# FAIR NEWS

BOOK WORLD PRAGUE
23RD INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR
AND LITERARY FESTIVAL

SUNDAY ₽ 14. 5. 8



## Prague Noir or From Prague's Nooks and Corners into the World



On Saturday morning a book signing was held of some of the authors featured in the anthology **Prague Noir**. As its editor **PAVEL MANDYS** explained, the book represents a Czech contribution to the worldwide literary phenomenon



started by the New York-based Akashic Books. Eighty cities have since turned into backdrops for a cycle of crime, mystery and adventure stories that are always site specific. The anthology series was started by Brooklyn Noir, with Boston Noir being the most successful to date and Prague Noir representing the latest addition to the collection. The book has so far been published in printed form by Paseka press, as audio book by One Hot Book, and its English translation is expected early next year. English-language audio book is not being considered at the moment. Saturday's book signing was attended by MILOŠ URBAN, MICHAELA KLEVISOVÁ, KATEŘINA TUČKOVÁ, PETRA SOUKUPOVÁ, PETR STANČÍK, ONDŘEJ NEFF, JIŘÍ W. PROCHÁZKA and MICHAL SÝKORA.

### **Actors On Air**

Spoken word in radio broadcasting traditionally enjoys considerable popularity in the Czech Republic, be it entertaining shows, drama adaptations of works of literature, book readings or radio plays.

Czech Radio's archive stores astonishing numbers of recordings ranging from the mid-20th century to the very present. New titles keep appearing all the time and the demand for them is large. As a result, the public-service broadcaster has been organising - for the past twenty years - a poll entitled The Invisible Actor, in which listeners vote for the actor who provided them with the most satisfying listening experience of the past year. On Saturday morning a debate was held about this poll. Its moderator VLADIMÍR KROC invited two ladies who are very familiar with the radio microphone -TAŤJAŇA MEDVECKÁ and DANA ČERNÁ. It is no coincidence that the former is the 2016 Invisible Actor laureate for her reading of Himmler's Cook by Franz-Olivier Giesbert. The actresses compared the work on film and television sets

with the radio, which, however, has lost the appeal of not having to worry about one's visual impression with the advent of web cameras. The discussion then turned to audio books, one of the main topics of this year's book fair. Tat'jana Medvecká mentioned her co-operation with the non-profit organisation Mluvící kniha (The Talking Book) that records audio books for the blind and visually impaired in high technical quality.



## The Winning Lake

Writer BIANCA BELLOVÁ became the Czech laurate of the 2017 European Union's Prize for Literature.

Saturday afternoon in the Lapidarium was dedicated to the author and her latest novel The Lake. The unorthodox story takes place in a faraway dreamlike landscape. "Where I got my inspiration from? People often ask me that question, but it's not an easy one to answer. For over forty years I've been drawing inspiration as it passes around me – in this particular case it was the picture of a lake," the writer explained. Also her other responses testified



to her being an author who defies classification and refuses templates in favour of a more natural and spontaneous creative process. When asked if she was imagining a specific target group of readers when writing, her answer was emphatically negative. "I used to have a job in marketing, where we worked with target groups all the time - we were constantly targeting someone, offering someone something specific, but I use none of this in my writing. I simply write a story and hope that it will find its readers," she explained. Judging from the accolades her books receive - including her latest prizewinning novel The Lake - she is successful in doing just that.

## City as Source of Literary Inspiration

Presentation of two thin volumes composed of prosaic texts by the poets PETR BORKO-VEC (Czech Rep.) and ALEŠ ŠTEGER (Slovenia) was one of the concluding literary debates of this year's Book World. Both books drew their inspiration from the city of Berlin, making the entire debate a valued contribution to the book fair's seminal topic – Genius Loci, City in Literature.

