

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE REHEARSAL FOR TRUTH THEATER FESTIVAL TO PRESENT SPRING WEEKEND:  
A SELECTION OF EUROPEAN STAGE READINGS IN NYC, BOHEMIAN NATIONAL HALL, MAY 10-12, 2019.**

**SLOVAKIA: URN ON AN EMPTY STAGE**

**SUNDAY, MAY 12 at 3PM**

In spring 2019, the REHEARSAL FOR TRUTH theater festival, honoring Vaclav Havel, will add a weekend of contemporary European stage readings to their yearly program. The Vaclav Havel Library Foundation (VHLF) partners with the Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association to create a showcase of young European playwrights. The selection process includes choosing Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian and Slovak plays that have been translated into English and reflect on current social and political issues of the region.

The Slovak stage reading offering is entitled *Urn on an Empty Stage* by Martin Cicvak, translated by Katarina Briggler, directed by Michael Piatkowski.

In *Urn on an Empty Stage*, Martin Cicvak brilliantly explores the dynamics between authoritative figures and their “victims”, particularly women. Using the Greek myth of Europa, the play attacks the problem of gender equality and the status of women in today’s society. The story begins when three actresses and an opera diva meet on an empty stage. They have come to say their last farewell to a great director whose ashes they have brought with them in an urn. With him, the women want to bury memories of career highlights along with recollections of the traumas the director caused them. But they are getting stuck in the preparation of the ceremony. They can’t come to an accord about its nature, or even agree about what has been and what is to come. At its heart, the play is a testimony to the complex relationships in the world of theater - the three actresses fight and detest each other, but also find themselves in tender harmony.

**Martin Cicvak** is a native of Kosice, Slovakia. His plays include *Frankie is OK*, *Peggy is Fine and the House is Cool*, *Agent Sonia*, *Kukura*, and *Urn on an Empty Stage*. His works have been produced across Europe including at Grace Theater London (under his own direction), Norwich Playhouse, State Theater Kosice (Slovakia), The North Theater in Satu Mare (Romania) and State Theater in Novi Sad (Serbia). Cicvak’s awards include the Alfred Radok Award for Talent of the Year (2000) and the most prestigious Slovak theater award Dosky (2004) for Best Direction and Best Production of Schimmelpfennig’s *Arabian Night* at the Slovak National Theater. From 1999 - 2004 he was the resident director of the National Theater in Brno. In 2000, he started to direct at the Prague theater The Drama

Club. Cicvak has also directed productions in Prague, Bratislava, Budapest, Vienna, Ljubljana, and Norwich. He has a Master's degree in Directing from Janacek Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (JAMU) in Brno, Czech Republic and studied directing at Dartington College of Arts in London on the Erasmus Scholarship.

**Michael Piatkowski** began his professional theatre career, age 12, at the Jan Hus Playhouse (just a block up from BNH) playing Pinocchio. Throughout his 55-year career in New York theater, he has been a director, playwright, as well as a prolific costume designer for many Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway shows. Most recently, he has directed at the Alchemical Theater, The Secret Theater, The Players Theater, and The Alpha Theater Company, among others. He is thrilled to be working on this new exciting play with these amazing actresses.

FREE TICKETS AVAILABLE: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-weekend-urn-on-an-empty-stage-slovakia-tickets-59965285784>

### **ABOUT SPRING WEEKEND**

The Rehearsal for Truth theater festival, honoring Vaclav Havel presents Spring Weekend. It is a showcase of emerging Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Slovak playwrights whose work reflects on current social and political issues. The plays have been translated into English and feature local New York performers and directors who will have the opportunity to try out these works onstage as part of the European Month of Culture. The program will include a full Romanian production as well.

The cultural institutions of these five countries collaborate with VHLF to select the plays as well as arrange trips for some of the chosen playwrights to NYC to participate in the rehearsals, stage reading performances, and discussions with the audience after the shows.

The program is organized by the Vaclav Havel Library Foundation and the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association, in collaboration with the Consulate General of the Czech Republic, Consulate General of Slovakia, the Polish Cultural Institute, the Romanian Cultural Institute, and Untitled Theater Company #61.

The program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

**All productions for this Spring Weekend are held at the Bohemian National Hall, 321 E. 73rd St., New York, NY, 10021, and have been translated into English. The stage readings and full-length production are free events, and reservations can be made on Eventbrite. After every stage reading and**

**production, there will be talk backs with the artists followed by a small reception hosted by the featured country's cultural institution.**

For more information visit: <https://www.vhlf.org/>