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BUDGET-CUTTING IN CZECH REPUBLIC

By Sean Carney

Czech general elections over the weekend gave a 118-seat majority in the country's 200-seat lower house of Parliament to a group of three center-right parties, and after years of political instability the Czechs will most likely have a solid government that is ready to deal with big issues.

"The Czech election results are clearly good news for markets," said Lars Christensen, economist at Danske Bank.

The three parties are led by the Civic Democrats, or ODS, which gained 53 seats in Parliament, while probable coalition partners include parliamentary newcomer TOP 09 with 41 seats and Public Affairs which has 24 seats.

But the single party which garnered the most votes overall, 22%, was the Social Democrats, or CSSD, which will have 56 seats in Parliament. The CSSD has only one potential coalition partner, the unreformed Czech Communists, or KSCM, which will have 26 seats. Voter turnout was 63%, little changed from elections in 2006 that resulted in a Parliament divided 100 to 100 between right and left.

According to Czech law, the country's president will choose a party to try and assemble a government, and preference is typically given to the party that gets the most votes, in this case the CSSD. It remains to be seen whether President Vaclav Klaus will give CSSD the nod, but even if he does follow through with the formality, there is very little chance the Social Democrats will find support from other parties. So it's a matter of time, hopefully only weeks, until the CSSD would then accept defeat and defer to ODS to try and assemble a government.

The Social Democrats had hoped for 30% of the vote, and following the weaker-than-expected election results the party's divisive chairman Jiri Paroubek promptly resigned, handing power to first deputy and former finance minister Bohuslav Sobotka, who said he's "pessimistic" CSSD can muster a governing coalition. The chairmen of three other parties—Christi-

an Democrats, Greens and Party of Citizens' Rights—resigned after failing to get into Parliament.

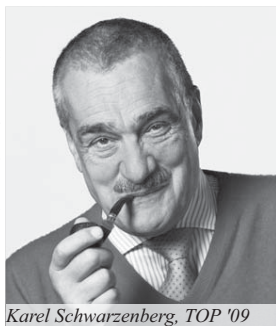
"If we can't push through our program, we'll spend the next four years in opposition in Parliament...but it's in the interests

of the Republic to move quickly without delays," Sobotka said on a Sunday television show with other political leaders.

"Getting only 22% of the vote in practice limits our ability to negotiate and form a government," he added pragmatically.

Leaders of ODS, TOP 09 and Public Affairs said that they are already working to find common ground to get the 2011 budget framework agreed upon, and on how their coalition could implement campaign pledges to overhaul the country's healthcare system and state-run pension plan, and improve education.

"I met with (ODS leader) Petr Necas this morning and we sorted out areas of agreement and highlighted potential problems and how they could be solved. We agreed we'll start coalition-building negotiations tomorrow (Monday May 31)," said Radek John, the chairman of Public Affairs. John's clear preference for a coalition with ODS and TOP 09 removes fears that his party, which will be the kingmaker in any coalition, could side with the CSSD. *The Wall Street Journal*



Karel Schwarzenberg, TOP '09

Necas said that the election was a victory for fiscal responsibility over populism and reiterated John's comment that negotiations start on Monday. "It's off to a good start," he said, adding that the coalition partners all aim to have a common stance on foreign policy. Necas, who said he would like to become Prime Minister, also ruled out a grand coalition of the two largest parties, saying the Social Democrat's program of increased social spending would hurt the country as it strives to build on its fragile economic recovery.

The market is expected to react positively to the news, which would be welcomed by holders of Czech assets as the country's currency has deteriorated to almost a six-month low in recent weeks due to fallout from the eurozone debt crisis.

"Financial markets got exactly the kind of outcome they longed for but which they didn't expect to pan out," said Marketa Sicharova, economist at Next Finance in Prague. "There's a very strong chance that a strong, pro-reform cabinet will be formed. Moreover, there's also high probability that the government will be formed surprisingly quickly," she said. The fiscally-minded government is expected to get instill confidence in markets and remove any pre-election concerns that the Czech Republic's sovereign rating could be downgraded.