Over a decade ago both authors won a yearlong scholarship in Berlin as part of the Writer in Residence programme. This gave them the opportunity to gain better understanding of the city and its everyday life and to reflect these in their literary work. Personal confessions from both authors elucidated the fact that for them Berlin was a very good choice for the creative sojourn. In the past century, few other major cities in continental Europe have witnessed such dramatic and often contradictory developments as Berlin. Since the twenties, when it adopted the role of Hitler Germany's prestigious industrial metropolis for 6 million citizens with adequate architectural developments, it underwent massive destruction in the closing stages of the Second World War (the number of its inhabitants had dropped to almost a half), only to be divided into four occupation zones and rid of its status of the empire's capital. In the sixties, instead of addressing the damage of the war years, it was divided by a closely observed wall into what were in fact two totally separate cities. It took almost thirty years for the wall to crumble and for the city to start functioning as a whole. This, however, proved more difficult than was previously expected. Political divisions were replaced by economic ones, as the two parts of the city had unequal financial potential. Even today the number of Berlin's inhabitants is nowhere near the numbers from the 1920s and 30s, which results in less pressure on hastened



building development in the inner city area. All this, combined with dynamic cultural developments (probably only comparable to Paris), makes Berlin the ideal backdrop for countless works of literature.

Petr Borkovec, who is not only a poet but also translator of Russian exile poetry, explored Berlin as a transfer (and sometimes also terminal) address for Russian poets in the 1920s. One of his strongest impressions was that of wandering the neighbourhoods around Vladimir Nabokov's home in the aftermath of the October Revolution.

Slovenian poet Aleš Šteger, who received the Berlin scholarship a year after Borkovec, was captivated mainly by the city's multiculturalism – not only now, but also in history. He confessed that besides the city's German fundament, he can also feel some significant Slavonic influences, which can be attributed to the Slavs' historical presence there. He was also compelled by one other characteristic feature of the city – the omnipresence of water. Šteger sees Berlin

as a city of lakes, river channels, fountains and water monuments.

The creative sojourn in Berlin provided Aleš Šteger with the inspiration for an interesting form of literary work, to which he has devoted himself in the past five years. He visits a place in the world previously unknown to him and writes articles from there, which are to be published no later than 24 hours after his visit. Aleš Šteger claims that our most striking impressions of a place and its specific lifestyle emerge in the very first moments of our stay. It is this precious "first impression" that he attempts to capture in his texts. Few other literary achievements bear the same close relationship with this year's Book World motto – Genius Loci in Literature. RaŠ

#### Winners of the 2016 SFFH Academy

For the 20th time this year, results of the annual Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Academy awards were announced at the book fair. Besides the best short story, best fantasy and other categories, a special award was introduced this year for longstanding contribution to the genre. It was presented to the Prague Book World book fair's founder and, until last year, its director Dana Kalinová.

THIS YEAR'S AWARDS

- Best SF: Kim Stanley Robinson:
- The Years of Rice and Salt (Laser-books)
- Best Fantasy & Horror: M. R. Carey:
   The Girl with All the Gifts (Host)
- Best original Czech or Slovak book: Vilma
   Kadlečková: Mycelium 5 Voices and
- Kadlečková: Mycelium 5 Voices and Stars (Argo)

   Best short story collection: George R. R. Mar-
- tin Gardner Dozois (eds.): Rogues (Argo)
- Best short story: Barbora Vrobelová:
- The Main Course (Mlok 2016)
- Best translation: Richard Podaný: Vodní nůž

   Odní nůž

   Odní
- Best (domestic) work of art: Jana Šouflová:

#### **Unexpected Parties**

- Achievement of the year: Antonín K. K. Kudláč for his book The Anatomy of Awe (Host)
- Best publisher: Argo
- Best magazine: XB-1 (Vlado Ríša)
- Prize for longstanding contribution to SFFH:

#### Alexandra Pavelková

- Special award: Dana Kalinová
- Book of the year: Alastair Reynolds:

The Prefect (Triton)

#### Barrandov Film Studios Through the Ages

The film studios on top of the Barrandov Hill have seen many dramatic changes since their foundation. PETR SZCZEPANIK'S book *The Barrandov Factory* describes them in detail.

