



---

# VANEK VARIATIONS

*Friday, May 10, 2019, 7 p.m.*

---

**“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



**Václav Havel**  
LIBRARY FOUNDATION



Consulate General of the Czech Republic  
in New York



CONSULATE GENERAL  
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
IN NEW YORK



POLISH CULTURAL  
INSTITUTE  
NEW YORK



ROMANIAN  
CULTURAL  
INSTITUTE



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER  
**BEN KALLOS**

**NYC** Cultural  
Affairs

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

Rehearsal for Truth Spring Weekend showcases stage readings from emerging Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, and Slovak playwrights translated into English. The program includes a full length Romanian production. The plays, featuring local New York performers and directors, reflect on current social and political issues.

---

## The Company:

Playwrights: Vaclav Havel (*Audience*)  
Edward Einhorn (*The Meeting*)  
Petr Erbes (*Infiltration*)

Translator: Jan Novak (*Audience*)  
Paul Wilson (*Infiltration*)

Director: Edward Einhorn

Cast:

Audience Ferdinand Vanek: Matthew Trumbull  
Brewmaster: Michael Bertolini

The Meeting Jan Stanek: Richard Toth  
Frida Vanek: Elizabeth Chappel

Infiltration Ferdinand Vanek: Matthew Trumbull  
Liba: Katherine Laheen  
Milada: Ivanna Cullinan  
Vlasta: Sandy York

---

## The Plays

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 brewmaster calls him in for a friendly talk, or possibly an interrogation. It is clear that the brewmaster 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.

## **Playwrights**

**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.

**Petr Erbes** (1991, Polička, Czech Republic) has co-authored various theatre productions including in DISK, Játka78, Dejvické divadlo, Národní 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.

## **Director (and author of *The Meeting*)**

**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*.

## Performers

**Sandy York** (*Infiltration/Vlasta*) with UTC #61: Vaclav Havel's *Hunt for a Pig*, *Cat's Cradle*, *Hiroshima*, *Rudolf II*. Other NYC: Pan Asian Rep, Prospect, NYMF, Fringe, Pulse. Regional: Trinity Rep, McCarter, Arkansas Rep, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, American Heartland, Bristol Riverside, Cape May Stage, Centenary Stage, Shadowland, Forestburgh, Arc Stages, Depot, STONC. TV: *FBI*, *Pose*, *One Life to Live*. Princeton University, NYSF Lab, Trinity Rep Conservatory (MFA). [www.SandyYork.com](http://www.SandyYork.com)

**Katherine Laheen** is both Irish and American and has just moved to NYC from London where she trained at the Guildahhl School of Music and Drama. She has been working with a number of emerging theatre companies workshopping new writing and re-imagined classics over the past year. She is very excited to be in the Big Apple and working with Edward once more!

**Elizabeth Chappel (Frida)** is thrilled to be included in the Rehearsal for Truth festival. Select theater credits: *See How They Run* (St Vincent Summer Theatre), *Angels in America* (Throughline Theatre), *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks), *Machinal* (Columbia University), *Richard III* (Columbia University), *Uncle Vanya* (Columbia University), *Turing Test* (NY Fringe Festival). Training: William Esper Studio. | [elizabethchappel.com](http://elizabethchappel.com)

**Richard Toth** was previously with UT61: Stanek in *Protest* (Havel Festival). Other recent NY Theater includes *Charleses* (Brick), *I'll Never Love Again* (Bushwick Starr), and *Dreamless Land* (NYC Players). Recent TV appearances include *The Blacklist*, *Billions*, and *House of Cards*. Director and co-founder Misery Loves Company (Prague).

**Matthew Trumbull** was previously with UTC #61 in *The Neurology of the Soul* ("A subtle performance, the sneaky anchor to the show"-The New York Times) and *The Velvet Oratorio*. He received the NYIT Award for Outstanding Performance in a Lead Role: *The Temple*, or *Lebensraum* by Nat Cassidy and the FringeNYC Award, MNFringe Audience Pick for his solo performance in *The Zebra Shirt of Lonely Children*. | [www.matthewtrumbull.com](http://www.matthewtrumbull.com)

**Ivanna Cullinan** (Esther) is delighted to be part of this wonderful project. Previously with Untitled Theater Co.# 61 she played Klytemnestra in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Recently seen as the Architect in *ReFuse* with Gemini Collision Works, she previously with the company in *CANT*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *Gone*, *Strategist*, and *Removal*. Also at the Brick Theater, she has appeared in Obvious Volcano's *Three Sisters* (NYIT Outstanding Featured Actress 2017), *Blood Brothers*, *Bedlam Nightmares*, Tux & Tom Productions' *The Moose That Roared*, Incubator Project's *The Brandywine Distillery Fire*, Piper McKenzie's *Granduncle Quadrilogy* and the Brick's *In a Strange Room/As I Lay Dying*. With Random Access, Ivanna has appeared in *Patronage*. A proud member of Actors' Equity Association and Master Mason of the Brick.

**Michael Bertolini** is thrilled to be working with Edward Einhorn again, who directed him in *Iphigenia in Aulis (Agamemnon)* at La MaMa Theatre, *Cat's Cradle* (H. Lowe Crosby), *The Night Before the Funeral* (Father) for last year's Rehearsal for Truth festival, to name just a few. Michael has appeared in many Manhattan and regional theatres and on television and film. Some career highlights include playing serial killer Colin Raimos (*Life on Mars* - ABC), voicing Homer (*Star Blazers* - classic anime TV series), and playing a variety of Muppets!