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**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.**

**CZECH REPUBLIC: VANEK VARIATIONS**

**FRIDAY, MAY 10 AT 7 PM**

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 Czech stage reading offering is entitled *Vanek Variations* and features three short plays: *Audience* by Vaclav Havel, translated by Jan Novak; *The Meeting* by Edward Einhorn and *Infiltration* by Petr Erbes, translated by Paul Wilson. All three are directed by Edward Einhorn, Artistic Director of Untitled Theater Company #61.

In *Audience*, by Vaclav Havel, the first of the Vanek plays, Ferdinand Vanek, a dissident writer, is forced to work in a brewery, so that he can contribute to society rather than be an intellectual bourgeois burden. The brew master calls him in for a friendly talk, or possibly an interrogation. It is clear that the brew master desperately wants something. It is not at all clear what that something is.

In *The Meeting* by Edward Einhorn Ferdinand Vanek's niece, Frida Vanek, a Czech-American, asks for a meeting with Vanek's old acquaintance Stanek, now planning to run for office in the Czech Republic. She brings some damaging information. Should she use it?

In *Infiltration* by Petr Erbes Jr, Winner of the Vaclav Havel Library Foundation's contest on the theme of Ferdinand Vanek today, the character Vanek is now a young man working at a puzzle factory, in a play set in the current Czech Republic. He wants to help the workers there, but finds himself a misfit.

FREE TICKETS AVAILABLE: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-weekend-audience-the-meetinginfiltration-czech-tickets-59964688999>

**Vaclav Havel** (1936-2011) was a playwright, essayist, political dissident, and the former president of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. He became well-known as a dramatist in the 1960s when his plays *The Garden Party* and *The Memorandum* were seen on world theatre stages. In the 1970s, he was one of the authors of Charter 77 – a manifesto calling for the Czechoslovak government to adhere to the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Agreement. Around this time, Havel released *The Power of the Powerless*, a powerful political essay that dissects the nature of totalitarian rule and the resistance that emerges within it. In 1989, he became the leader of the two-month long Velvet Revolution, which culminated in his ascension to the Presidency of the re-established democratic Czechoslovakia. Only a few months earlier, he had been released after being held by the communist regime for his activities in defense of human rights.

**Edward Einhorn** is a playwright, director, translator, librettist, and novelist. He is the Artistic Director of Untitled Theater Company No. 61. Some of his notable Czech projects include *The Velvet Oratorio*, an opera oratorio retelling the events of the Velvet Revolution, *Cabaret in Activity* and *Vaclav Havel's Hunt for the Pig*. He has just finished directing the film version of Karel Svenk's *The Last Cyclist*, originally written in Terezin, due to be released this year. Einhorn's original plays include *Rudolf II* and *Golem Stories*. Einhorn has directed or had plays produced at The New Ohio, The Brick Theatre, Columbia University, Lincoln Center, The Bohemian National Hall, Pangea Cabaret, The Center for Jewish History, The Czech Embassy in Washington D.C., York Theatre, Goodnough College (in London) and Chashama Theatre. In 2006, he curated the Vaclav Havel Festival, a festival of all of Havel's work, which Havel himself attended. *The New York Times* has called Einhorn's 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*.

**Petr Erbes** (1991, Policka, Czech Republic) has co-authored various theatre productions including: DISK, Jatka78, Dejvicke divadlo, Narodni divadlo Brno. He is an active member of 8people. He studied Multimedia Technology at CTU and Alternative Dramaturgy and Puppet Theatre at the Theatre faculty of The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU). He is interested in active role of audience in theatre; he explores game structures and narratives.

## **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/>