Now it appears only a matter of going through formalities before a government with the strongest parliamentary majority since 1992 can get to work.

PRAGUE DONATES CZK 1.85M TO ETHIOPIAN SCHOOL PROJECT

The Czech capital of Prague will provide 1.85 million crowns for the construction of a four-class elementary school in Ethiopia that the Czech People in Need humanitarian organization

is implementing, Mayor of Prague Pavel Bem said yesterday. People in Need has built 11 schools in Ethiopia since 2003.

The new school for 200 children in Kefalo district in the east Ethiopian region of Somali is to be completed by the year's end.

"We have chosen a region to which we were afraid of going, to put it sincerely, because it is close to the Somali border," said Jan Mrkvicka, from People in Need.

"The border is still open, which means that anything is moving across it in both directions. The more so is it necessary for people who live there to be more contented and more educated," Mrkvicka said. Thirty-six percent of Ethiopia's inhabitants are literate. It is one of the poorest countries of the world and Kefalo district is allegedly one of the most backward in the country.

There are 468 villages in Kefalo in which 90 schools provide education. A mere 30 of them are built of bricks or stone.

"The everyday necessity to secure at least fundamental living, an insufficient access to education, fundamental health care and drinking water does not give people much chance of extricating themselves from the

trap of poverty," Bem said. He added Prague wants aid to Ethiopia to be long-term and to be well outlined. *Source CTK www.praguemonitor.com*



Petr Necas, ODS

PRESIDENT WITH PARTY LEADERS

On Monday May 31 President Vaclav Klaus met leaders of all five parties that made it into the lower house to talk about the formation of the next government. The leader of the TOP 09 party, Karel Schwarzenberg, informed Mr Klaus of the progress of coalition talks between his party and the Civic Democrats, which he said were going very well. The acting leader of the Social Democrats, Bohuslav Sobotka, said that while he is not convinced that his party would be able to succeed in forming a government, he still believes that, in line with tradition, the winning party should be given the first chance to form a government. The leader of the Civic Democrats, Petr Necas, expressed his wish to form a coalition of fiscal responsibility with the TOP 09 and the Public Affairs parties.

Even though the Social Democrats gained the most votes and seats in elections to the lower house, their chances of creating a viable coalition seem slim. It is now up to the Czech president to decide who will get the first chance to put together a government. Mr Klaus has not yet made any statements regarding when he is planning to announce a decision. *Radio Praha*



Photo Wikipedia

BEDŘICH HOLÁČEK

AN UNKNOWN CZECH ARTIST

By Laurence Svoboda, Westlake, California

Mr. Holáček (1903-1984) lived in my grandmother's Prague apartment during the Second World War. But as an art student during wartime, he was unable to pay any rent. It did not matter to my grandmother. She was glad to have the company. After the war ended, Marie emigrated to the United States to live in California with her son, my father, Alois. But Bedřich Holáček remained an unknown artist in Czechoslovakia for the rest of his life.

Nevertheless, after the War, Holáček wanted to thank Marie Svobodová for her generosity by sending some of his paintings to her in California. Circumventing Czechoslovakia's post-war policies about "art" was a problem for many years that Mr. Holáček was unable to overcome. Czech artists were not allowed to sell,

let alone, give their paintings to private individuals. They could only sell them to the State. But a brief moment of opportunity occurred during the "Pražské jaro."

In the summer of 1968, my father Alois visited Mr. Holáček in Frýdek-Místek. In his studio they worked out an arrangement to benefit the artist. They devised a plan to smuggle Holáček's paintings out of the country. The artist selected about 100 or more water-colored works which could fit into my father's luggage. Since these paintings were flat, Alois packed them carefully under clothing inside his suitcases. The artwork traveled by car across the Czechoslovak border, was not discovered, and soon arrived in California inside my father's luggage.

