

NATIONAL
CZECH &
SLOVAK
MUSEUM &
LIBRARY

MOST

[The Bridge]

Spring 2020

THE POWER OF ART



Thank you for your support of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

NATIONAL CZECH & SLOVAK MUSEUM & LIBRARY

Officers

Steve Michalicek, *Chair*
Lee Freeman, *Secretary*
Ron Detweiler, *Treasurer*
George Drost, *Past Chair*

Board of Trustees

Dr. Kim Becicka
Dr. Brad Buck
Tom DeBoom
Denver Dvorsky
Tony Golobic
Bruce Hamous
Dr. Charles Heller
Dr. Martin Izakovic
Mary Kay McGrath
Ernie Melichar
Josh Moore
Dr. Karel Pacak
Dr. Miriam Potocky
Sharon Schweitzer
Michael Seng, JD
Dr. Allison Stanger
Martin Valko, JD
Bob Vancura
Craig Van Dyke
Doug Wenzel, JD
Chad Zenisek
Steven E. Zlatos, JD

National Advisory Council

The Honorable Madeleine Albright
The Honorable William and Mrs. Catherine Cabaniss
Dr. Pavol Demeš
Tony and Magda Golobic
His Excellency Hynek Kmonicek, *Ambassador of the Czech Republic*
His Excellency Ivan Korčok, *Ambassador of the Slovak Republic*
Wendy Luers
PhDr. Michal Lukeš, *The National Museum in Prague*
Dr. Sally Mason
Sue Plotz Olson
Chuck Peters
The Honorable Tom Ridge
Gary Rozek
Dr. Jan and Marica Vilček
The Honorable Michael Žantovský

The NCSML is funded in part by a grant from the Cultural Enrichment Partnership Program administered by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Upcoming Events

As we prepare to send this edition of *MOST* to the printers, we are struggling with what to put in this notice. Because of the fluidity of the COVID-19, we cannot say what events will go on as scheduled, and what will be rescheduled and/or canceled.

While we hope to reopen as soon as possible, the safety of our staff, members, volunteers, and guests is our top priority. Information changes daily, so we encourage you to check our website and social media sites often.

Stay safe and healthy!

THE MUSEUM STORE

There's always something for everyone in our award-winning Museum Store!

Our online store is open 24/7, orders are processed weekly! Visit our website for more details.



■ **FOR HER** The Triple Poppy Charm necklace from our Custom Charm Collection is both playful and elegant. Hand enameled and gold plated, made in the USA — an instant classic!



■ FOR THE KIDS

This adorable plush hedgehog hand-puppet is appropriate for children of all ages and is imported from Czech Republic.



■ **FOR HIM** A selection of the best chocolate dragée contains pistachios in milk chocolate, almonds in milk chocolate and cinnamon, coffee beans in dark chocolate, roasted almonds and hazelnuts in milk chocolate and cinnamon, almonds in white chocolate with coffee.

■ FOR THE FAMILY Letter

Jam is a cooperative game for 2 to 6 players. In each round, every player has a letter that everyone else can see. But no one can see their own letter! Guess them all before clues run out, and unscramble your hidden word.



FROM OUR PRESIDENT/CEO



Spring greetings from Cedar Rapids! With the freshness and beauty of the season, we welcome new exhibits, educational programs, and special activities for all ages. At the same time, however, the air is filled with caution as we work to provide a safe environment for everyone. In spite of these difficult times, we continue to work in preparation for the busy months ahead.

The year 2019 marked several firsts for the NCSML. We held our inaugural Preciosa Presidential Gala with out of town guests from the Czech and Slovak Republics, Florida, New York, Washington, D.C., Montana, Illinois, South Dakota, Texas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, and we hosted our first Ph.D. student, Marek Vasut, from Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. He spent one semester doing research and archival work in our Skala Bartizal Library. We will now be having students on a regular basis from universities in both the Czech and Slovak Republics. We also signed affiliation agreements with the National Museums in both Prague and Bratislava. This will enable us to work more closely together on exhibits and exchange of staff, faculty, and researchers.

