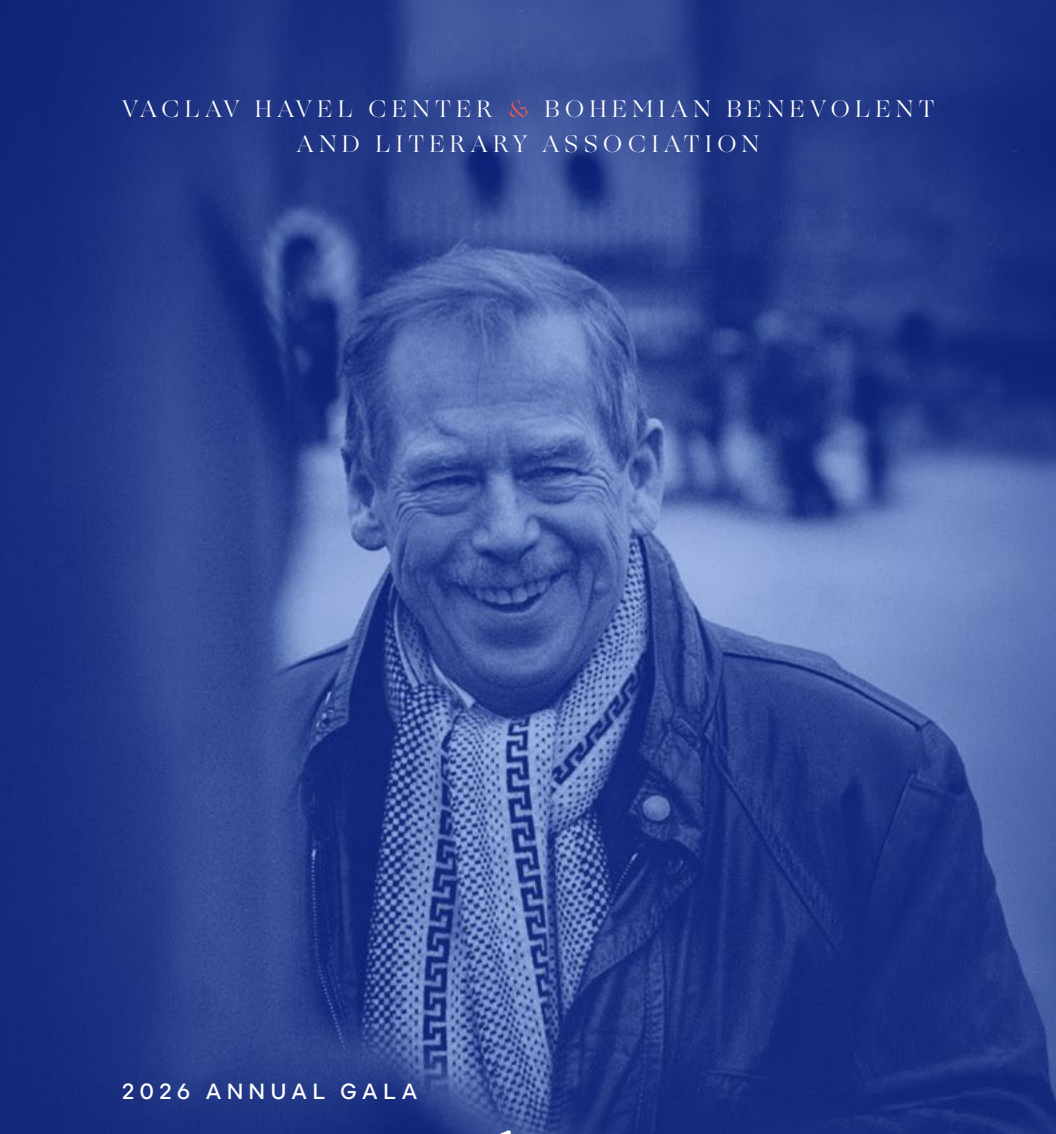
VACLAV HAVEL CENTER & BOHEMIAN BENEVOLENT AND LITERARY ASSOCIATION



2026 ANNUAL GALA

Havel at 90

His legacy. Our moment.