Once the paintings were safely

in California, Alois set to work preparing Holáček's artwork for an art show in his lovely garden. With sunny weather of Southern California, amid lush tropical plants and a swimming pool, Alois displayed the paintings so that his guests could admire the art as they strolled through the garden. The stunning pastoral beauty of Czechoslovakia made the sale a spectacular success.

The next step was to get the money from the sale back to the artist. Fearing that sending a large sum of money might attract attention; Alois sent the cash in small installments. Once again, the artist was grateful.

Fortunately, some of Holáček's paintings hang in my home today. These lovely paintings of Prague and of the Czech countryside are a treasure to me and my family. Although today his paintings are also found in private collections in the Czech Republic (see www.galeriepodzamkem.cz), they remind me of something more.

The recall a personal friendship of reciprocal generosity established during wartime Czechoslovakia of the 1940's when Bedřich Holáček lived in my grandmother's Malá Strana apartment.



The painter born March 6, 1903 in Moravian Ostrava, died December 12, 1984 in Frýdek-Místek. He studied painting at school Manes his was prof. Nejedlý in Prague.

He devoted himself to drawing and painting, before joining the AVU he began as a painter of decorations. The theme of his paintings was mainly Beskydy, but gave attention to Šumava, Bohemian Paradise, Wallachia, often pulled into the Tatra Mountains in Slovakia. His works are owned by GVV Ostrava, Beskydy Museum in Frýdek-Místek and private collections.

From Nicaragua to Thailand

By Geoffrey Svoboda

I never had the pleasure to meet my late Czech, Great Grandfather whose diary was recently discovered. He sailed aboard a ship, the "Saída", in 1898. His son, Alois Svoboda, came to America in 1939, and four years later my father, Milan Svoboda, was born. I arrived in 1970. Even though I never met my Great Grandfather we share a similar passion for exploring new and faraway lands.

Like my Great Grandfather I left Oregon and began traveling when I was 16. Over the years I have had many memorable experiences. I will highlight a few. At 18, I swam with Albanian 'gypsies' in the Skopje River in southern Macedonia. They challenged me to a fight. We settled on arm wrestling and push-ups. At 21, I spent many late nights playing trombone in a Mexican wedding band and learning to dance the

'quebradita.'

In addition to playing music I began teaching English as a way to earn money. My first English teaching job was in a busy market in Oaxaca, Mexico. It was there I learned to sell 'mole', 'quesillo' and 'chocolate' made the traditional way.

In Costa Rica I floated the Arenal River on a raft at night with bright-eyed crocodiles staring back. I traveled on horseback up the side of a mountain in the rainforest to plant bamboo and hiked the rivers of San Felipe in Venezuela.

Ironically, what I remember most of the places I've visited is not the places themselves; rather it's the friendships I've acquired. Of these friendships there is one that stands out.

Nearly two years ago on the day of my birthday I was traveling in Nicaragua and was fortunate to meet 3 students who were members of a local orphanage. I instantly felt a kinship with these people and we agreed to work together in some capacity in the future. It was this friendship that led me to Thailand.

I came to Thailand because I was offered a job to teach English here, and the pay was much better than what I was earning in Latin America. I thought this the perfect opportunity to develop my teaching skills and to earn more money, some of which could go to help my friends in Nicaragua.

For 1 year and 8 months now I have been in Thailand teaching children to read, write and speak English. Currently, I am teaching

1st Grade at Regent's International School in Pattaya. I have continued to support some of my Nicaraguan friends financially, and our dream of acquiring land and operating a small business there is still very much alive.

I do not know what tomorrow will bring. Perhaps one day I will travel to Prague to see the birthplace of my Grandfather. He grew up in a stone house across from the famous St. Charles Bridge.

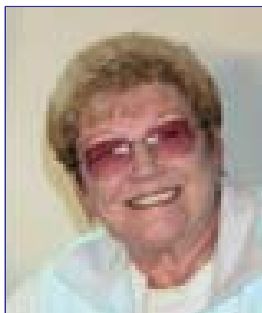
Wherever I end up I shall always remember what the orphans of Nicaragua taught me.