"I was interested in what the filmmakers' world was like at a time when they all had to be fulltime employees of the studios, when there were virtually no freelancers, and when everybody in a management position had to be a member of the communist party. How could films be made under such conditions? How were they actually made? I was also interested in the period when the regime had eased its iron grip and the filmmakers gained a degree of independence from politics. A large part of the book is also dedicated to comedies, which is a genre of its own," the author of the publication Petr Szczepanik told the book fair visitors. "Artists involved in the making of comedies often share similar sense of humour and historically they used this sense of humour to fight the regime. They were no dissidents, but still they played a significant role at the time. The film Limonádový Joe, for example, is a milestone for me, an expression of pure laughter. It was the first laughter that liberated itself from a political assignment and as such it was very important. That is why comedy plays such a role in my book," he added. The book's launch was also attended by the former director of the Barrandov film studios VÁCLAV MAR-

HOUL. "I worked there in the seventies as an assistant, and then in a period when films got so political that I had to leave, only to return as the general manager in the nineties, when everything was changing rapidly," he recalled. The book's author and the former eye witness to a part of Barrandov's history then together launched the book into the world.



# Young Author's Fantasy Worlds

The Sci-fi and Fantasy Room was packed to the point of bursting on Saturday morning, as MARCELA REMEŇOVÁ introduced her third book in the company of some very distinguished quests.



At eleven years of age few people spend their leisure time writing novels. Marcela Remeňová started writing the first volume of her Eight Worlds series precisely at that age. Two years later the book entitled The Acquaintance was published and received favourable reviews. Today the author is seventeen and she has lost none of her former diligence. She has so far authored three books and the latest instalment, The Family, is newly also being released as e-book.

"My main concern is not be black or white in my writing," says the writer about her stories, "no character is simply good or bad and each has some kind of justification for what he or she does." Composing novels at school age is no easy task. That is why the author considers her parents to be her biggest source of support,

and usually they are also the first ones to read all the newly written passages. A fourth volume of the Eight Worlds fantasy series is already on the horizon. "I'm about halfway through with the writing. The book could be ready in the spring of next year," Remeňová says.

Film director **ALICE NELLIS**, another of the programme's guests, has nothing but praise for the young author. "Marcela is greatly talented, but she is mainly hugely diligent and humble. And being a writer is tough." Excerpts from both the third and the planned fourth volume were read by the actor Radek Hoppe. The event was concluded by a ceremonial launch of The Family - e-book version, but because of the age of the author the sparkling wine for the toast had to be non-alcoholic.

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## Remembering the Great Writer

Few countries were as beloved by TERRY PRATCHETT as the Czech Republic, which always had the warmest of welcomes for him. On Sunday noon the outstanding writer was remembered in the Sci-fi and Fantasy room in a programme moderated by Jiří Walker Procházka.

For decades Pratchett has counted among the most popular fantasy writers in the Czech Republic. No surprise that the debate attracted close to a hundred visitors! Various fan associations also thrive here. The Terry Pratchett Club boasts hundreds of faithful fans of the Incredible Discworld and organises many events each year. Věra Liptáková, one of the club's chief organisers, talked about these events and much more. She also collaborated on the dramatic adaptation of Pratchett's novels for the V Dlouhé Theatre. The plays Wyrd Sisters and Maskerade or the Phantom of the Opera have together reached 260 runs and were personally attended by the author. Stories from the Incredible Discworld series are also popular among amateur ensembles. "The amateurs often end up with a much better rendering of Discworld than do the professionals," Liptáková added with a

Visitors could also examine the 2017 Terry Pratchett Club calendar. It is full of photographs featuring cosplayers who portray various guilds from the author's best-known world. Author of the photographs is Hanina Veselá, another guest at this year's book fair – fantasy writer renowned for her books featuring the heroine Magnolia. All proceeds from the calendar will go towards Alzheimer's disease research, the very illness that claimed Terry Pratchett's life after a long fight in 2015.

Jan Kantůrek, Pratchett's translator into Czech, was also scheduled to take part in the debate, but eventually could not come. However, his fans can meet him in Chotěboř at this year's Fantasy Festival.