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

BOHEMIAN NATIONAL HALL

321 EAST 73RD STREET,
NEW YORK CITY

"The only genuine core of all our actions — if they are to be moral — is responsibility."

— Václav Havel, Address to the U.S. Congress, 1990

2026 ANNUAL GALA

Havel at 90

His legacy. Our moment.

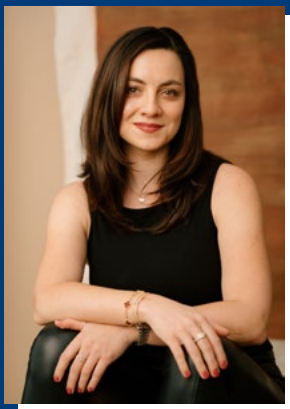
Born on October 5, 1936, Václav Havel would have turned 90 this year — an occasion not only to remember an extraordinary life, but also to reflect on the enduring relevance of his ideas.

Havel believed in the power of truth, personal responsibility, dialogue, and hope. His legacy reminds us that each of us has a role to play in shaping the world around us.

Our mission

We promote democratic freedoms, universal human rights, and the power of the arts to uplift and transform our lives in the spirit of Vaclav Havel.

A Note from the Executive Director



This year, as we mark what would have been Václav Havel's 90th birthday, I find myself thinking less about commemoration and more about responsibility. A legacy survives only if we continue to give it meaning in the present.

For the Vaclav Havel Center, that means creating a place where writers, artists, dissidents, students, and audiences can come together around the questions Havel spent his life asking: What does it mean to live in truth? What responsibility do we have to one another? And what can one person do when silence would be easier?

This evening brings many parts of that work together. We celebrate ten years of the Disturbing the Peace Award and mark ten years of Rehearsal for Truth — while celebrating Havel not only as a statesman, but also as a writer, artist, friend, and human being.

It is a special privilege to celebrate Havel's 90th birthday with Dagmar Havlová as our Guest of Honor and with so many friends of the Vaclav Havel Center gathered together. And because this is, after all, a birthday celebration, I hope there is room tonight not only for serious reflection, but also for the humor, friendship, conversation, creativity, and sense of the absurd that are so much a part of Havel's legacy — so please raise a glass, reconnect with old friends, meet someone new, and enjoy the evening.

Thank you for being part of it.

Jana Krupkova
Executive Director

Two Programs. Two Decades of Impact.

This year, the Vaclav Havel Center marks two milestones: **10 years of the Disturbing the Peace Award** and **10 years of Rehearsal for Truth.**

10 Years of the Disturbing the Peace Award

For a decade, the Disturbing the Peace Award has recognized courageous writers at risk whose work challenges repression and defends human rights and freedom of expression.

10 Years of Rehearsal for Truth

For ten years, Rehearsal for Truth has brought contemporary theater from Central and Eastern Europe to New York, creating a platform for artists to explore freedom, identity, politics, and human rights through performance.

Program Highlights

GUEST OF HONOR

Dagmar Havlová

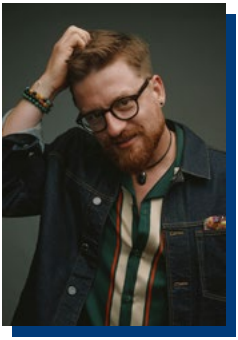
is an acclaimed Czech actress, philanthropist, and former First Lady of the Czech Republic. During her long and distinguished acting career, she has portrayed numerous memorable roles in film, television, and theater, establishing herself as an important figure in Czech culture. She married President Václav Havel in 1997 and became an active supporter of cultural, social, and charitable initiatives. She founded the Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation VIZE 97, where she remains Chair of the Board of Trustees. She has long been closely associated with the Vaclav Havel Center in New York, originally established in 2012 as the Vaclav Havel Library Foundation, where she served as co-chair alongside Madeleine Albright and Laura Bush. She has long supported the arts, education, civil society, and humanitarian causes, continuing through her public and philanthropic work to promote the values she shared with Václav Havel.