Before eating their meal of rice and beans, the same one they eat for every meal, of every day, they recite the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. Because of this experience I will forever remember to be grateful for what I have and for my life.

The prayer goes like this:

Lord, make me an instrument of
your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow
love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope
where there is darkness, light
where there is sadness, joy
O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much
seek to be consoled as to con-
sole;
to be understood, as to under-
stand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are
pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are
born to Eternal Life. Amen

Photo By author



The page By
RADKA MAYEROVÁ
Edmonton



Michael Rohac was born in Toronto in 1974. His parents lived in Prague, Czechoslovakia until 1968, at which time they emigrated to Canada after the Soviet invasion, in search of a life in a free country. Michael grew up in Mississauga, eventually earning his Masters degree in Conducting at the University of Toronto in 2001. That same year he moved "back" to the Czech Republic to begin his career. Today he works as the Music Director of the West-Bohemian Symphony Orchestra (Západočeský symfonický orchestr) in Mariánské Lázně. Founded in 1821, it is the oldest orchestra in the Czech lands.

When did you decide to work in the Czech Republic?

When I finished my Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Toronto in 1997, I began to frequent conducting master classes in the U.S. and Canada, where I quickly learned that beginning a conducting career in North America is a rather problematic and perhaps even unrealistic undertaking. Everyone I met advised me to go to Europe if I had a chance. When I began my Masters degree in 1999, my goal was to move to the Czech Republic immediately upon its completion.

What is it that keeps you there to this day?

Although my work in the Czech Republic is difficult in many ways, and although I still do not feel wholly at home in the country, I remind myself everyday at the overwhelming odds that would be stacked against me were I to remain or even return to Canada at this point in my career. The idea that I should be Music Director of a professional orchestra that plays over 100 concerts per year in my 30's is something that I could have never dreamed of in my University years, yet now, the Czech Republic has offered me that opportunity.

Did you know as a boy that you would devote your life to music?

I began to study piano at the age of 5, but it was more of a chore or responsibility than a passion at that point. As a young boy I was very interested in sports, as a young teen I was interested in writing. My passion for music awoke through my experiences in my High School music program, around the time I was 16.

How does one begin a career as a professional musician?

Instrumentalists have a very difficult but very direct path. They attend orchestral auditions when a vacancy is announced and along with hundreds of other candidates compete for that one position. In the meantime, they support themselves by teaching music, and perhaps playing with various non-permanent ensembles on a concert-to-concert basis.

Conductors have a much more complicated path to their

first, next and last opportunities. There is no standard audition process, every orchestra undertakes in a conductor search in a way that fits the special needs of that particular ensemble. An important factor in beginning and continuing a career as a conductor is the ability to speak to a range of people on many different levels. A large part of the art of conducting is the ability to motivate and convince people, which makes interpersonal matters an important factor in securing opportunities and engagements.

You have a University degree – is that sufficient to become a conductor?

Certainly not. A degree provides the opportunity to acquire the basic musical skills that a conductor needs. What one does with that knowledge and how one turns it into real experiences is a more difficult issue. Orchestras are hesitant to afford young conductors opportunities if they do not have experience, but where does one then acquire that experience? A dilemma that all young conductors must face and solve at the beginning of their careers.

6. Where did you acquire your experience and practice?

In this matter I am greatly indebted to John Barnum and the Mississauga Symphony orchestra, who offered me the opportunity to work as the orchestras apprentice conductor for four years from 1997-2001. The regular podium time, progressively more involving concert opportunities and especially the chance to understand how to work with people were all invaluable experiences for when applied to my beginnings in the Czech Republic.

When did you first stand before a Czech ensemble?

My earliest opportunity in the Czech Republic was with the Janáček Opera in Brno, where I acted as assistant conductor for 3 new opera productions. Through contacts that I acquired while filling that role, I was given opportunities with the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc and the Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava conducting school and family concerts, a role that I be-

came widely identified with in my first 3 years in the country.

