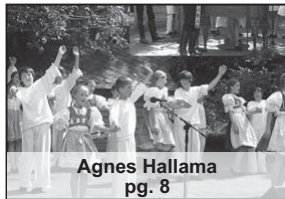




Jarrett Stastny  
pg. 1



Agnes Hallama  
pg. 8



Henrieta Haniskova  
pg. 9



JANUARY 28, 2010

No 2 (2737)  
Volume 61 • \$2.00

Published every other Thursday  
26 issues in 24 mailings a year  
PAP Registration No. 8108  
ISSN 08329-2668

# NOVÝ DOMOV



THE NEW HOMELAND

Pravda vítězí!



CZECH AND SLOVAK BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER [www.novydomov.com](http://www.novydomov.com)

## HELP HAITI !

People sent some eight million crowns in support of earthquake-hit Haiti during two charity concerts of Czech pop music singers and bands staged in Prague today. Hundreds of people were watching the first concert, co-organised in cooperation with the People in Need NGO, on Old-Town Square in the centre in the icy cold weather this afternoon and evening. The concert moderators called on people to send charity text messages (DMS) on their mobiles phone in aid of Haiti.

Moreover, people could directly contribute to Haiti throwing money in the People

in Need moneyboxes on the square during the concert. Prime Minister Jan Fischer with Prague Mayor Pavel Bem greeted the audience from the stage.

Another charity concert, co-organised by People in Need as well, was held in Prague's La Fabrika club tonight. It was broadcast live on public Czech Television.

Former Czech president Vaclav Havel addressed the audience via a video-recording.

He recalled that people should behave more humbly on the planet Earth. "We are not able to estimate when tsunami or earthquake strikes. More

humbleness will probably contribute to the world's better future," Havel said.

Moreover, people in the club collected 100,000 crowns in cash. One of the mobile operators also handed over a cheque for 1.1 million ➔ *str.10*

## SNOW AND ICE FALLING OFF ROOFS

The heaviest snowfalls to hit Prague in thirty years have been making the life of Prague residents difficult, and sometimes even dangerous. Currently,

people's biggest concern is that pieces of snow and ice are melting and falling off roofs around the city, causing serious damage and injuries. The heaviest

snowfalls to hit Prague in thirty years have been making the life of Prague residents difficult, and sometimes even dangerous. Currently, people's biggest concern is that pieces of snow and ice are melting and falling off roofs around the city, causing serious damage and injuries.

After nearly two weeks of more or less uninterrupted heavy snowfalls,

a thaw has arrived in the Czech Republic. While temperatures above zero have melted some of the snow that was blocking sidewalks in the capital, Prague residents are now in danger of being hit by pieces of ice or snow that for the past few days have been falling off buildings across the city. On Monday, a baby boy suffered serious head injuries after being hit by falling snow. A nine-year old boy and an elderly woman also ended up in hospital after getting direct hits.

Not all owners have installed warning signs in front of their buildings to alert pedestrians about the danger. But they are legally responsible for cleaning the snow and ice off their roofs and liable if someone gets injured. Some Prague residents say that many house owners were simply taken by surprise and are unprepared to deal with the issue.

I think that snowfalls like this happen once a decade in Prague, I think they probably just didn't expect this to happen rather than being irresponsible." ➔ *str.10* (middle aged woman)



Prague in winter

Photo [md.ic.cz/fotky/zimni\\_praha](http://md.ic.cz/fotky/zimni_praha)

## Learning to speak Czech

(as a first generation on Canadian)

Jarrett Stastny

The third time is the charm. Or at least that was the case when it came to me securing a spot among those attending the Czech language course in Dobruska - after applying in 2006 and 2007, I was finally accepted in 2008.

After spending some time with my family from Vrané nad Vltavou, my cousin dropped me off at Prague central station and my adventure began.

There were two coaches leaving from Prague carrying the majority of the group.