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#### Chinese Dissident at Book World

During an interesting meeting on Saturday afternoon the exiled Chinese writer, musician, poet and critic of the country's communist regime LIAO YIWU was introduced to the fair's visitors. He presented his work together with the Plzeň-based poet IVO HUCL. "When Liao wrote his poem Massacre, he was thrown into China's notorious jails for four years. It was there that he learned to play the Chinese flute," Ivo Hucl said when describing the programme's musical accompaniment - Liao's flute music. This was followed by some violin music, but above all by plenty of recitation and reading. Liao, who has by now spent many years in exile, Ivo Hucl, as well as other protagonists of the afternoon programme were treated to a well-deserved applause.



## Echo Weekly's Salon

Echo weekly's very own JIŘÍ PEŇÁS has somewhat altered the design of his debate with leading Czech writers. Instead of the several Czech leading authors previously advertised, Peňás had only invited one, explaining: "Why invite more writers when we have Ondřej Štindl – that's more than enough."

True. ONDŘEJ ŠTINDL is an interesting author, and engaging him in a fifty-minute captivating dialogue is hardly a waste of time. It should also be noted that the moderator knows his guest well from their engagement in the same daily newspaper. Such debate promised "deep insights" without unnecessary formal embellishments. Indeed, no formalities were traded quite the contrary. Both speakers seemed afraid lest their dialogue looks too "book fair-like" and "scholarly", and had instead set out on a worldweary excursion along the surface, resulting in something of a throw-away - almost as though both protagonists were at odds with a regular literary interview. Jiří Peňás took great pains to create a casual, unprepared and top-of-thesituation (by situation understand dialogue) impression. Ondřej Štindl, on the other hand, brushed aside several promising polemic points that were raised. His succinct rejections were tantamount to saying, "That's just the way it is".



Eventually, however, even the audience was "let in" – if only to catch glimpses of the author's method of creative writing. The visitors learned that Ondřej Štindl reads his manuscripts out loud to himself, which leads to various omissions and adjustments, that his inspiration is largely sensory, that he writes neither fast, nor slow, and that his writing is based on an essen-

tial ground plan, although this plan is not laid out in detail. After some thirty minutes, the moderator's rejection of the usual form of literary debate caught up with him. He encouraged the event's numerous visitors to partake by asking some questions – in vain. The debate was conducted on such a subjective level that no members of the public had the courage to enter it. RaŠ



# Danube on the Moldau 5

Composed programme with an awards ceremony for the best translation of a Slovak text into Czech was held at the book fair on Sunday. The competitors worked with an excerpt from **Peter Balko's** book *Vtedy v Lošonci. Via Lošonc*, which had received the readers' prize in Slovakia's best known literary competition Anasoft litera in 2015. The expert jury was selecting from 21 translations and singled out the work of **KATEŘINA ZAJÍCOVÁ** (on the left) as the very best.

### Publishing Science (in Czechia)

On Thursday, 11 May, the Book World book fair played host to a meeting of Czech university and technical publishing houses, during which some best practices of aiding scientific publishing were discussed. Experiences were shared by PETR VALO (Karolinum), ALENA MIZEROVÁ (Munipress), HANA DZIKOVÁ (UPOL), EVA DIBUSZOVÁ (VŠCHT), MARIE KRATOCHVÍLOVÁ (FHS UK) and ANDREA SLOVÁKOVÁ (Nová beseda). The debate was moderated by Martina Tlachová from Munipress.

One of the debate's key topics was the discrepancy between the two contradictory tasks faced by these publishing houses, which are rather difficult to reconcile. On the one hand they want to publish the very best books and select manuscripts accordingly. On the other they are expected to mass-produce grant outputs and, in the remaining time, teach emerging scholars how to write expert texts. "Far from just picking the cherries, we have to publish everything," Hana Dziková summed up.

"Unlike other presses, Czech university publishing houses cannot opt for a narrow specialisation. For ambitious authors they will always represent a second choice," Petr Valo stated openly. Alena Mizerová remarked: "Even the publishers of the most wide-reaching scientific outputs play an important role. They can motivate the authors and show them how books can be made better by giving them the attention they deserve – even the ones that hardly stand a chance on the commercial market."