Did you perceive a difference between Canadian and Czech Orchestras?

While I do not wish to generalize too broadly about Czech musicians, in comparison to North American musicians they are almost shockingly unfriendly and there can often be a very poor work ethic in rehearsals. I soon learned that it is the conductors role to put these things right, and if they sense a strong authority on the podium, both musical and personal, they will respond very positively. Musically, Czech orchestras have a very intuitive understanding of style, but it is an understanding that can often

of all of this were the musicians, who were horribly overworked and underpaid at the time, which made for rather poor morale. My arrival was seen as hope for better times... but this is a long process that is still in development today, 5 years later.

The challenge was trying to find a harmonic solution to the orchestra's financial troubles and the musicians' low salaries, through constant meetings the Board of Directors, the Musicians' Union and the City Council. My first four months in the orchestra were spent in that seemingly endless loop. In those days, music was unfortunately the last thing on the agenda. However, from that conflict there

emerged a certain understanding on all sides what the role of the orchestra is within our city and how that needs to be supported. Our players are still the lowest paid orchestral musicians in the country, but we have found a system of operations where all elements work in an acceptable balance. That system is the fortunate product of our early difficulties and the dialogues that surrounded them.

How were you accepted by the players in the orchestra? Did they regard you as a foreigner?

On a conversational level, my Czech is very good, so people do not see me as a foreigner. My grammar is a little shaky when having to speak formally, but I don't think that the few mistakes I make shed a bad light on the people that I represent. A more pressing issue with

From conducting, it is only a short step to composition. Do you compose?

I do, but not nearly as much as I would like to. Composition is an extremely time-consuming process, and I believe that a "real" composer must devote himself entirely to this art if he wishes to create something of worth. I compose one or two short pieces for my orchestra every season, for me it is an exercise that vents a certain amount of "artistic inertia" that is often left over after studying and performing the great works of other composers.

I write my music under a pseudonym, for two reasons. First of all, I want the orchestras to which I present these works to feel free to criticize them without fear of offending their author. Secondly, it creates a certain amount of mystery and speculation among audience members (especially in Mariánské Lázně), and I remain playfully non-committal to the questions that are raised about the identity of this composer who often appears on our programs.

Who is your favorite composer?

In my University years in Toronto, Jukka-Pekka Saraste was the Music Director of the Toronto Symphony, and therefore the music of Jean Sibelius was often on the program. I attended many rehearsals and concerts where his works were performed, and they left a lasting impression on me. I have been slowly introducing Sibelius to our orchestra and audience in Mariánské Lázně. Although it is an unfamiliar idiom, his works have been met with courage and admiration alike.

You have lived in Mariánské Lázně for 5 years now – how do you feel there?

Mariánské Lázně is a unique town in that although it has only 15000 inhabitants, it is a very sought-after tourist destination thanks to its spa, and therefore the presence of a full-time symphony orchestra is possible. With regards to how I feel here, I see my life here only in direct relation to my work with the orchestra. The town does not have much excitement to offer for young people, but Prague and even Nurnberg are not that far away...

The region has always been closely related to Germany and the German language. Is the German influence still prevalent?

With regards to the city's economy, certainly. More than three quarters of the spa guests are German, and German is spoken fluently by all the service providers in the city. I expected to find a certain xenophobic antipathy towards Germans among the local inhabitants, but I was pleasantly surprised to find that this is not the case. The local people understand that their livelihoods and the prosperity of the city is dependant on German partnership and ac-



lead to inflexible interpretations, especially of Czech and Classical repertoire. It is quite difficult to bring a "new" idea to a Czech

foreigner. My grammar is a little shaky when having to speak formally, but I don't think that the few mistakes I make shed a bad light on the people that I represent. A more pressing issue with

Michael Rohac

orchestra and have them play a piece in a way that they are not accustomed to.

What was your most difficult challenge when you first assumed the role of Music Director?