Meanwhile, the rest of the people attending were being dropped off by car or had arrived early. The entire group totalled somewhere around sixty

people. The difference in our ages spanned almost as many years - there were teenagers, seniors and everything in between. I was one of three Canadians attending, the only Albertan. From China to South

Africa, Israel to Australia; there were people from all over the world sharing one thing in common - we all had Czech heritage. That was the one condition of acceptance for the Dobruska program. Growing up

in the small town of Bonnyville in rural northern Alberta meant that my father was the only Czech growing up because it was impractical. Nor did I have any exposure to Czech language or culture because there just weren't any Czechs around. Now as a young adult I was

going to start taking my first Czech language lessons. I was assigned to the absolute beginner class, and we were given text books and a rough schedule for our days. The language was extremely difficult to pick up. The tenses and conjugations are very different from the languages that I was taught growing up - English and French. Together we began to slowly piece things

together and I developed the ability to recognize words and gain a vague, general meaning from conversation. After a month of intensive classes I still can't hold a conversation past brief small talk, but I was able to ask for directions, buy bus/train tickets, order at a restaurant (and know what I was getting), and read/pronounce text properly.

This might not seem like much to someone who knows the language - I'm sure my relatives in the Czech Republic were a little disappointed that I couldn't talk freely with them afterwards - but it has made a world of difference for me. Everyday we were being shuttled around and the busses seemed like our second home. We were able to taste a wide variety of Czech cuisine and enjoy quality Czech beers.

Apart from the language element of the class, the course in Dobruska also taught me much about Czech culture. We had Czech history lessons that discussed everything from Charles IV. to communism. We

visited many cultural landmarks and heritage sites and developed an appreciation for both the history as well as the beauty of the country.

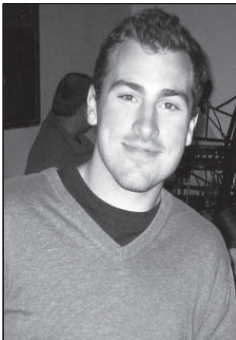
I returned to Europe this past summer and was able to revisit many of the friends I made in Dobruska in all of their respective countries.

I also had the opportunity to return to the Czech Republic to practice my language, visit family, and enjoy all things Czech.

I was one of ten or so students to have received student scholarships from our Edmonton CSSK during my time as an undergraduate at the University of Alberta. I have since graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English degree.

After a year of working and a vacation abroad I will be once again returning to the University of Alberta this fall to pursue a Masters in Occupational Therapy.

Source: Edmonton's zpravodaj, No. 4, Volume 23, Winter



I belong to the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International which is based in St. Paul, MN. I have attended a couple of their conferences and through these meetings met a person who does "Heritage Tours" to the Czech and Slovak Republics. My wish and my sister's was always to be able to see more of these two countries and not just visit with relatives. We've learned about the American tour guide, Mark, who was organizing a nine day tour in the heart of Europe, which was exactly what we were looking for.

We departed for Prague on Sept. 9, 2008. The tour itself started three days later. We met with the group in our hotel. There were twenty of us, plus Prague's tour guide Jan, and then of course the bus driver, Karel, who spoke NO English. As we started on our trip, Mark asked everyone to introduce themselves. My sister and I were the only two Canadians and the only ones who could speak Czech. This was going to be interesting! At the beginning of the tour Mark had asked my sister and me if we would mind sitting with Karel for meals so he would have someone to talk to. We willingly obliged and had all daily meals with him. We sure improved our conversational Czech!!

Our first stop was Brno. We had a lunch there and an opportunity to contact our cousin from Zlatý Krumlov. After leaving Brno, we stopped at Austerlitz, Napoleon's battle field (1805). We drove through some very lovely country and were impressed with all the flowers decorating the village houses. In Zlechov we visited a pottery factory, where we admired the craftsmanship, and the American tourists were buying interesting pieces. Standing outside the little factory, I was approached by a gentleman, enquiring about my origin. I started a conversation with him and he was so pleased someone could converse with him. He said "don't leave just yet, I'll be right back", and went away. Shortly after he returned with a big bowl of grapes and was handing them out to the tour group, everybody just standing around on the road and enjoying the grapes. This was not a rushed tour!

We arrived in Uherské Hradiště in the early evening and settled into our hotel for the next three days. It was their annual Wine Festival and the next day was the BIG day. We were up early to have breakfast and get a good spot on the street to watch the parade.

There were 50 villages from

## HERITAGE TOUR

Agnes Hallama

the surrounding area represented in the parade. People from each village wore their own kroje (costumes). What a sight to see, what variety! Each of the costumes was beautiful and unique. It was a fun time as some participants were carrying jugs of wine and pouring wine to people who had cups, some were pulling big jugs of wine on decorated wagons and handing out wine to anyone who wanted

costume and making home made butter, decorating Easter eggs and making "peroutky". They greeted us with songs, had a jug of wine at the door and home-made pastry. What an interesting stop and once again, we talked with them in Czech. Everytime the wine jug was emptied, it was immediately refilled. We left Uherské Hradiště with many fond memories. The following day we stopped in Uherský Brod to tour the Janacek

interesting city. From Budapest we traveled to Szentendre, also in Hungary. What a quaint town. We asked Jan to join us to go on a "discovery" tour through this town. We walked and walked, up many stairs, too many to count, then down the hills and into some interesting areas. In the several hours we had, we were able to see quite a bit of the city. After dinner we returned back to Slovakia, and spent overnight in Komarno.