Our dedicated staff and Board of Directors have planned outstanding new initiatives for 2020. In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment and women's right to vote both in the U.S. and Czechoslovakia, a number of activities are planned to celebrate Czech and Slovak women, both in the U.S. and abroad. We will also host a new exhibit, *"Treasures of Slovakia: 1,000 Years of Slovak Culture,"* featuring artifacts on loan from the Slovak National Museum. Many of the items in this exhibition have never been seen in the U.S. before!

This is a special year for the NCSML as we celebrate our 25th anniversary of the dedication by the three presidents in 1995. In 2024, we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary from the founding of the idea of a Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids. So as we "Journey from the Silver to the Gold," watch for surprises and new programs and exhibits for the next four years.

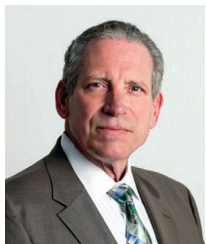
We have learned so much from this COVID-19 pandemic, but three things remain constant: the importance of each of you; the pride we have for our Czech and Slovak heritage; and the strength of our community, state and nation to preserve our freedom and democracy.

My heartfelt greetings,


Cecilia Rokusek



FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



It is an exciting time for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, and I am thrilled to be part of it in my new role as Chair of the NCSML's Board of Trustees.

As Cecilia mentioned, we are celebrating our Silver Anniversary of the day three presidents — Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic, Michael Kovac of the Slovak Republic, and Bill Clinton of the United States – came to Cedar Rapids for the dedication of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in 1995. So much has happened in the 25 years since that historic event and even more when we look back further to 1974, the year a group of citizens and visionaries who established the Czech Fine Arts Foundation, Inc.

The early master planners envisioned a museum and library that would welcome people of all ethnic backgrounds. They wanted all visitors to feel at home, and to learn from the rich stories of immigration from the Czech and Slovak settlers. I think they would be proud of what we have accomplished. However, our work is far from over, which is why we recently unveiled our new mission and vision statements.

MISSION: Through the Czech & Slovak lens, the NCSML preserves, presents and transcends unique stories of history and culture through innovative experiences and active engagement to reach cross-cultural audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

VISION: NCSML is an innovative leader for lifelong learning, community building and cultural connections. We encourage self-discovery through extraordinary experiences that tell stories of freedom, identity, family, and community.

I look forward to serving you and this wonderful institution, and hope to see you at one of NCSML's amazing programs and events throughout the upcoming year. Please remember that your membership and support allow us to do all that we do. Even in these challenging times, we must work together to preserve and expand our NCSML, and all the wonderful work that it does.

Best,


Steve Michalicek

EXHIBITS



Taking a Stand: *Artists as Activists*

March 28 – September 20, 2020

Artists as Activists, an exhibit featuring works created by internationally known contemporary artists in response to political oppression, opened at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library on Saturday, March 28. This exhibition investigates artists' roles in addressing these issues and illuminates the possibilities of change as a result.

Artists are iconoclasts by nature. In order to create the new, to seek their own independent expression, artists are inadvertently positioned to oppose the reigning doctrines. Examples can be found in the former Czechoslovakia where David Černý brought attention to the overpowering domination of the Soviet Union over a large swath of Central and Eastern Europe, or in China where Ai Weiwei points out the disregard to the living conditions of his compatriots.

Curated by Charlotta Kotik, great-granddaughter of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia and an independent curator based in Brooklyn, this exhibition is a new addition to the international art scene. Many of the pieces in *Artists as Activists* have never been shown together before.



Artists as Activists features work by Tania Bruguera, David Černý, Juanma Garcia, Hong Hao, Emily Jacir, Jc Ilenochan, Malik Sajad and Ai Weiwei. The exhibit is on display in the Petrik Gallery through September 20.



Heritage Caretakers of Moravia Strážkyně moravského dědictví

Preserving a way of life

Cutting the ribbon to signify the opening of a new exhibit is always exciting, but the ceremonial gesture was even greater for the *Heritage Caretakers of Moravia* exhibition as folk artists, 84-year-old Marie Švirgová and her colleague Dagmar Benešová, along with Czech-American artist Sonya Darrow, completed the task to hearty applause.