Although the West-Bohemian Symphony Orchestra is a fine ensemble that fills a variety of roles in its community, it is drastically under-funded in comparison to other Czech orchestras of similar size. Also, I entered into a situation where relations between the orchestra's management and city council had been deteriorating for several years. At the wrong end

regards to my acceptance among musicians was my age. I came to the orchestra when I was 30, which is very young for a conductor, or any manager for that matter. Early on, I won the appreciation of certain musicians through my ability to listen to and value the opinions of others. But in the end, a conductor must make difficult decisions, both musical and personal, and stand by them. It has been my ability to stand by my decisions that ultimately won me the respect of the musicians in the orchestra.

A recent novel by Simon Mawer, Booker Prize winner, *The Glass Room* published by Little, Brown is based on presumed life in Brno's Mies Van Der Rohe designed Tugendhat House. This architect, along with Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, is widely regarded as one of the most important architects of the 20th century.

Mies designed the building through 1928 and 1929 when construction began. Money was not an issue for the Tugendhats and they gave him a free hand. For Mies, therefore, the commission offered a unique opportunity to realize his own ideas in full, including designing the furniture (viz pages 44 to 51 in Claire Zimmerman's book *Mies Van De Rohe* published by Taschen). The exterior is a low-key International Style white box, but it is the interior that is astonishing. As Mawer says, „My impression of the Villa Tugendhat was as vivid the first time as subsequent ones. I had the sensation of actually walking into a work of art.“

The public rooms are contained in one large open space. A curved wall of Macassar ebony defines the dining room, and a straight free-standing wall of gold-veined onyx separates the music room from the living room. The space is punctuated by slender cruciform columns covered in chromed metal.

The sense of openness is heightened when, at the touch of a button, the fifteen-foot sections of the glass walls sink into the ground, hence the *The Glass Room*. I have never been in the Tugendhat House, but I know that it was severely damaged during the Second World War and only recently restored, to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

THE GLASS ROOM

By Ernie Zucker

But Mawer's narrative brings the interior furnishing (the window coverings, the grand piano and the architect-designed furniture) purchased by the fictional owner-family, Victor and Liesl Landauer, to the fore. Novels cannot be based on just remarkable buildings,

even as Mawer claims this building to be a piece of art after walking through it. His book initially describes the life in the thirties' Czechoslovakia where Landauer was a successful car manufacturer. Newly wed, he and Liesl commissioned a famous architect (very much like the Tugendhats) to design them a unique home. Victor is Jewish married to Liesl who is gentile and, as the Tugendhats, are caught up the post-Munich tragedy of the country so far free and prosperous.

As the lights began to dim, the Nazi army occupying the country, Mawer's richly drawn characters are swept into the maelstrom of history. Disturbed, Victor on his „business“ trips to Vienna embarks on an affair with milliner Kata Kalman.

Liesl tries to escape reality, by embarking on a lesbian dalliance with her confidante Hana Hanakova. In the end, Victor manages to get himself, and the family to Switzerland, and eventually to the United States. He tries to bring Kata and her daughter Maryka along, to help with their children Ottilie and Martin, but the two are detained by the Gestapo and disappear. Their fate is unknown. Ultimately, *The Glass Room* itself becomes the narrative. First, under the Nazis, it becomes an institute conducting genetic experiments, then the Russians make it into a sanatorium, and now a muzeum, as the building is owned by the state - the Czech Republic.

At this stage, the Landauers visit and, by a twist of events, are reunited with Kata's daughter Maryka. I think that the book's ending is infinitely moving. This book has been shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2009 and *The Glass Room* has recently been translated into Czech. Mawer's books: *Chimera* (1989); *A Place in Italy* (1992); *The Bitter Cross* (1992); *A Jealous God* (1996); *Mendel's Dwarf* (1997); *The Gospel of Judas* (2000); *The Fall* (2003); *Swimming in Ithaca* (2006); *Gregor Mendel: Planting the Seeds of Genetics* (2006) and *The Glass Room* (2009)..