The next day we had a chance to admire a church built in the 10th century in Kostolany pod Tribečom.\*\* What an interesting church. There is a lot of work being done to restore the inside. Just down the hill from the church are old Roman ruins. What a climb and hike to get to the church! A horse-breeding farm in Topolčany had impressive Lipizzaner horses, as well as the Hutzul {Romanian} and Teplokrvník (Slovak/Arabian) breeds. In Tesarské Mlýny we explored an Arboretum, had dinner in Nitra, and drove to Bratislava. We had free time here, so together with Jan we went exploring this magnificent city. We were very impressed with Slovakia's capital, and the effort for the restoration of historical buildings in the city's center.

The next destination was the Czech city of Jihlava for a two day stay and touring in the area. A visit to Telč, the UNESCO site,

was most interesting, as was the village of Hrušice, home the of much-loved native painter Josef Lada. Our tour ended in Prague, but we continued on to visit with

relatives for the next ten days. Before we returned home, we had an opportunity to visit places we hadn't seen on our previous trips, like: Rakovník, České Budejovice,



Josef Lada Photo Google

Český Krumlov, Horšovský Týn, Písek. We ended in the gorgeous spa city of Karlovy Vary. The heritage tour was one of the most interesting tours I have taken - it had all right elements of excitement and knowledge. Sometimes hectic, sometimes leisurely enough to give us the opportunity to take in the beauty and atmosphere of these countries and visit with people from towns and villages.

About author: Agnes was born in Canada. She is the granddaughter of Vaclav Hallama and Barbora Blahníková - Hallamová. Vaclav immigrated to Canada in 1891 and settled in Manitoba. The Hallamas are one of the oldest Czech families in central Canada - in the Prairie Provinces.

Source Ricka, Heritage Tour, summer-fall 2009, photo www.czechtourism.com/fotografie/2008-04/foto, www.renwy.com/http://imgdata/telc.gif



Český Krumlov Czech Tourism

some. We found out there were 4000 people in the parade. It was long but worthwhile seeing all of it. I had a good seat on the street, and thus was able to take many pictures. When the parade finished everyone went to the town square where you could buy food and other items.

There were several stages with music and dancing as there were in several areas of the town. Music and dancing was everywhere. There was a "wine tent" where one could sample all the different wines. There were stands selling "burcak" a pretty potent wine drink! The partying went on all night. In the evening our tour guide Jan, my sister and I visited some of the wine cellars, and were entertained by a violin and dulcimer music. We sampled some "hot wine" which was very good. It was a great but tiring day.

The next morning we went to church which was packed. After church they had a parade of bridal costumes. With such a variety of colour combinations and embroidery details, it was a real feast for our eyes. We were told that some local brides still dress in the traditional costumes 'kroje' for their wedding. Some costumes had black designs which we found interesting. In the afternoon our group visited Buchlov Castle, dating back to 1300. The view from there was just beautiful and we could see many small villages of the area. On our way back we stopped in the village of Jezov, to visit with six elderly ladies, all dressed in

brewery, and to sample the local beer. Continuing through the famous spa city Píseň, and then to Komarno, the next day we toured Budapest, and had lunch at a cozy restaurant on the Danube. What a lovely spot! We had a lot of time for sightseeing in Budapest. It is a beautiful and

## The world Cultural Heritage - Cesky Krumlov

The Czech lands have a rich and eventful history. People who came here from all corners of the world to cultivate our country did not only order castles to be built and decorated, churches erected and monasteries founded, but they also influenced the overall architectural design of our cities. No fewer than twelve of these sites have already been entered in the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage, while yet others have submitted their candidacy.

Picturesque town of Český Krumlov lies in a deep, meandering valley of the Vltava river in the very South of Bohemia. Its golden age came about during the rule of the Lords of Rožmberk (Rosenbergs), in 1302-1602, who made their residence there. At that time, Krumlov was a point of contact between the Czech interior, the Austrian/German Danube region, and Northern Italy. The Italian Renaissance greatly influenced the appearance of the town and its castle.