DISTURBING THE PEACE AWARD

Phạm Đoan Trang

Phạm Đoan Trang is one of Vietnam's most prominent journalists and has worked for media outlets including VnExpress, VietNamNet, and Pháp Luật TP. Hồ Chí Minh since 2000. She became a democracy activist in the early 2010s and has been involved in social movements and educational activities. Alongside her work as an editor for LIV, she was a leading author at Liberal Publishing House and has written many books on Vietnam's political and legal affairs.

Her journalism and human-rights work have been recognized by People in Need, Reporters Without Borders, the Martin Ennals Foundation, the US Department of State, the Canadian and United Kingdom governments, and the Committee to Protect Journalists. Vietnamese authorities arrested her in October 2020 and sentenced her to nine years in prison for "spreading propaganda against the state." She is currently serving her sentence at An Phước Prison in Bình Dương province.



SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Ondrej Pivec

GRAMMY-NOMINATED CZECH MUSICIAN
AND HAMMOND ORGANIST

Ondřej Pivec is a Czech-born, New York-based keyboardist, organist, composer, producer, and musical director. A four-time Grammy-nominated musician, he is best known internationally for his longtime work with Grammy Award-winning vocalist Gregory Porter, with whom he has performed at venues and festivals around the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and the Montreux Jazz Festival.

Pivec has collaborated with artists including Andra Day, Wu-Tang Clan, Marcus Miller, The Baylor Project, and Cécile McLorin Salvant, while maintaining close ties to the Czech music scene through projects with Vojtěch Dyk, Vladimír Mišík, and others. A two-time recipient of the Czech Anděl Award, he is also a composer, recording artist, radio host for Czech Radio Vltava, and consultant for Swedish keyboard manufacturer Nord.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES AND
AUCTIONEER THIS EVENING

Nicholas D. Lowry

Nicholas D. Lowry, Czech-American, President and Principal Auctioneer of Swann Auction Galleries is tonight's auctioneer and MC. An expert in vintage posters, Lowry is most recognized for his role on the PBS television series Antiques Roadshow, he also conducts numerous charity auctions across America. His current project is a two-part exhibition of vintage Czech Travel posters which are on display here at the Bohemian National Hall and downtown at the Poster House museum in New York through November 2026.

Menu

Appetizer

Mango Gazpacho

Main Course

Confit Duck Breast with Roasted Fingerling Potatoes,
Red Wine Reduction & Grilled Asparagus or Potato Gnocchi with Mushrooms,
Parmesan & Spinach (Vegetarian, Gluten-Free)

Dessert

Chocolate Mousse with Whipped Cream & Berries

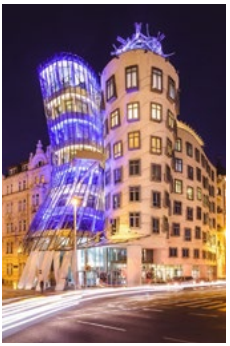
Wines

White: Pinot Grigio – Ruffino – Italy (Dry) – 2025
Red: Cabernet Sauvignon – Bistro B. G. – France (Dry) – 2024

Beer

Draft Pilsner Urquell – Czechia

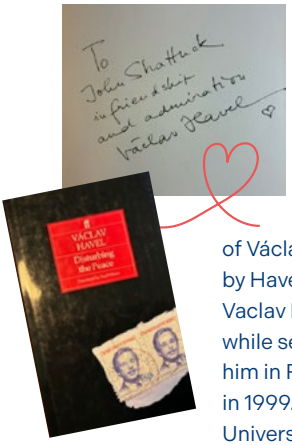
Live Auction



ESTIMATED VALUE: $500

A Night at Prague's Dancing House

The story of Prague's Dancing House is closely connected to Václav Havel. Long before it became one of the city's architectural icons, Havel discussed with architect Vlado Milunić the idea of bringing new life to the empty site next to his family home. Years later, as President, Havel helped champion the bold vision that eventually became the Dancing House. Thirty years after opening its doors in 1996, the building is still very much alive – today home to a boutique hotel, Dancing House Café on the ground floor and the Ginger & Fred restaurant, where exceptional gastronomy comes with some of the most beautiful views of Prague. This voucher invites two guests to become part of its story with a one-night stay in a Deluxe Room including breakfast.