It took almost six months of preparations in Moravia, and another week in Cedar Rapids, to put this exhibition together. The two women spent hours painting the folklore motifs for the exhibition, which also includes mannequins in the beautiful folklore dresses Švirgová donated to the NCSML.

The exhibition is dedicated to the book *Vanishing Perennials of Moravia*. It is about the last group of grandmothers still wearing traditional folklore dresses on a daily basis. It is the book that brought these two Moravian women to the U.S. for a third time as they



share their love of folklore art and traditions that grow strongly in their home region by giving art workshops to Czech communities.

Švirgová, from Lanžhot, Moravia, is a legend in the folk art community, having learned the craft at a young age. Together with Benešová, they both founded Výtvarná folklorní akademie (Folk art Academy), where they preserve the decorative folk art by teaching it to new generations.

The book *Vanishing Perennials of Moravia*, photographed by Liba Taylor with text written by Jan Kostrhun, is available for purchase at the Museum Store (store.ncsml.org).

Heritage Caretakers of Moravia is on display through June 14.



EXHIBITS



Visiting NCSML Rocks!

The Petrik Gallery was alive with the sounds of music as popular songs from several decades played on constant rotation for visitors viewing *Medieval to Metal: The Art & Evolution of the Guitar*.

The touring exhibition, developed by The National GUITAR Museum, opened at the NCSML in early October of 2019. It featured 40 objects, ranging from the intricately inlaid Moorish oud and six-foot long Renaissance theorbo on to the modern Italian design of the Eko and transparent acrylic body of California's BC Rich guitars.

Of special interest was the resonator guitar, a metal guitar of the same type created by the Slovak-American Dopyera Brothers. Brothers John and Rudy Dopyera, born in what is now Slovakia and part of the wave of Eastern European immigrants around the beginning of the 20th century, represent the American Dream as inventors, innovators, marketers and creative force behind the National Dobro Company.

Dobro is both a contraction of Dopyera Brothers and the word 'good' in their native language.

Medieval To Metal also included life-size photorealistic illustrations of historically



important guitar designs from noted artist Gerard Huerta, and 20 photographs of acclaimed musicians and their guitars from Neil Zlozower, one of the world's premier concert photographers.

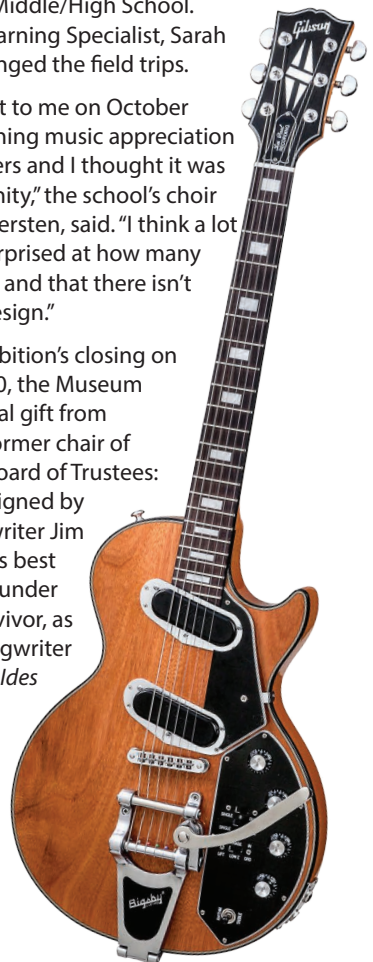
This was a unique exhibition for the Museum, as evidenced by those who visited during its 16-week residence. We welcomed several first-time visitors, as well as all sixth- through 12th-grade band and choir students from Alburnett Middle/High School. NCSML's K-12 Learning Specialist, Sarah Henderson, arranged the field trips.

"She reached out to me on October when I was teaching music appreciation to seventh graders and I thought it was a great opportunity," the school's choir director, Joe Fagersten, said. "I think a lot of them were surprised at how many guitars there are and that there isn't one standard design."

