

FAIR NEWS

BOOK WORLD PRAGUE
23RD INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR
AND LITERARY FESTIVAL

SATURDAY
13. 5. 2017

BOOK
WORLD
PRAGUE

Meeting with the Irish Writer John Boyne

The Large Theatre was filled to the last place on Friday afternoon in eager expectation of the Irish author JOHN BOYNE.

A significant part of the audience hoping to see the author of the best-selling *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* in person consisted of students and young people. The compelling novel about the tragic friendship between two boys on opposite sides of a fence dominated the debate that was moderated by Radek Malý. John Boyne confessed that the original version of the book was written in approximately three days, followed, of course, by a full year of various adjustments. Another of John's books that is also available in Czech – *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* – is also set during second world war, but had a more laboured delivery and the original idea had hatched in the author's head for



a long time. This book's hero is an orphan who ends up living with his aunt, a housekeeper at Hitler's Berghoff, gradually turning into a victim of ideology and brainwashing. John Boyne offered visitors a glimpse of his everyday writing habits, admitting that he sits down

to write every day at noon, as "novels require patience". The ensuing book signing was also met with enthusiastic response from the audience, and the book *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* was produced many times in both the original and the translated version. IK

Making Children Understand the Terrors of War

URI ORLEV, the Polish-Israeli writer and laureate of the Hans Christian Andersen award, attended a meeting with a predominantly young audience on Friday.



The debate was moderated by Martin Vopěnka and it focused mostly on the author's personal memories of a childhood spent in wartime Warsaw and the destinies of a Jewish child in the course of the holocaust. The audience had a unique opportunity to listen to a first-hand account of the author's childhood. They were offered an insightful and three-dimensional perspective,

portraying a child that attempts to lead a worryless and happy existence even at a time when his immediate surroundings are ravaged by callous genocide and his own life is destined for demise just like the lives of his loved ones and other members of his nation. Several times Martin Vopěnka would quote from Orlev's autobiography, which excerpts were supplemented by the author with real-life stories and experiences. It is these aspects that are also reflected in Orlev's books, most notably in the famous *The Island on Bird Street*, or the successful novel *Run, Boy, Run*, which draws its inspiration from the story of another boy from Warsaw. We can only hope that this close encounter with a tragic but at the same time life-affirming reality will leave a deep and lasting impression in the children's minds.

IK

Belgian Family's Psychoanalysis

On Friday afternoon PATRICK DECLERCK, philosopher, anthropologist, psychoanalyst and writer, introduced the Czech translation of his novel *Démons me turlupinant*.



At the start of his meeting with readers an excerpt from the book was read, followed by a thought-provoking analysis not just of this particular work, but also of Patrick Declerck's life itself. The novel's story discloses the very foundations of his family's relationships and its basic plot is psychoanalysis. The author speaks very openly about his hysterical grandmother, about his uncle's psychopathic traits and also about his father, who was always on the run from something. "In the book I strip myself bare," laughs the author. "I don't know how to describe it – I'd probably call it a dubious genre, maybe even a bad genre," he said. And yet he exaggerates, as the book has won the prestigious Prix Victor-Rossel, setting it apart from any pulp production. "Why did I choose to focus on my family? Because it is marked by numerous psychopathologies. My granny, to whom I own my literary talent, thanks to which I can write books, would faint at the snap of a finger. My uncle was a mercenary in the Congo, which also speaks volumes, and our family doctor was a psychiatrist, attempting to introduce some order into all that chaos like some kind of Moses. When you're surrounded by things like these and grow up in this type of environment, you cannot but be influenced by it. And yes, it was certainly reflected in my later interest in psychoanalysis," Declerck explains, adding that shedding light on some of the least flattering characteristics of his family has nothing to do with seeking vengeance. "In no way do I attempt to settle scores by this. If anything, I think myself lucky to have had such a family. If I take my family and look at what is considered normal around me, I realise we are not that exceptional or crazy. I am glad to be the way I am and I am glad that my family is the way it is." JM

Helmsman on the Troubled Sea of Literature

On Friday the prestigious Jiří Theiner Prize, awarded annually at the book fair, was presented to the literary agent EDGAR DE BRUIN for his advocacy of Czech literature abroad.