ESTIMATED VALUE: $900

Disturbing the Peace:

First Edition, Signed by Václav Havel

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Disturbing the Peace Award, John Shattuck offers a first-edition volume of Václav Havel's Disturbing the Peace, personally inscribed to him by Havel: "To John Shattuck in friendship and admiration, Vaclav Havel." Shattuck knew Havel well and met him frequently while serving as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, joining him in Prague during the 10th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in 1999. Their connection continued through Central European University in Budapest, which Havel had co-founded and where Shattuck served as President and Rector, defending the University's academic freedom against authoritarian attack.

MORE AUCTION LISTINGS ON THE NEXT PAGE →

ESTIMATED VALUE: $1300

“Miloš Forman and His Muse” by photographer Sára Saudková

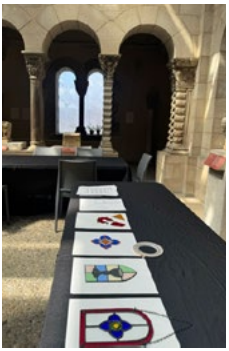
“Miloš Forman and His Muse” by acclaimed Czech photographer Sára Saudková is a striking original black-and-white silver gelatin print (16 × 12.2 in.), created in Prague’s Malá Strana in 2009. The portrait captures legendary Czech-American filmmaker Miloš Forman, whose remarkable career—from the Czechoslovak New Wave to One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest and Amadeus—left an indelible mark on international cinema. During the 2026 Annual Gala “Havel at 90,” Sára Saudková will personally sign the photograph for its new owner, making it a unique and memorable collector’s piece.

ESTIMATED VALUE: $1500

Havel’s Prague:

A Three-Night Stay & Private Theatre Experience

Enjoy three unforgettable nights in the heart of Prague in a luxurious two-bedroom, two-bathroom Art Nouveau–style apartment with breathtaking views of the Vltava River and historic Old Town. With its elegant interiors and exceptional location, the apartment offers the perfect setting to experience the beauty, architecture, and atmosphere of one of Europe’s most enchanting cities. Your Prague stay also includes a special evening at Švanda Theatre during its 2027 season, with a performance of your choice, a private tour of the theatre and backstage areas before the show, and an opportunity to meet members of the cast afterward. Selected performances are available with English surtitles, offering two guests a rare opportunity to experience Prague’s vibrant theatrical life from both sides of the stage.



ESTIMATED VALUE: $1200

Create Your Own Medieval-Inspired Stained-Glass Panel:

The Met Cloisters X UrbanGlass for Two

Step into the world of medieval art and glassmaking with an exclusive, hands-on workshop inspired by the extraordinary stained-glass windows of The Met Cloisters. Your experience begins with a private 3-hour session at The Met Cloisters, where a Museum curator will introduce you to the history and artistry of medieval stained glass. With inspiration all around you, you'll design your own one-of-a-kind suncatcher panel with guidance from an UrbanGlass instructor. On day two, bring your design to UrbanGlass in Downtown Brooklyn for an immersive 6-hour studio session. You'll learn the fundamentals of glass cutting, grinding, foiling, and soldering—and transform your design into a finished stained-glass work of art. At the end of the experience, you'll take home your own unique stained-glass panel, created by you and inspired by centuries of glassmaking history. No previous glassmaking experience necessary—just curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to get your hands on the glass! Date: Spring 2027 TBD

ESTIMATED VALUE: PRICELESS

Václav Havel's Personal Tie

A personal tie belonging to Václav Havel, donated by Dagmar Havlová especially for the Havel at 90 Gala. The accompanying photograph shows Václav Havel wearing what is in all likelihood this very tie. Provenance: Donated by Dagmar Havlová from Václav Havel's personal collection.

Havel 90 Events

SEPTEMBER

26
World Premiere:
Warning – Havel's Newly Discovered Play
The 92nd Street Y, New York

30
Havel at 90 – 2026 Annual Gala
Bohemian National Hall, New York

OCTOBER: HAVEL 90 FESTIVAL
BOHEMIAN NATIONAL HALL, NEW YORK

Film • Theater • Conversation • Art • Celebration

Over four days, Havel 90 looks beyond the presidential portrait to the artist, playwright, friend, and keen observer whose humor and imagination still resonate today.