At the end of the 17th century, during the rule of the Eggenberg dynasty, a Baroque theater was built and the chateau garden remodeled. During the rule of the Schwarzenbergs, Krumlov received a decorative Baroque makeover. However, Český Krumlov equals more than an exceptional complex of 300 historical buildings. The town presents itself to visitors also as a hub of culture, conventions and tourism. The International Music Festival takes place annually in August, as does a festival of Renaissance music; theatrical productions are held in the castle

garden, the Festival of the Five-Petalled Rose is a major summer attraction, and the Egon Schiele Center is open to visitors the year round.

Český Krumlov is situated some 180 km south of Prague, near the border with Austria. A network of long-distance bus lines connects it to major cities. In the summer, an express train from Prague (the Šumava) comes here daily.

Since the mid 1960's, special care has been devoted to the preservation of the historical merits of Český Krumlov; the town was included in 1992 onto UNESCO's List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

**Stone and rose** Early-evening strolls around the town Learn and relax just before the night falls. In Český Krumlov, there are moments when the stone (stone houses, harshness of life, eternity, stately castle) encounters the rose (the Five-petal Rosenberg Rose, symbol of mystic sciences, wisdom and secrecy) While strolling around, we will point out the most interesting and intriguing numbers, signs and symbols of the town and pause on their possible meanings. We will be discovering the world of alchemists, stonemasons and Marian paintings, including the Castle Tower, Saint Vitus's Church and the Minorite Monastery.

Source Czech Tourism

CzechTourism Canada  
2 Bloor Street W Suite 1500, Toronto, ON  
Canada M4W 3E2, Tel: 416-363-9928  
Fax: 416-972-6991 info-ca@czechtourism.com  
www.czechtourism.com





*We see her at many of the community events, most often at the Hudobno-Poeticke Skvosty, the brainchild of director Olga Turok, who likes to work with Henrieta as her visual media director. Her task is to complement the performances with images, illustrate the content and set the mood for the show.*

*Henrieta Haniskova was born in Slovakia, in a small but beautiful historic town, Levoca. She is currently living in Toronto and works as a commercial photographer. After getting a taste of photography at the Toronto School of Art, she decided to pursue it as a career and enrolled at the Ryerson University. But the true education came from working with several of the best photographers in the city.*

*We are looking to her as another young person in our community who has searched and found her path by using her knowledge and her skills and uses them to bring joy to others.*

*Henrieta's path led her to photography.*

### **Photography is a way of capturing a moment, what captivated you about photography?**

It sums up all of my main interests, technology, artistic creativity, psychology and used to be chemistry, but now it's digital knowledge. It challenged me on many levels and pushed me to do better.

But most of all it gives me a way to communicate. Each of us sees the world differently and photography allows me to show other people how I see.

### **For some, photography is an art for others a way to document history, how do you see it?**

This is a topic many people like to debate on. I think the truth lies somewhere in the middle. I don't think there is such a thing as an objective photograph that exclusively documents reality. Each image is done with some artistic sense but it depends on the context it is presented in that decides more than anything which category we will place it into.

### **How did you get interested in photography?**

I grew up next door to a movie theater. I would get a couple of coins to go to movies on Sundays and it was the highlight of my week. My mom is an artistic soul with a lot of patience. I did not inherit the patience though. My dad on the other hand is very inquisitive; he is curious and loves to read. As soon as I knew how to read I was at the library daily I loved picturing the stories I read in my mind. I like to stage my photographs; it's my way of story telling that comes from deep within. It's a sum of all my experiences, thoughts and feelings, it's a joy to do and it's freeing.

### **What was your original profession?**

I always thought I wanted to be a nurse. Do you remember those adorable blue uniforms with pristine white aprons and the little white hats nurses in Czechoslovakia used to wear?

I studied nursing and I have deep admiration for people who have the emotional strength to do it, because I don't. But I had learned to listen, I heard a lot of life stories in the hospital and I found that everyone would amaze you if given the space.

### **How did you come to Canada?**

By coincidence, some would say destiny. I finished school and my sister told me to pack my bag and go with her to Germany. She was studying there and found a place for me to live and work with a family from Canada. When they moved back, they invited me to visit in Toronto. I came here just as I turned 19 and worked as a nanny for a few different families. I hated it at first, but I found opportunities and since I loved art and wanted to pursue it I enrolled at the Toronto School of Art. Which later led to photography. But still I found my time at the art school extremely valuable, I learned to see by drawing, I learned about light by painting and I learned that visual expression is something I need, to feel happy.