With Pavel Theiner – the son of Jiří Theiner and donor of the financial reward – in attendance, the prize was presented to Edgar de Bruin's wife Magdalena, as the laureate himself was disqualified from partaking in the ceremony by illness. "Edgar looks like a very calm man but he does get mad occasionally," Magdalena smiled when answering the question what Edgar is like when he is not busy. She recapitulated her husband's journey to translating and promoting Czech literature – he graduated in Czech studies and together with her they founded the Pluh agency, which today successfully represents more than a dozen Czech authors on foreign markets. David Vaughan, the moderator of the awards ceremony, added that the jury was unanimous in its decision this year. One of the authors represented by Edgar de Bruin is Jáchym Topol, who also attended the event. "Edgar is not just a great translator, editor and friend, he's also a great reader. When my text passes his scrutiny, I know that it's good. Often he is my first reader and I'm glad that he's not afraid of telling me that something is rather poor. He is honest and I trust his opinions. It's hard to appreciate the amount of work he does and the number of authors he has introduced to foreign audiences. Just ponder for a while that this is not done by a team of people in a shiny skyscraper but by a single



person sitting at a computer in a small brick house in Amsterdam – it's incredible," Jáchym Topol concluded. At the end of the ceremony he read out a laudatio, in which he compared Edgar de Bruin to the heroes of his favourite book *Java Ho!*. "Edgar de Bruin has accepted an entire pack of landsmen aboard his galleon, the Czech writers, and he lets the salty winds whip and caress their faces," Topol said in his light-hearted address, but concluded by challenging Czech authors to become better writers. "This man sends books on a journey. He knows the paths that lead into the world and how to walk them. He only needs one thing – good books. Czech authors, let's be better writers, lest Edgar's eyesight will be spoiled by our bad writing. Edgar, you're not only Czech literature's good spirit, but also its black conscience. I think for that also you deserve this prize." JM

TODAY AT THE BOOK FAIR

Saturday will kick off with sorcerers and magic. At 10 am the Literary Theatre will be conquered by the orc shaman Gul'dan and Illidan the night elf from the second volume of the hit book *World of Warcraft: Chronicle*, while celebrations will be under way of the 20th anniversary of *Harry Potter*'s first publication in the right wing. Butterbeer, anyone? One hour later the Large Theatre will bear witness to a discussion about the truth and its various forms with the Polish reporter and well-known Czechophile Mariusz Szczygiel. At the same time Tomáš Zmeškal will be reading from his planned short-story collection in the PEN club room. Noontime can be spent in the company of William Shakespeare and writer and illustrator Renáta Fučíková, author of original illustrations of twelve plays by the famous playwright. At the same time you can accept the invitation from Jiří Peňás, journalist from the Echo weekly, to a debate with leading Czech writers. Half an hour after noon the Lapidarium will witness an interesting poetic dialogue between the exiled Chinese writer Liao Yiwu and the Plzeň-based poet Ivo Hucl in a programme entitled *Broken Words*. If you consider learning Spanish, do not miss the event held

by Institut Cervantes in the Central Hall, entitled *¡Hola, amigos!*. Halina Pawlowská's humour will come to the fore half an hour later, when the author introduces her new book *Three Metres of Passion*. The young writer Marcela Remeňová will be launching e-book versions of her successful *Eight Worlds* series at 2 pm in the right wing. From 3 pm authors of crime stories Kateřina Tučková, Petra Soukupová, Michaela Klevisová and others will meet their readers in the Literary Theatre. At the same time you can meet Ivan Havel in the Literary Café, and half an hour later make sure you do not miss a debate about Nordic crime novels in the right wing. At 4 pm the Literary Theatre will play host to the launch of a Czech translation of a compelling novel by the Hungarian writer Gergely Péterfy *The Stuffed Barbarian*, and Oldřich Kaiser and Dáša Vokatá will perform in the Small Room, launching Czech Radio's 'summer with Hašek' season, which will feature, among other, Oldřich Kaiser's rendering of Hašek's *Good Soldier Schweik*. Meeting with the Czech laureate of the EU prize for literature will represent the highlight of Saturday's programme. We hope today's varied programme will satisfy everybody's expectations. JM