Prior to the exhibition's closing on January 26, 2020, the Museum received a special gift from George Drost, former chair of the Museum's Board of Trustees: a dobro guitar signed by musician-songwriter Jim Peterik. Peterik is best known as the founder of the band Survivor, as vocalist and songwriter of *Vehicle by the Ides of March*, and as co-writer of the anthem *Eye of the Tiger*. The guitar is now part of the NCSML's permanent collection.



Musician-songwriter Jim Peterik, left, stands with George Drost, outgoing chair of the Museum's Board of Trustees. Drost gave the guitar Peterik is holding to the NCSML.



NCSML extends hours for individuals on the autism spectrum

In order to be more accessible for individuals with disabilities, specifically those on the autism spectrum, the National Czech & Slovak Museum recently introduced Hubert's Night Owls.

During this program, the Museum will close at 4 p.m. to the public on a designated Sunday, but remain open for people with disabilities, as well as their friends and families, until 5 p.m. Exhibits are modified at this time, reducing stimuli in order to provide a sensory-friendly experience. Staff provide multi-sensory opportunities for learners who benefit from tactile experiences, and offer crafts and activities for young visitors.

Hubert's Night Owls is the Museum's latest addition to access-friendly programming. In 2018, the NCSML introduced exhibit tours for the visually impaired and started personalizing tours for special education classrooms.

"We believe that our museum belongs to everyone and it is our job to make sure that people feel welcome and included in this space," NCSML's K-12 Learning Specialist Sarah Henderson says. "Hubert's Night Owls is one small step toward making the NCSML a place that everyone will think of as 'their museum.'"



Hubert's Night Owls will be offered on the following Sundays in 2020:
July 19 • 4 to 5 p.m. | October 18 • 4 to 5 p.m. | December 13 • 4 to 5 p.m.

NCSML announces national scholarship program

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library's first-ever digital speech competition is underway, with the winning student receiving a \$750 scholarship to the college or university of their choosing.

Sponsored by the Aegon Transamerica Foundation, the 2020 Velvet Voices of Freedom competition honors Václav Havel, a civil activist of international stature, and author of plays, poetry and essays that continue to inspire millions. Havel served as the last president of Czechoslovakia from 1989 until the country's dissolution in 1992, having led the people through the Velvet Revolution, which peacefully overthrew communism. His leadership continued during the Velvet Divorce, which saw the country's peaceful separation into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Havel was the first President of the Czech Republic, serving from 1993 to 2003.



The deadline to apply is April 30.
Visit ncsml.org/velvetvoicesoffreedom for more information.

Velvet Voices of Freedom pays tribute to Havel by celebrating the power of human compassion expressed through speech and literature to transform the world. This year, applicants must use excerpts from the play *R.U.R.*, a quintessential piece of literature by Karel Čapek, in their video.

Čapek was a Czech writer, playwright and critic who supported free expression, and opposed the rise of fascism and communism. *R.U.R.*, which stands for Rossum's Universal Robots, celebrates 100 years of publication in 2020. NCSML will honor this milestone with the exhibition, *A Century of Robots: From Čapek to Now*, in May.

Planning to visit NCSML?

We recently launched new group packages including appetizing add-ons and options to customize your experience with special tours, speakers and presentations. Book a visit with us and enjoy:

- ✧ Special group rate of \$8.00 per person
- ✧ Personal introduction from museum staff
- ✧ Admissions to all museum exhibits
- ✧ Hemphill Theater Features (30 min.), seats 50
- ✧ Guided Tour of Czech Immigrant Home
- ✧ Exclusive group discount coupon in our award-winning Museum Store

For large groups of 25 people or more, we have customized a traditional Czech Lunch Buffet for \$30 per person. This price includes the \$8 admission. The Czech Lunch Buffet is available from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Call 319-362-8500 for a full list of offerings. You can also schedule a visit online at ncsml.org/visit/group-tours. Please book online or call at least two weeks in order to receive any discounted rates your group qualifies for and reserve your space.



Pack Your Bags

The NCSML will host two trips to Europe this fall. One journey will explore castles and wines of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, while the second will have your holiday spirits rising with visits to traditional Christmas markets in Germany, France and Austria.