### **Do you have any regrets about leaving your home?**

I grew up sharing a room with four siblings all very close in age and I miss them dearly. I miss my moms cooking and debating politics with my father over Sunday lunch. I am sure my mother regrets it now, but she was the one who instilled the sense of adventure in all of her children. We are all scattered around the World. Or maybe she was setting herself up for a busy retirement and a lot of travel!

But had I not left the small town I was born in, I would not have the wonderful life I have now.

I think you have to create your own

opportunities in life; coming to Canada opened my eyes to a whole new universe.

### **What do you miss about back home?**

Family. The distance is the hardest part! I wish I could call up one of my sisters and have a coffee with them and hang out any day, not only every couple of years.

### **Let's go back to photography; what is your main interest as far as photography goes?**

Everyone finishing a photog-

raphy school has the fantasy of going into fashion; it's the idea of creating beauty that sways most of us. It took years, but I came to understand that people are way more interesting and beautiful than any clothes. I focus on portraiture, because it offers yet another challenge to me, it's an art and a very difficult skill to gain. It requires you to find it in your heart to understand the person you are about

to photograph and perhaps the most challenging part of this process is to be able to put yourself mentally and emotionally into the space where you can do that without compromising your own expression.

### **Is photography only serious work, or do you get to have fun**

does not shape you as an artist, that is gained with life experience. As a profession, it's a business like any other; I make calls every day, work on my accounting and marketing. Have meetings with clients and plan jobs, execute them and spend hours and days on editing my work and retouching it before it can be presented to the client.

Photographer is not only a technician, but an image-maker and trendsetter. All of that is serious work. You never stop working, but work does not feel like a chore either, it's fun to do what you love. So the short answer: photography is hard work that is a ton of fun!

### **Do you only shoot digital?**

Not exclusively, but film is expensive and takes time and a lot of very toxic chemicals to process. I was a huge skeptic once, but digital photography has improved leaps and bounds and is very versatile.

### **What do you think of Black**



### **graphs do you consider to be the best and why?**

It's like asking which one of your babies do you love the most! Editing is an art in itself and having a clear idea of what you want to communicate makes it easier. But it's also a very personal matter, which partly depends on the current state of my mind.

Succeeding in communicating my ideas through images, is what I strive for. The best photographers were consistent in their work, there wasn't an image or a few, these were bodies of work they created that were great.

### **Can anyone become a photographer?**

Photography is perhaps the most democratic art form. Anyone can do it. It's not the camera you use, it's not the amount of schooling you'll ever do that will make you good.

To become successful one needs a lot of determination and desire, discipline and commitment, loose all fear and pride and love to work.

### **After capturing the image do you continue somehow working on the image?**

Like with film digital images need to be adjusted and processed. There were techniques we used in the darkroom to modify the images, now there is software and it is fantastic. Retouching is not a new concept in photography. Sometimes I spend a few hours on an image and sometimes no time at all. It all depends on the image and what it needs, to do its job. It's not the skills you flash that make an image better, but the sensibility in knowing when to apply them. This is the second part of the job. First, photographs need to be edited and that may be one of the hardest parts of the job. Which images to choose to tell the story? It is time consuming and quite exhausting and you continually make tough decisions, which is draining. Sometimes I leave the work for a while before I can come back and make and objective choice.

### **What is next for you?**

There is so much to see and do and so little time! I have been working on a series called "I am Elvis" which I showed in an art gallery in 2008 as a featured artist of the Toronto Contact Photography Festival and which got me a 3<sup>rd</sup> place in New York at the International Photography Awards. I am continuing work on this fine art series and hope to publish it as a book. I have just shot my first advertising job in Toronto and am negotiating terms with an artist representative to market myself further as a commercial photographer. I have my clients that I work with and continue to look for new ones.

I have lots of ideas and plans for personal projects I hope to find time to work on in the future while working on commercial assignments.

The questions asked by

Věra Kohoutová

### **and White Photography? Why do you prefer color?**

I love Black and White; it strips away all worldly distractions. I don't think I necessarily prefer color. To me there is time and place for everything. Part of understanding the craft is to know the effect it has on the viewer and to know what the photograph is meant to say. Every trick and effect has its place it's only when it's used unnecessarily that it becomes a kitsch.