Mark Pastor and José Luis Peixoto on Translations and Adaptations



A debate on Friday afternoon brought together the Portuguese poet, writer and playwright JOSÉ LUIS PEIXOTO with the renowned Catalan writer of crime novels with elements of science fiction MARC PASTOR. The debate, which mostly focused on the topic of translation, and also film, TV and theatre adaptations of literary works, was moderated by translator Anežka Charvátová in Spanish. Speaking of Spanish, Marc Pastor remarked that since childhood he speaks Catalan and that the worst translation of his *Barcelona Shadows* has been into Spanish. José Luis Peixoto explained that he speaks Spanish because he had lived very close to the Spanish border and watched Spanish children's programmes on the television because they were better than the Portuguese ones. Both authors also agreed on the importance of the translator and

his or her approach to the work, as well as on the significance of choosing an adequate translation of a novel's title for each linguistic area. Both also disclosed how (and if at all) they oversee the adaptations of their works. Marc Pastor shared his experience with the film adaptation of his novel *The Year of the Flood*. "The scriptwriter authored four versions of the screenplay and in the fourth one eighty percent of the original work had been omitted. Even more versions were made afterwards and they no



longer bear much resemblance to my novel." José Luis Peixoto offered a simple rule: "I learned not to judge friends' novels. If you do it, you lose them. I do form my own opinion but I never pass any judgement on the adaptation of my works." IK

The 2016 Rack Anti-Award Ceremony

The popular anti-award was once again organised by the Translators Guild. The jury consisting of renowned translators assessed the numerous nominated hopefuls and eventually reached a verdict.

Translation entitled *Pope Francis: Mercy Is the Name of God* from Omega press served as something of a forerunner. The problematic nature of this particular translation was remarked upon even by Cardinal Miroslav Vlk shortly before his recent demise. It is therefore worthwhile to quote some of the most outstanding blunders in the Czech translation. The Old Testament is translated in the book as *The Old Alliance*, according to the book *Pope Francis partakes in acts of gratuity* (the original speaks of acts of grace) and what is more, the Czech translation seems to claim that the Holy Father has com-

promised his celibacy – the translator has mistaken a grandniece for a great-granddaughter.

Omega press has also secured the main prize for its translation of the debuting Finnish author Elina Hirvonen's book *When I Forgot*. Two expert opinions have revealed hundreds of translating, factual, stylistic and grammatical mistakes and errors on the 180 pages of the book. It remains a sad and alarming fact that the translator has already been commissioned with another translation by the publisher – Mika Waltari's *The Grand Illusion*. Czech readers have little to look forward to in this respect. RaŠ

From Childhood to the White Masai

CORINNE HOFMANN'S novel *The White Masai* has become a bestseller around the world and was also favourably received by Czech readers. But Friday's debate with the Swiss author was not just about the novel.

The amicable writer acquainted the packed auditorium of the Large Theatre with her new book *The Girl with the Giraffe Neck*, in which she describes her childhood. "The plot begins to unfold with me being three or four years old and it goes all the way to the White Masai. Some of my readers, who previously couldn't grasp how I could drop everything and leave for the bush, will finally understand why I did it and how I could live and survive there," Corinne explained in connection with the story of her famed novel. In the new book an important role is assigned to the author's father, who was born in former Czechoslovakia. "If human beings really have seven lives, then I have lived one of them in Africa for sure. Even my African mother-in-law told me I was one of them, only with somewhat fairer skin. My other lives are German, Swiss and



thanks to my father, also Czech. I've still got several lives left but I think I'm done moving," she said, adding that she now lives in the Swiss town of Lugano and

wants to take a rest from the nomadic lifestyle. "After *The White Masai* was published I've hardly stopped travelling – and that's twenty years ago. That book had changed my life. When I found the courage to write and publish my African story I hadn't the slightest idea how much it would impact upon my life. I'm glad that so many translations of the book have been published – I enjoy talking to readers from around the world, I like attending author's readings and debates, but I also feel like I already said everything I wanted to say. It's time to rest," she said and added that *The Girl with the Giraffe Neck* is probably her last book. "I know I have described each and every one of my five books as the last upon its publication, so maybe you won't believe me anymore, but unless I experience some great love, I won't have much to write about. In Africa I learned to live in the present, which means I make no plans and I live here and now – right now, for example, my life is Prague and this beautiful book fair. I'm happy to be here."