During the Castles and Wines of Slovakia and the Czech Republic experience, hosted by Cecilia Rokusek and Bob Petrik of the NCSML, you'll meet the family wine makers of Slovakia and

Moravia, and enjoy the picturesque castles of both countries as you immerse yourself in the culture and daily living. Your lodging will include castles, chateaus, and a 5-star mountain lodge.

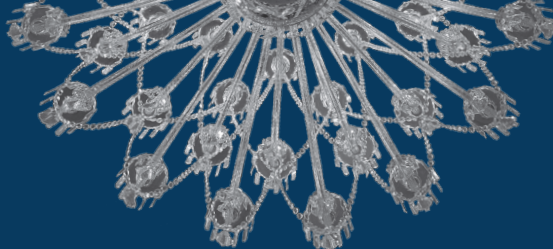
This excursion will take place from August 24 through September 4. The cost is \$4,265 per person in a shared room or \$4,455 for one person in a single room. This price includes all meals, wine experiences, transfers and tips. Travelers are responsible for transportation to and from Vienna, where the tour begins. The first payment of \$500 to hold your seat is due April 30. It is non-refundable.

Director of Programs Teresa Stenstrup is your NCSML host of the Classic Christmas Markets trip, which will take place December 12 through December 20. This journey is your opportunity to sip mulled wine and shop for handicrafts in some of the oldest and most famous Christmas markets in Europe, as well as see firsthand how European cultures influence one another and compare traditions of the Czechs and Slovaks.

Book by July 13 for a reduced price of \$300 per person, bringing the cost to \$3,299 per person for a double room and \$3,499 per person for a single room. The total trip cost includes round-trip airfare from Cedar Rapids, hotel accommodations and several meals. An information session about the Classic Christmas Markets Trip will be held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3, at the NCSML.

Contact the NCSML to reserve your seat today!





SAVE *the* DATE • NOVEMBER 6

2ND ANNUAL
PRESIDENT'S SOCIETY

Preciosa Gala

Cherish the past. Celebrate the present. Create the future.

On November 6, join us in celebrating 25 years in the community as a nationally recognized center of Czech and Slovak culture and heritage. Enjoy delicious food from Pöpolí Restaurant in Cedar Rapids, special wine pairings, and exclusive silent auction offerings. This year we will honor Gary T. Rozek, past Board President and long-time champion of the NCSML, for his outstanding philanthropy towards the museum and our community as a whole. We will also be recognizing and thanking the dedicated students, teachers, mentors, administrators, and community partners who are working together on a special project which will be revealed at the opening of our 'Century of Robots' exhibit.



Reserve your tickets today, space is limited!

Tickets for President's Society members are only \$100, Non-President's Society Member tickets are \$150.

For reservations or information about sponsoring a table, please contact Evelyn at erossow@ncsml.org, call 319.362.8500 or online at ncsml.org/gala2020

Reservations are required and accepted until April 30 or until capacity is reached.

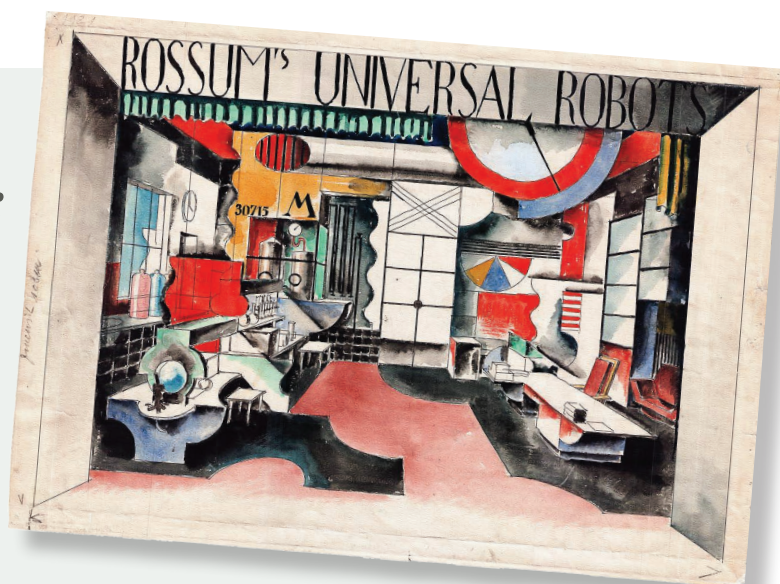
IN THE GALLERIES

Did you know that the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library rotates exhibits in our four temporary exhibit spaces at least twice per year? That means that each year, you can see more than eight different exhibits celebrating Czech and Slovak history, culture, and art.

