

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Vaclav Havel Library Foundation  
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## **Rehearsal for Truth**

**Theater Festival Honoring Vaclav Havel Presents:  
Eve of Retirement/ PRED ODCHODOM NA ODPOCINOK from  
Astorka Korzo 90 Theatre, Slovakia  
Friday, September 28, 2018, 7:30 p.m.  
Bohemian National Hall  
312 E73rd Street, New York, NY 10021**

***“What matters is not whether a play is light-hearted or serious, but—be it comedic or otherwise—whether it speaks to people about their problems, how it speaks to them, what impact it has on them. . . We wish only to put on plays that meet certain standards of urgency, that are intellectually penetrating, complex, challenging, and powerful.”***

*--Vaclav Havel, “The Kind of Theater We Want to Do,” from a letter to Alfred Radok, August 4, 1963*

The Vaclav Havel Library Foundation (VHLF), together with the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association (BBLA), will partner with Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Slovak performing arts and cultural institutions to host the second year of a unique festival presenting the best in contemporary Central European theater.

The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia have worked together consistently in the performing arts for almost thirty years. The result of their collaboration has been an outpouring of outstanding dramatic works that pose important questions about immigration, European identity, reconciliation with

fascist and communist pasts, and a host of other essential issues. The region's unusual creative energy deserves to be promoted and acknowledged internationally, especially as it has resulted in—to borrow Havel's words—theatrical productions that are at once urgent, intellectually penetrating, complex, challenging, and powerful.

The 2018 **REHEARSAL FOR TRUTH** festival will present four performances in the original languages with English supertitles, followed by talk-backs with the artists and after parties hosted by the countries cultural institutes and consulates general in NYC. There will also be two staged readings, one panel discussion and a Gala event in honor of **The Honorable Madeleine Albright**. These events will take place at The Bohemian National Hall (321 East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street). All **REHEARSAL FOR TRUTH** productions are **free to the public except the Gala Event**. The festival is supported by The Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association, NYC Cultural Affairs and New York City Council Member Ben Kallos.

## **EVE OF RETIREMENT/ PRED ODCHODOM NA ODPOCINOK**

**Friday, September 28, 2018, 7:30 p.m.**

Presented by: Astorka Korzo '90 Theatre

Playwright: Thomas Bernhard

Director: Juraj Nvota

Cast: Peter Simun, Zuzana Kronerova, Marta Sladeckova

Supported using public funding by Slovak Arts Council, Bratislava Self-Governing Region and the Slovak Consulate General in New York

*Eve of Retirement* represents not only an artistic masterpiece but also a political and social catharsis for the Slovak nation, whose government collaborated with the Nazi regime during the so-called Slovak state (1939–1945). The production

may be characterized as metaphorical realism showing this “evil” and its historical recurrence. Playwright Thomas Bernhard is one of the most important German-language authors of the postwar era, he pushes his contempt for Austria as a nest of unregenerate Nazis and anti-Semites to an outrageous extreme in the play.

The production was awarded Grand Prix as Best Production at the New Drama Festival of Contemporary Slovak and World Drama 2006 organized by The Theatre Institute in Bratislava.

*The Astorka Korzo'90 Theater from Bratislava is a company committed to pioneering dramaturgical and directorial works related to modern world classics. They have been one of the leading theatres in Slovakia following the legendary On Korzo Theatre that was closed for political reasons in the early 1970s.*

Book free tickets on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rehearsal-for-truth-eve-of-retirement-pred-odchodom-na-odpocinok-free-tickets-47700211617>

Link to Publicity Photographs:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/knvoetofrwn4en1/AADgxOda2KpsQ3aP4fU\\_NkBaa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/knvoetofrwn4en1/AADgxOda2KpsQ3aP4fU_NkBaa?dl=0)

Photo credit: Pavel Breier

### **Juraj Nvota –Director**

He graduated from the College of Performing Arts, Department of Theater Direction in 1976. After graduation, he worked in Slovak professional theaters in Trnava, Martin, Bratislava in SND, L + S, Astorka Korzo'90, Radošinske Naivné divadlo, in Prague in Semafor, Štúdium Y and Na zábradlí, in Brno in Hus na provázku and Městský divadlo . He has produced many theater productions at home and abroad. Among the most important are Romeo and Juliet, Othello,

Much Ado about Nothing, Armageddon on Grbe, Kazimír and Karolína, Mother, Heroes Square, Audiencia, Cocktail party, Day of joy, Vygumuj a napiš, Gazdova krv. In addition to theatrical production, he has created several feature-length feature films – Kruté radosti, Muzika, Confident, Rukojemník, Johankine tajomstvo. As an actor, the main character of Jakub /postmen/ in the Dušan Hanák film Rose tinted dreams, in Šulík film Všetko čo mám rád the character of Tomáš and others.

In his work he worked with prominent Slovak writers such as Dušan Dušek, Rudolf Sloboda, Petr Pišťánek, Pavel Vilikovský, Stanislav Štepko, Milan Lasica, Milan Uhde. He received the following prizes: The Igric Film Award for the Best Director of Kruté radosti 2002, and Muzika 2005; Slnko v sieti for the Best Director - Muzika 2005, Zlaté slnko for Best Actor in the Rose tinted dreams movie, many creative prizes and Litfond main awards for theatrical production. His works have taken part in foreign festivals in Lyon and Arhous - Charlie, Edinburgh – The Elephants Graveyard, Cividale and New York - Armageddon na Grbe.

### **About Vaclav Havel Library Foundation**

The Vaclav Havel Library Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in the United States to honor, preserve, and build upon the legacy of playwright, dissident, and former President of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel.

### **The Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association (BBLA)**

The mission of the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association (BBLA), established in 1891, is to preserve the Czech and Slovak culture in New York City as well as to build a cultural and social dialogue between the Czech and Slovak communities and the American public.

**Vaclav Havel** (1936-2011) was a playwright, essayist, political dissident, and, after 1990, president of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. In the 1960s Havel's plays *The Garden Party* and *The Memorandum* were widely performed around the world. But in the climate of political orthodoxy that followed the 1968 uprising in Czechoslovakia, Communist authorities forbade the publication and performance of Havel's works. Havel refused to be silenced and continued to write on behalf of the unjustly oppressed. He became an outspoken human rights advocate and in the 1970s was an author of Charter 77, the manifesto of the Czechoslovak dissident movement, which called on the government to honor its human rights commitments under the Helsinki Accords. During the next two decades Havel was arrested many times for alleged anti-state activities and was sentenced to more than four years in prison. Havel's seminal essay, "The Power of the Powerless," written in 1978, had a profound impact on dissident and human rights movements in Eastern Europe and around the world.

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