JM

UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature, Mere Slogan or an Effective Measure to Support Literature?

"Genius loci in literature is an important theme of this year's book fair. My personal objective was that representatives of cities boasting the UNESCO Creative City of Literature title could meet in Prague on this premise," RADOVAN AUER, Book World director, said at the outset of the meeting which brought together representatives of these cities, who came to Prague to exchange experiences with bringing this prestigious title to fruition. It was created 13 years ago at the instigation of the Scottish city of Edinburgh.

The underlying motivation in establishing the title was the effort to enhance the city's literary life, as well as

an attempt at creating a business model that would attract financing for literary events, and at the same time result in a palpable economic effect, such as increased tourism.

Representatives of the various cities (e.g. Nottingham, Barcelona or Krakow) agreed that these original ideas have been transformed into reality. Other experiences were also voiced. So far the title has attracted such prestige that it manages to draw state and public funds that would otherwise have ended up outside the field of literature. Adding the UNESCO brand has helped make the title interesting even for the private sector.

As far as the cultural life of the cities themselves is concerned, the UNESCO Creative City of Literature title is significant namely for enriching the city's cultural life, ranging from individual cultural events to systematic steps (such as strengthening the role of libraries), all the way to addressing the various urban subcultures. In this respect the project's most valuable contribution rests in its focus on the support of reading in the youngest generation. This represents a very important investment into literary future. Even if this was its only result, it would still be worthwhile to grant and uphold the title of UNESCO's City of Literature.

RaŠ

Troubled Return from Afghanistan

Friday programme at the Lapidarium was commenced by one of the many foreign guests of the book fair – KARINE TUIL has introduced her latest novel *L'insouciance*, or *Carelessness*.

Why has the French author chosen this particular title? "I started writing the novel in 2015," the writer says, "and after the bloody events that took place in Paris majority of our society had lost this feeling of carelessness." Carelessness and the joy of life have also departed from the life of the book's main protagonist, a French colonel who is returning to France from an exhausting mission in Afghanistan. Being haunted by memories of his fallen soldiers and unable to find comfort in his family, he turns to the most aggressive rap music. Despite various recuperation programmes and establishing a romantic relationship, he will always be scarred by his past.

"This topic is widely discussed in the States, for example, but not so much in France," Tuile explains why she focused on the return of a war veteran. This was no easy task for the writer. The French public sees its soldiers as heroes, but expresses little in-



terest in their life beyond the army. Tuile has spent long hours studying descriptions of the post-traumatic stress disorder and meeting soldiers with fighting experience from abroad.

And yet the story's plot does not revolve around war veterans only. It also features various politicians and top managers of multinational corporations. "At the same time I wanted to uncover some of the interactions taking place between the people in power and the army," says the writer. Now Czech readers can see for themselves how successful the author has been in her effort. The novel was published this year by Garamond.

OnŠ

Brasília – A City – A Dream

Did you know that Brazil's capital was built from scratch and that its foundation was instigated by a man with Czech roots? These and many other interesting information can be found in the book *Brasília – A City – A Dream*.

YVONNE FRIČOVÁ and her husband PAVEL had more than one reason for publishing the book. One of them was Pavel Frič's grandfather, the renowned botanist and traveller Alberto Vojtěch Frič, who had sojourned in South America in the early 20th century and grew to love it. Another impulse was the fact that little has been published so far about Brasília in the Czech Republic. The third reason can be attributed to the fact that the city's founder Juscelino Kubitschek inherited Czech origins from his father's side. "Brasília is a wondrous city. It was built

from nothing. After the Brazilian's had won their independence in the 19th century they wanted to have a new capital city that would be located in the centre of the country and would be free of all historical burdens. This dream came true in the 1950s when they managed to build an entire city in a short space of time," Yvonne explained to Book World visitors during yesterday's meeting in the Literary Theatre. "Brasília is a metropolis with some highly intriguing architecture. It has buildings that are still at the centre of much discussion and sometimes even myths – they possess both hidden and open symbolism," the author added. The book does not stop at architecture, however, and portrays Brasília as a city bustling with life and definitely worth a visit.