Here is what you will find in our galleries throughout the spring and summer months:

A Century of Robots: From Čapek to Now

May 16
through
October 25,
Smith Gallery



The exhibition marks the 100th anniversary of Karel Čapek's play, *R.U.R.*, in 2020. Čapek (1890-1938) was a Czech writer, playwright and critic best known for his science fiction works. *R.U.R.*, which stands for Rossum's Universal Robots, introduced the word robot. He also wrote politically-charged works dealing with the social turmoil of his time. Visitors will gain an appreciation for Čapek's life and work, and understand the connection between a Czech author and one of the most fascinating technical revolutions of the 20th century.



Voices and Votes: Democracy in America

TBA, Skala Bartizal Library

When American revolutionaries waged a war for independence, they took a leap of faith that sent ripple effects across generations. They embraced a radical idea of establishing a government that entrusted the power of the nation not in a monarchy, but in its citizens. That great leap sparked questions that continue to impact Americans: who has the right to vote, what are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens, and whose voices will be heard? *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* will be a springboard for discussions about those very questions and how they are reflected in local stories.



In Her Father's Eyes: A Slovak Childhood in the Shadow of the Holocaust

September 1 through November 8, Skala Bartizal Library

This moving exhibit documents the short life of Kitty Weichherz, a Czechoslovakian girl born in the same year as Anne Frank. Told through the loving eyes of her surviving father, Kitty's story paints a portrait of a young girl's innocence in the face of increasing anti-Jewish sentiment on the eve of World War II. The touching story of just one girl, one family, emphasizes the humanity of millions just like Kitty who were lost in this tragic war.

Vincent Hložník: Between War and Dream



September 19 through January 2, 2021,
Anderson Gallery

This exhibition features 20 Surrealist-inspired linocut prints by Slovak artist Vincent Hložník from the series *Dreams (Sny)* (1962) on loan from Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection at Hebrew Home at Riverdale. They represent a turning point in the artist's career as his figurative motifs — always related to the exploration of the human condition — began to take on more symbolic and metaphorical meanings. Detached human limbs, monstrous figures assembled from eyes and teeth, the Angel of Death, and threatening flanks of silhouetted and stylized archaic warriors signal unspecified danger, while angles and voids create an instability that marks the very real threat of annihilation, whether from war or nuclear arms.



Czech Us Out



We have a podcast

Teresa Stenstrup, NCSML's Director of Programs, recently released the first four episodes of the Museum's podcast, *Czech Us Out*. The podcast showcases the events, people, ideas and artifacts featured in programming at the Museum.

"The podcast allows us to bring our programs to people unable to attend them in person," Stenstrup says. "We are the national museum for Czech and Slovak culture, and now we have a platform to share what we do on a national and international level."

Visit soundcloud.com/ncsml to listen to *Czech Us Out*. The SoundCloud app can be downloaded from Apple's App Store or the Google Play Store.

***Next time you visit the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library,
make time to explore our Library.***

Join us October 2 for an International Beer Festival!

Supporting the educational mission of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Presented by



BasepointWealth

From here you can go anywhere.

Oct. 2 | 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Largest 1-day beer festival of its kind in Iowa!

For tickets and more information visit NCSML.org/BrewNost

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cedar Rapids, IA
Permit No. 414

NATIONAL
CZECH &
SLOVAK
MUSEUM &
LIBRARY

LOCATED IN CZECH VILLAGE

1400 Inspiration Place SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
(319) 362-8500
www.NCSML.org