



NIGHT BEFORE THE FUNERAL / POHŘEB AŽ ZÍTRA (Stage Reading)

presented by
Untitled Theater Company No. 61
and Svanda Theatre

Tuesday, September 25, 2018, 7:30 PM

“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), have partnered 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 festival is supported by The Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association, NYC Cultural Affairs and New York City Council Member Ben Kallos.

SPECIAL THANKS to Theatre for the New City's Director, Crystal Fields, and the staff at TFNC for providing the theatrical properties for these visiting productions.

The Company:

Playwright:	Natalie Kocab
Translated by:	Alex Zucker
Director:	Edward Einhorn
Cast:	Michael Bertolini Tad D'Agostino Timur Kocak Ann Moller Alyson Leigh Rosenfeld Sandy York

Night Before the Funeral is a new Czech play, originally produced in 2017 by the Svanda Theatre in Prague under the direction of Daniel Hrbek. A death in the family brings everybody home, but a brief peace is broken by family squabbles, politics, and life crises. The mother's new Iranian boyfriend and a spectacular public breakdown just increase the tensions. An examination of life, in all its complexity, in the modern Czech Republic.

Untitled Theater Company #61 is a Theater of Ideas: scientific, political, philosophical, and above all theatrical. Their shows mix tragedy and comedy in a manner inspired by classic absurdism, while often incorporating music, technology, and physical theater. Early defining events include their Havel Festival and Ionesco Festival, in which they produced their full works (with the participation and attendance of President Havel and with Ionesco's daughter, Marie-France, respectively). They have received Critics Picks for their work from The New York Times, Time Out, and The Village Voice.

Though they now produce only original work, their responses to the absurd and terrifying moments of their history are a continuing inspiration they try to navigate a contemporary response to our time.

Other Czech projects include *The Velvet Oratorio*, which told the story of the Velvet Revolution (at Lincoln Center and the Bohemian National Hall); the original play *Rudolf II* (also at the Bohemian National Hall); the English-language premiere of Vaclav Havel's *The Pig*, or *Vaclav Havel's Hunt for a Pig*(At 3LD); and their ongoing show *Cabaret in Captivity*, songs and sketches from Terezin (performed in New York, Washington DC, and London). We have received Critics Picks for our work from *The New York Times*, *Time Out*, and *The Village Voice*.

Edward Einhorn - Director

Edward Einhorn is a playwright, director, translator, librettist, and novelist. He is the Artistic Director of *Untitled Theater Company #61: A Theater of Ideas*, which has been performing in New York City for 25 years. Some notable Czech projects have been *The Václav Havel Festival*, a festival of all of Havel's work, which he curated in 2006 with Havel in attendance, performed at *The New Ohio*, *The Brick Theatre*, and *Columbia University*; *The Velvet Oratorio*, an opera-theater production retelling the events of *The Velvet Revolution*, performed at *Lincoln Center* and *The Bohemian National Hall*; *Cabaret in Captivity*, songs and sketches from Terezin, performed at *Pangea Cabaret*, *The Center for Jewish History*, the *Czech Embassy in Washington, DC*, the *York Theatre*, and *Goodenough College in London*; *The Pig*, or *Václav Havel's Hunt for a Pig*, adapted from the work by *Václav Havel* and *Vladimír Morávek*, performed at *3 Legged Dog*; and his original plays *Rudolf II* and *Golem Stories*, performed respectively at *The Bohemian National Hall* and *Chashama Theatre*. He is currently working on a filmed version of *Karel Svenk's* play, *The Last Cyclist*, originally written in Terezin. *The New York Times* has called his work "exquisitely ingenious", "dramatically shrewd," and "almost unbearably funny"; *Time Out* has called it "challenging, thought-provoking," "mesmerizing," and "startlingly intense"; and *The Village Voice* has called it "hilarious, provocative," and "Inspired absurdist comedy". He has received a *Sloan Grant*, *SEED Magazine's Revolutionary Mind Award*, *The NY Innovative Theater Award for Best Performance Art Production of the Year*, *NYTheater.com's Person of the Year Award* and placement in their *Indie Theater Hall of Fame*, and *Critic's Picks* in *Time Out*, *The Village Voice*, and *The New York Times*.

Svanda Theatre

Svanda Theatre is one of the oldest drama theatres in Prague. It's focused on contemporary plays and also on the bold adaptation of classics. Besides its own repertoire Svanda Theatre also offers a wide range of supporting events such as concerts, talk shows, independent theatre group productions, stage readings and also the best of Czech regional theatre work.

The Svanda Theatre in Smichov is a free cultural space on the left bank of the Vltava River. They aim to create dialogue with the audience through novel dramaturgy and formulation of distinct attitudes through politically and artistically clean-cut theatre productions.

It was also awarded the prestigious Alfred Radok' award for its dramaturgy.

Daniel Hrbek -Director

Director and manager of Svandovo Theatre, pedagogue of acting and direction at DAMU Academy in Prague. From 1989–1994, actor in Severomoravske Theatre, Sumpark, Moravske Theatre Olomouc, Theatre Na Zabradli Prague, and Celetna Theatre Prague. In 1994, he established the highly regarded theatre company CD 94, which he ran as an Artistic Director for 8 years. Productions of CD 94 were shown not only in the Czech Republic but also in Spain, France, Germany, Denmark, and other European countries. In 1999, Daniel Hrbek became the Artistic Director of Svandovo Theatre, one of the oldest Prague theatres (established in 1881). His directing credits include classical plays such as Ben Jonson's Volpone, Moliere's School for Wives, Shakespeare's Macbeth, Ostrovskii's The Forest, Machiaveli's The Mandrake, and contemporary plays such as The Lieutenant of Inishmore by Martin McDonagh, Nikoline Werdelin's Experts, Line Knutzon's The Builders, and his own adaptation of movie scripts: The Boss of it All by Lars von Trier and The Art of Negative Thinking by Bard Breien (together with Martina Kinska and Lucie Kolouchova). Besides his directing work he also writes stage adaptations and his own plays (Kratatit, In the Web, Three Musketeers, Born on October 28th, The Feast's End, The Good and The True). The Good And The True had a successful 8 week run in NYC in 2014 (DR2 Theatre Off Broadway).