JM

Oh, Czech Women!

On Friday afternoon, sociologist and columnist JIŘINA ŠIKLOVÁ talked about the book *Ach, ty Češky! (Oh, Czech Women!)* with its Polish author MARIUSZ SUROSZOV. Telling the stories of four well-known and four unknown Czech women, the author attempts to describe and pin down the differences and similarities of the Czech and Polish temperament.



Looking for the Centre of Europe

On Friday afternoon GRYGORI SEMENCHUK and MARIA ILYASHENKO discussed their poems and many other topics.



How can we classify literature from countries between Germany and Russia? Do we belong to the west, or to the east? Does Central Europe actually exist? "I think it does, but it is rather hard to pin down," answers Semenchuk, Ukrainian poet and organiser of the Lvov literary festival. But what exactly do Czech Republic and Ukraine have in common? According to the guests they are partially connected by their shared history as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. "Our languages are similar and that also has to play an important role," says Semenchuk. "I often talk with authors from other countries without interpreters, using what we call 'the Slavonic

Esperanto'." Maria Ilyashenko has a slightly different take on our region. "For me Central Europe is more like a border between the sunny, warm south and the depressive north," says the author with Czech, Polish and Ukrainian ancestors.

Both authors also recited poems from their published books. Semenchuk chose texts from the collection *Inner Jihad* and Ilyashenko read from her debut *Osip Heads South*. The programme in the Lapidarium was moderated by Lenka Kuhar Daňhelová. The Polish writer Ryszard Krynicki, who was also invited to Prague to share his perspectives, had to cancel his participation due to ill health.

OnŠ

Česká televize

Srdečně Vás zveme ke stánku **P408** na setkání s osobnostmi, které znáte z televizní obrazovky

Čtvrtek 11. května

12:00 Slavnostní otevření stánku České televize

12:15 Objektiv objevuje svět již 30 let | autogramiáda s účastí bývalých a současných tváří pořadu *Objektiv*

14:00 Doteky přírody. Rok s Václavem Chaloupkem autogramiáda s účastí ministryně školství Kateřiny Valachové

Pátek 12. května

10:00 foyer Vaříme s knihou Vaříme podle Herbáře 4 | ochutnávka z kuchařského bestselleru Kateřiny Winterové a Lindy Rybové

11:30 Tajemství tvorby Šárky Váňkové | autorské čtení a beseda na téma Jak se dělá animovaný film

13:30 Češi 1938: Jak Beneš ustoupil Hitlerovi autogramiáda Pavla Kosatíka, Roberta Sedláčka a Štěpánky Jíslové

14:30 Češi 1948: Jak se KSČ chopila moci | autogramiáda Pavla Kosatíka, Roberta Sedláčka a Karla Osohy

15:30 Bohéma křest DVD za účasti režiséra dramatické série a představitelů hlavních rolí

Sobota 13. května

11:00 Vynálezce Alva 2 | výtvarná dílna Kláry Smolíkové, Jiřího W. Procházky a Ludka Bárty

12:00 Labyrint záhad | beseda s Arnoštem Vašíčkem o největších záhadách Čech, Moravy a Slezska

14:00 Teleskop aneb Letový deník vesmírné mise křest knihy Sandry Vebrové s účastí moderátorů pořadu *Teleskop*

15:00 StarDance ...když hvězdy tančí | autogramiáda ke knize Bohuslavy Holubové a Jana Onděra s účastí Kateřiny Baďurové a Pavla Kříže

16:00 Habsburkové – Nelehká samota trůnu | křest knihy Vladimíra Mertlíka s účastí Pavla Kříže, průvodce pořadem Habsburkové

Neděle 14. května

11:00 Wifina 3 | autogramiáda Petry Braunové a Tomáše Hořavy a wifináků Kuby, Verči, Matěje, Kariny a Terky

12:00 Lvíčata – Abeceda sportů s Alešem Valentou | autogramiáda Elen Černé, Aleše Valenty a dalších vrcholových sportovců, soutěž o knihy



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