Ave. Oak Park, IL 603 02).

Late Czech President Vaclav Havel became a worldwide symbol for freedom, democracy, and human rights. By playing such a strong role in opening the door to democracy and freedom to Czechs in 1989, he made the partnership between Prague and Chicago possible. A **sculpture “A Heart for Vaclav Havel”** became the gift from Prague to Chicago on the occasion. It was unveiled by the Mayor of Prague and the Mayor of Chicago in the presence of President’s former close colleagues on June 15. It will now travel through public places in Chicago, including universities, to tell the story of Václav Havel.

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