### **Which one of your photo-**

## HELP HAITI !

➔ *ze str. 7* crowns for Haiti to the NGO. The DMSs were sent from all over the Czech Republic today.

The Czech NGOs have already gathered over 40 million crowns within their public fundraising campaigns for Haiti, including today's concerts. The Czech government has donated 20 million. Up to 200,000 people have been killed in the catastrophic earthquake that hit Haiti last week, according to estimates. Some 1.5 million people have lost their homes. A Czech expert sent to Haiti will decide on the concrete purpose of such reconstruction projects. Czech military experts will not go to Haiti in the end since the presence of further teams would only worsen the already complicated coordination of rescue works,

the Defence Ministry said. The Czech government has allotted a total of 20 million crowns to Haiti, five million of which have already been sent to the UNICEF project of the water resources renewal. A team of experts comprising the Foreign Ministry and NGOs' employees today recommended how to use the remaining 15 million. Moreover, Czech citizens donated over 36 million crowns to Haiti as of Wednesday within public fund-raising campaigns organised by various humanitarian organisations.

Defence Minister Martin Bartak said previously the military was prepared to send a mobile health care team, a biological unit to deal with the contaminated drinking water sources as well as the military police to help keep the peace.

Source [www.ceskenoviny.cz](http://www.ceskenoviny.cz)  
(\$1=18.316 crowns)

## Snow and ice...

➔ *ze str. 7* "The city sends people out sometimes. But in my opinion, it's the responsibility of the house owners, and they don't care at all, and that's bad." (middle aged man)

"The situation has been tragic of course, but I was really glad that the firefighters responded to it so quickly." (middle aged man)

The city has created a phone line where house owners can get useful information, and over a 1000 Prague residents have already taken advantage of the service, says the Prague town hall's spokesman, Jiří Wolf.

"At this time, the most frequent questions asked concern snow on rooftops. People ask for help and we refer them to Prague's firefighters or private companies that deal with the problem. In the past two days, huge lumps of snow have been falling from roofs all over Prague, and it's truly a danger for pedestrians."

Aside from posing a threat to passersby, the falling snow and ice have also damaged a number of parked cars. Iveta Kenety, who lives in central Prague, says her family car was one of several dozen in Prague that took a hit.

"It fell right on the car, on the roof and the front shield window. It shattered the glass and also completely damaged the structure of the roof. The mechanic said that the cost of the repairs would be higher than the value of the car."

Another factor complicating the situation is the recent shift of legal responsibility in clearing the sidewalks. Under the old legislation, house owners had to make sure that the sidewalk in front of their building was cleared. Now, cities and municipalities are responsible for maintenance. The Prague authorities have sent over two thousand workers onto the streets to clear the snow.

Mr. Wolf believes that Prague has been handling the situation well, but additional help may be needed to cope with what is the heaviest snowfall that the city has seen in 30 years.

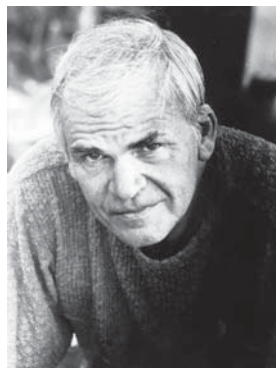
Jiří Wolf "I think that Prague has risen to the occasion when it comes to dealing with the heavy snowfall, we employed a number of temp workers and even sent out our own employees, so when the emergency first hit Prague, and shortly after, there were about 2000 workers on the streets clearing the snow. At the present time we are considering engaging Prague's unemployed residents in the effort as well."

Experts say that at this time, there are over 3 billion cubic meters of snow on the ground in the Czech Republic, the equivalent of 42 liters of water per square meter. Source: Czech Radio 7, Sarah Borufka