2 — OPENING DAY

5:30 PM | Workshop: Discovering Václav Havel and Prague
A two-hour storytelling and creative workshop for children ages 7–14. Artist and illustrator Sylva Francová introduces children to Havel and Prague through stories, images, and hands-on creative activities.

6:00 PM | Film: Citizen Havel
Preceded by the three-minute archival film Václav Havel's Address on Jan Palach's Sacrifice. A drinks reception follows the main feature to celebrate the festival's opening.

8:40 PM | Film: A Report on the Party and the Guests

3 — FILM PROGRAM

12:40 PM | Olga

2:30 PM | Havel

4:30 PM | Every Young Man

6:30 PM | Havel's Audience with History
Followed by Q&A with filmmaker and producer Michael Wolkowitz.

8:30 PM | The Firemen's Ball

4

11:00 AM | Live Podcast: Dissent Lab with Sergei Lebedev
A live recording of the Vaclav Havel Center podcast.

3:00 PM | Jan Švankmajer Shorts Series
Dimensions of Dialogue • Darkness, Light, Darkness • The Garden • The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia

5:30 PM | Havel Speaking, Can You Hear Me?

8:30 PM | Leaving

5

7:00 PM | HAVEL'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Unveiling
A new English-language production of Václav Havel's darkly comic one-act play, followed by a discussion and birthday celebration with goulash inspired by Kančí na daňčím.

Theater Events:

1—17

Theater: Unveiling
Torn Page, New York

12

Theater: Frida Vanek
Torn Page, New York

Havel 90

www.havel90.com

Dissent Lab

A new podcast from the Vaclav Havel Center, created in honor of Václav Havel's 90th birthday.

Dissent Lab

Dissent Lab brings listeners into conversation with contemporary dissidents, writers, and activists who have faced imprisonment, persecution, or exile for challenging authoritarian power and defending fundamental freedoms.

Hosted by U.S. journalist Peter Green, a former *New York Times* correspondent who covered the Velvet Revolution and the birth of the Czech Republic, the series connects Havel's legacy with those confronting authoritarianism today.

The inaugural live recording featured Venezuelan activist Jesús Armas on March 23, 2026.

Next: **Sergei Lebedev**
October 4, 2026 | Bohemian National Hall

The acclaimed Russian writer and journalist joins Peter Green for the second live recording of *Dissent Lab*, as part of the Havel 90 Festival.

The Narrowest Path is Walked Alone

The distinctive sound of *Dissent Lab* was created by Czech composer Ivan Acher, who wrote the series' original music and text.

Tonight you will hear **"The Narrowest Path"** composed for *Dissent Lab* by Ivan Acher.

Listen. Question. Dissent.

With Gratitude

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Benefactors, Patrons, Sponsors, donors, and friends whose generosity makes Havel at 90 possible and is helping us reach our special $90,000 fundraising goal in honor of Václav Havel's 90th birthday.

Your support sustains the work of the Vaclav Havel Center and helps us carry Václav Havel's legacy forward for future generations.

For our complete and updated list of Havel at 90 supporters, please visit *www.havelcenter.org*

Thank you for being part of Havel at 90.

Special thanks to:
Bohema
Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association
Czech Center New York
Sara Saudkova
Svandovo Divadlo / Svandovo Theatre
Tancici Dum / Dancing House Prague
Urban Glass

Presented in cooperation with
GOH Productions
Graphic Design and Marketing by MIUZA & NU AVE ART
Catering provided by Bohemian Spirit

Excerpt from Citizen Havel
Co-produced by Michael Wolkowitz and David Dušek

Executive Director:
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In Memoriam: William H. Luers

One More Birthday Gift?

If you didn't bring Václav Havel a 90th birthday gift, there's still time.

Make a gift to the Vaclav Havel Center and help carry his legacy forward.

Prefer to give by check?
Please make checks payable to Vaclav Havel Center:
Vaclav Havel Center
Bohemian National Hall
321 E 73rd St
New York, NY 10021

Vaclav Havel Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Vaclav Havel Center

BBLA Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association

Havel 90