Photo Wikipedia



Michael Rohac

cept that readily.
 > from pg 9 *The Czech Republic probably does not offer all the comforts to which you were accustomed to in Canada. Do you miss something from "home"?*

I am often asked this question here, both in interviews and on a personal level. I live rather modestly and have never sought "creature-comforts", I can truthfully say that I don't miss any thing... I do however miss the openness and genuine friendliness that I associate with Canadian people. There are certain Czech character traits that manifest themselves on every level of society that I find unfortunate, and because of them, I have had troubles establishing lasting and meaningful relationships in this country, both personal and professional.

What have you learned in the Czech Republic?

This country and my professional experiences here have taught me about the nature of responsibility. To oneself, to one's profession, to art, and to society as a whole.

Is musical life in the Czech Republic and Europe different than in North America?

Certainly. In North America, going to the symphony or to the opera is still an activity sought after almost exclusively by the intellectual elite and the wealthy. That is not necessarily a criticism, but it is a fact. In Europe, I think a larger cross-section of society attends concerts, which has repercussions on how musical ensembles are funded, how music is taught, and on the general public's consciousness as a

whole.

Do you find that there is something that Czech people under appreciate about their country that deserves more respect.

Art, music, theater, literature. Less than 0.5% of the national budget is allocated to art, which is far behind the European average, where 1% is a guideline, while the Benelux countries approach 3%. Investing in the arts may not yield immediate cash returns, but it makes for a cultured nation with a solid sense of morality and value, especially where education is concerned. I'm afraid that the problem on the level of government is not one of finance, but one of philosophy.

Czech politicians do not understand the value of art within a society, and unfortunately equate the terms "Art" and "Culture" (kultura), which are two separate things.

How do you see your future?

I still see my work in Mariánské Lázně as incomplete, I would like to remain here for a few more years to "finish what I started", so to speak. Within a 5-10 year time-frame I would like to become Music Director of a larger orchestra in this country, one that would afford me a little more time to study and perhaps provide a broader network of contacts for the future.

Where is home? In the Czech Republic or in Canada?

I am very much in between worlds with that issue... but if home is a feeling of belonging somewhere, than I am most "at home" on the podium, in front of an orchestra

Translated by - mr -

The question by Věra Kohoutová

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR THE DIPLOMATIC SPOUSES ASSOCIATION (DSA) CHRISTMAS BAZAAR!

This popular event, which is now in its 13th year, was held in December, 2010 at the Prague Hilton hotel and welcomed over 8 thousand visitors. The 2010 bazaar raised a grand total of just over 3 million Czech Crowns! The funds go directly to applicants from among 18 different Czech charitable organizations, chosen by DSA representatives who conduct visits to ensure funds are used appropriately. The money raised helps care for children, women, and the elderly as well as those who are physically and mentally challenged.

The DIPLOMATIC SPOUSES ASSOCIATION PRAGUE (DSA) organizes the Bazaar with over 50 countries participating. Each country has a representative table and fundraising is done by selling products typical to the region including food, wine, arts and crafts and Bazaar tickets. Our Canadian table had great success in selling Maple Syrup, Sockeye Salmon, Ice wine, Native prints and of course Hockey paraphernalia to

name a few. It is also a medium to promote "CANADA" in a country that is very pro Canadian.

Everybody on the volunteer committee worked extremely hard behind the scenes in order for the Canadian table to be the huge hit that it was! It was a fantastic year for the Canadians and we should be proud of our results. After tallying ticket sales, sponsor donations, silent auction proceeds and table sales the Canadian table team contributed 102,166,-CZK!! Many,

many thanks to all our sponsors/donors, tireless volunteers, Canadian Residence and Embassy employees and to our special friends in Canada.

Every year we are looking for sponsors, and especially donors who would be willing to donate products at cost or for free or even services which we could sell at our Canadian table.

It is a chance to promote your products, Canada and to aid various charities who help many less fortunate persons. Should you want to make a difference or wish more information please contact marie@manzac.org.

Marie Manzac, Member of the "Canadian table" organization team.