Eva Dibuszová mentioned several systemic obstacles – the most pressing topic of contemporary European and world science seems to be dealing with its system of assessment and the tendency to "publish for the sake of publishing". This often forces the publishing houses into bringing out this type of books. It is then up to the individual book series and the bosses to exert their influence and only connect their brand name with quality production.

The panellists couldn't bring all the topics to a close. They did disclose, however, that they are already cooperating on creating some sort of joint standards and that they intend to continue in these debates in the near future. As they say around the scientific world: "It's for science."

## Seeking the Truth

Polish reporter MARIUSZ SCZYGIEL has embarked on an intriguing journey, seeking for the truth around the world. He asks people in taxis, on planes and also at the Book World book fair.

"Each journalist knows that when you have your facts verified from several trustworthy sources, that's the truth. The truth is facts," moderator and journalist Petr Vizina said at the outset of the meeting. "Ok, let's see then - what colour is your jacket?" Mariusz Sczygiel reacted. "It's wine red," Petr Vizina responded. Then Mariusz put same question to the packed auditorium and he got several different answers. "You see, someone says red, somebody else savs wine red. another sees it as auburn. Who is right?" Mariusz asked. "Each of us has his or her own truth. Even when a journalist writes something it is his truth, because each reporter is entitled to his own impressions," Mariusz explains. "Truth isn't absolute. We may have facts, but it is up to us how we name those facts. Each person on the Earth at any given time is in a different point from which he or she views the world, and each of these vantage points offers a different perspective of truth." The original impulse for the unorthodox project, which Mariusz has simply called The Truth and which involves his asking people around the world for their own truth, was a thought he had chanced upon in a book. "It said: Life has value when we arrive at a certain truth, a thought, a rule. At that moment it occurred to me to start asking people what rule have they discovered in their life. I got into a taxi and the taxi driver was the first person I asked. Since then I'm asking everyone, everywhere.



The only criterion is that the truth mustn't be banal, because sometimes people say something banal, like for example 'the rule of my life is to respect other people'. That's a banal answer but I don't let it discourage me and keep asking. And often it happens that behind the trite statement there is an interesting story, which delivers the banality from being banal," Mariusz explained how he collects his truths. "You could say that the truth is thereby provided with some kind of a body," Petr Vizina concluded. "Truth has a body, that's nicely put. This truth I will take home with me from this book fair," Mariusz laughed. JM

# I'm Coming! or Sex in Literature with Only the Slightest of Blushes

On Saturday, Book World hosted the Norwegian journalist, columnist and novelist SELMA LØNNING AARØ.

It is almost discouraging that an author with quite a substantial bibliography only achieved international fame with a somewhat thin novel whose departure point is almost ostensibly spicy, to the point of redefining the taboos in literature's mainstream. What are we talking



about? Nothing less than an emancipated woman who has reached numerous successes in her life and only needs to reach one more goal for her life to be completely happy – an orgasm. For a week she locks herself up in her bedroom with a dildo and lets the family steer its own course. When, from time to time, her husband asks how she is doing, she answers with the promising, "I'm coming!"

The amicable author plausibly argued that her motivation behind writing the book was not just commercial, but also, and especially, serious. According to her women are under incredible pressure (especially from the media) and have to fulfil a role that is not so much threefold, as consisting of three different roles standing in irreconcilable opposition to one another. The role of an emancipated successful woman with a career, the role of a mother who cares for her children, and the role of a lover who can "hold on to" her partner and fulfil his expectations. While today's women have gotten some kind of a grip on the first two roles, in the third things sometimes do get difficult. It was this topic that the Norwegian author wanted to address, employing means which attack the very borders of what is acceptable in literature. The international acclaim of her novel has proved her right.

## The Most European of the Arts: The Novel





Debate about writing novels and the significance of this literary form for European literature in the Gulliver Airship. Guests: ALEŠ ŠTEGER, JOSÉ LUIS PEIXOTO and GOCE SMILEVSKI, moderated by Guillaume Basset.