## The Unbearable Lightness of Being

By Ernest Zucker

Milan Kundera's movie and novel of this name, count as my favourite offerings by this Czech author. Communism and the politics of his native country (he now lives permanently in France), are essential in the work's narrative. However, Kundera has always resisted being labeled a dissident writer, preferring a broader description to his work to include and embrace past traditions and philosophies. Often described as ironic, satiric, pessimistic, and erotic Kundera's work is difficult to describe in a brief summary. This amuses the novelist, because he dislikes the Western media's penchant for reducing art to brief explanatory descriptions. Once, when asked why he so often used the joke as a literary device, Kundera replied (tongue-in-cheek) that it was because he was born on April Fools Day (1929). Now to the movie, which I highly recommend. May be I like it because it includes views of Prague, particularly the neighbourhood around Old Town Square. Or may be because it features a stellar performance by then young French actor Juliette Binoche looking very, very Czech as Tereza. The movie is



also best known for the erotic contradiction of Sabina, played superbly by Lena Olin, stripped down to her underwear and wearing an old-fashioned bowler hat. The hat itself becomes a symbol, slowly weighed down with a series of meaning, from the functional article it was for Sabina's grandfather a 19th century mayor; to the sexually plaything it becomes for the lovers; and eventually as a monument to her affair with Tomas (played by Daniel Day-Lewis) after it had

ended. Tomas himself, a medical doctor, eventually is reduced to washing windows by the communist regime. We sympathize with the trio when their life becomes entwined as emigrants, leaving Czechoslovakia for Geneva. "The history of the country and of Europe is a pair of sketches from the pen of mankind's fateful inexperience," Milan Kundera wrote. "History is as light as individual human life, unbearably light, light as a feather, as dust swirling into the air, as whatever will no longer exist tomorrow." The recent commemoration of 20 years since the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, illustrates the writer's point. With the writing of the 'Unbear-

able Lightness of Being' and the subsequent film of the same title, Kundera rose to international prominence. He is currently considered to be one of the leading living Czech writers and continues to write his novels, often considered as complex. Often, his narratives are interrupted by bits of philosophy, autobiography or psychological conjecture. The distancing nature of his writing style has been deemed modernist, or even post-modernist, yet Kundera is quick to connect his work to the long tradition of the Central European novel. Milan Kundera's selected books: The Joke (1967, Eng. trans. 1982), Laughable Loves, a collection of short stories originally published in the 1960s (Eng. trans. 1974); The Farewell Party, 1976, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting 1979 (Eng. trans. 1974), Life is Elsewhere (1969; Eng. trans. 1974), The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1984; Eng. trans. 1984), Immortality 1990, Slowness 1994, Identity 1998, Ignorance 2000.

Photo [stardustandfairymagic.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/milan\\_kundera.jpg](http://stardustandfairymagic.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/milan_kundera.jpg)

## A Czech couple weds in a freezing cold river!

The Semily divers' club plays a game of football underwater and sculptors build a snow kingdom in the Beskydy Mountains! Find out more in Magazine with Daniela Lazarová. The cold snap may be causing problems across Europe, but at least one Czech couple is enjoying the cold weather. Tatiana and Tomáš are both members of a club for hardy men and women – in fact that's where they met and fell in love. Last weekend they wed in style, dressed in white swim-wear they waded into the freezing cold Metuje river for the wedding ceremony with a number of hardy witnesses and bridesmaids treading water behind them. The bride wore a white bathing suit with a posy, a veil and white boots, while the groom wore bathing trunks with a flower. The deputy mayor of Náchod, who conducted the wedding ceremony, refused point blank to take a dip and went through the rites from the embankment. Moreover, the newly weds were not alone – the bride's bulging belly showed that a third member of the family was taking a compulsory dip as well – much to some people's horror. However the bride was quick to reassure relatives on that count, saying that once the baby was born it would not be dipped into the river but given time to adjust gradually. Well – may they live happily ever after! [radio.cz](http://radio.cz)



Exclusive CD Release in memory of KAREL ČERNOCH supporting Cancer Research

Karel Černoch & Martin Mayer

# THE ORPHAN BOY

*Malý Pítel z města 'N'*

In loving memory of my friend, recording artist Karel Černoch,  
100% of the proceeds from each CD sold will be donated to the  
Canadian Cancer Society. I thank you for your support!

*Martin Mayer*

Karel Černoch & Martin Mayer "The Orphan Boy (Malý Pítel z města 'N') CD @ \$4.99 = \$

Shipping 1-2 CDs = \$2.75 • 3-4 CDs = \$4.25 • 5-6 CDs = \$5.75 • 7-8 CDs = \$7.25 Shipping = \$

Total = \$

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. Please make cheque or money order payable to **Martin Mayer Productions Inc.** and mail with this form to  
Martin Mayer Productions Inc. Suite 1120 Metrotown Plaza, 141-6200 McKay Avenue Burnaby, British Columbia V5H 4M9

Ad Sponsored by  
Proud supporter of the  
Canadian Cancer Society