#### German Poetess Hilde Domin

Hilde Domin, perhaps the most outstanding German female poet of the 20th century, was presented at the book fair by her close friend, writer MARION TAUSCHWITZ, on Saturday in the Lapidarium.

Czech readers only know Hilde Domin's poetry from fragments published in various magazines, but a more extensive anthology is scheduled to appear on the Czech book market early next year. The German poet, who was a close observer of Czech history and had strongly reacted to the events of 1968, is interesting not only for her work, but also for her dramatic life story. Born into a rich Jewish family, she studied at universities in Heidelberg and Berlin, where she met her later husband Erwin Walter Palm. It was he who had played a rather ambiguous role in her literary life. For many decades he



had brushed aside her artistic ambitions, being quoted as saying, "When my wife writes, she steals the Muses away from me!" For this reason she adopted the pseudonym Domin in her poetic debuts published in the sixties, inspired by the Dominican Republic to which the married couple had retreated. The Jewish emigrants travelled there through Mussolini's Italy and England, a country at war. Marion Tauschwitz offered a detailed account of Hilde Domin's life, drawing direct comparisons to excerpts from her poetry, courtesy of several thousand letters found after the author's death in 2006. Tauschwitz provided a gripping summary of an incredible life that would best be concluded by Hilde Domin's own words, "I rested my feet against the air and they carried me".

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## **Barbarian Among Freemasons**

In his latest book, the Hungarian writer GERGELY PÉTERFY, one of the many foreign Book World guests, describes the remarkable life of a Negro scholar at the Viennese court.

At the outset of the age of Enlightenment, Angelo Soliman became something of a phenomenon. He was born in today's Nigeria and as a child was taken to Europe and forced into slavery. While here he received education and served at the courts of some outstanding aristocratic families, namely the Lobkowiczs and Liechtensteins. In 1783 he entered a Viennese freemasons lodge, of which he later became the Grand Master. In the lodge he became acquainted with, among others, Haydn and Mozart. Despite his social standing and Christian confession, however, he could not enjoy a dignified rest after his death. His body was mummified and exhibited in a museum as "an African

savage", clad in ostrich feathers.

Péterfy's novel The Stuffed Barbarian, which has received the book of the year accolade in Hungary in 2014, extends even beyond Soliman's life. Its story also focuses on the Hungarian scholar from the Enlightenment age Ferenc Kazinczy, Soliman's close friend, who spent most of his life being expelled to the edges of society and for some time was even detained at the Brno Špilberk fort. Today he is considered one of Hungary's foremost revivalists and linguists.

The Stuffed Barbarian is being published in Czech in Robert Svoboda's translation.

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## The Struggle between Writer and Authority





To write is to challenge, to turn false ideologies into real perceptions of domination, away from "alternative facts". To write is to contest what oppresses us. Could the pen really be mightier than the sword? The debate on this pressing issue in the Gulliver Airship in the Centre for Contemporary Art hosted the Chinese dissident writer LIAO YIWU and concerned Czech novelist RADKA DENEMARKOVÁ. It was moderated by KATEŘINA PROCHÁZKOVÁ.

#### Statistics for BOOK WORLD PRAGUE 2017

**FAIR** 

exhibitors: 396 stands: 205

surface area: 3,412 m²

professional visitors registered: 682

accredited journalists: 237

visitors: 44,000

exhibiting countries and regions: 31

Belarus, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Ukraine,

United Kingdom, United States of America

LITERARY FESTIVAL

participants: 636 total programmes: 486 total exhibitions: 20

countries and regions active in the programme: 27

Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Macedonia, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain,

Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom,

United States of America

A total of 33 countries were represented at the fair and festival.

**24TH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR AND** LITERARY FESTIVAL

**PRAGUE EXHIBITION GROUNDS** 

## **BOOK WORLD PRAGUE** 10.-13. 5. 2018

**TOPICS FOCUSING ON:** COMICS

CZECH HISTORY'S ANNIVERSARIES: YEARS WITH NUMBER EIGHT























































