



# OST THE BRIDGE

News of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Volume 3, No. 3 — Fall 1997

## An Evening With the Ambassadors *Ambassadors Vondra and Lichardus to help introduce National Advisory Board*

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is proud to announce *An Evening With the Ambassadors*, a special dinner and program to be held in the museum's Heritage Hall. In commemoration of the historic building dedication performed by Presidents Clinton, Havel, and Kovac, and in celebration of Dozinky (the fall harvest) and Czechoslovak Independence Day, the museum's annual fall dinner will take on a particularly national and international theme on October 25. Ambassador Branislav Lichardus from the Slovak Republic and Ambassador Alexandre Vondra from the Czech Republic will be the featured speakers during a program which will also recognize the museum and library's newly formed National Advisory Board. Also on the program will be the crowning of the Czech Prince and Princess, a popular annual event the museum is proud to host.

Ambassador Lichardus visited the museum in 1995 when he accompanied President Kovac for the dedication. Ambassador Vondra was named U.S. Ambassador in spring 1997, replacing Michael Zantovsky who is now a member of the Czech Senate.

A National Advisory Board has been part of the museum's planning since the early 1990s. The objective is to utilize



President Clinton shown with Ambassador Branislav Lichardus (center) during the building dedication in 1995.

the many skills the National Advisory Board members would bring to the museum, and have them act as ambassadors for our initiatives in their respective communities. Honorary memberships to the National Advisory Board have been extended to the two ambassadors and to the Director Generals of the National Museums in Prague and Bratislava

The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with a reception in the Grand Hall and complimentary touring of *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Riches from the National Museum in Prague*. Dinner will be served at 7:30. Tickets are \$30. ■

## U S WEST Communications Announces Title Sponsorship

*An Evening with the Ambassadors* will be a special evening indeed. U S WEST Communications, has generously offered to fund the event to be held on Saturday, October 25th at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

"We are proud to be associated with the Museum and Library and feel it is a privilege to be involved with the efforts to bring Ambassador Branislav Lichardus from the Slovak Republic and Ambassador Alexandre Vondra from the Czech Republic to our community," says Teresa Wahlert, U S WEST Communications Vice President - Iowa. U S WEST Communications has shown a long standing commitment to the Cedar Rapids area both in technology, and community enrichment. "This is our way of ensuring that life truly is better here," added Wahlert.

Several representatives from U S WEST Communications will be in attendance at the dinner, and will have an opportunity to meet and visit with both of the Ambassadors. The Museum and Library is deeply grateful for this support, and for the long history of support U S WEST Communications has provided over the years. We are thrilled to be the recipients of this major contribution, and become partners in helping to promote cultural life in this community. ■

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## DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Dan Baldwin,  
Executive Director

It seems like ages since I last communicated to the membership all the exciting events going on at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. Since our last newsletter we have opened the special exhibit *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* and have enjoyed the satisfaction of both record attendance and an approving public.

People often ask about our attendance figures — both before and since the opening of TYCC — so I thought I might offer a sense of what this project has meant in this regard. Prior to 1997 the highest single attendance month at the museum was May 1996 when 3,000 visitors, many of them schoolchildren on spring field trips, went through our exhibit hall. The second highest monthly attendance was 2,600 in July 1996. The first calendar month of *A Thousand Years* (June) saw a new record set when 3,450 visitors went through. July easily broke that with more than 4,600 tickets sold. August stayed strong as more than 3,700 visitors were able to enjoy the fine artifacts and interpretation. What this means is that attendance for each of the first three months of *A Thousand Years* was higher than any previous month in the museum's history.

This type of information is very useful to us. We are still learning what our expectations should be for visitation and building usage, how to project revenues from visitation. These revenues help us with both daily operations and future special projects. So as we look two and three years ahead we can gauge what funds will be available and what projects will require special funding. All this plays an important role in the sound management of the museum, insuring that

critical curatorial and library functions at the heart of our mission will not have to be compromised.

We also routinely check our guest register. Visitors from Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have been plentiful. These are nearby states which have many residents who are of Czech or Slovak descent. But our reach goes much further. Over Labor Day weekend alone, residents of 24 states and five foreign countries signed our register. Obviously interest in Czech and Slovak culture is not limited to Cedar Rapids.

Comments and observations about *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* have been overwhelmingly positive. We were concerned about how the public would respond to a higher admission price, but exit surveys indicate the public feels it is reasonably priced. We get many compliments on the way the gallery is organized and people often are happy the exhibit is not larger, perhaps a reaction to 10,000 – 15,000 square foot “blockbuster” exhibits which can be both overwhelming and tiring. If there is a particular complaint that we hear on a regular basis it is one we should take as a compliment: some visitors express disappointment that our collection is not on exhibit. Never fear! Spring 1998 will bring the unveiling of a wholly new exhibit showcasing the collections of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, including several treasures which have been added to the collection this year. These artifacts will be displayed in the fine exhibit cases currently housing the artifacts from the National Museum, and will be placed in an absorbing context through an interpretation now being researched by one of this country's best scholars on Central Europe.

And none of this would be possible without the ongoing support of our members. For that, we always say thank you. ■

— Dan Baldwin, Executive Director

### Board of Directors

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### MEMBERS RECEIVE FREE ADMISSION

A reminder to all current members of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library: Your membership allows you free admission to *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture*. All you need to do is show your current membership card at the visitors station in the Grand Hall. There is no limit to the number of times you can use this benefit! Encourage your family and friends to become members so they too can enjoy these privileges.

### WISH LIST

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is in need of the following items:

- electric typewriter
- paper cutter (with sharp blade)
- letter-size four-drawer file cabinet

If you would like to donate any of these items, please call (319) 362-8500.

## Curator's Update

Work in the Museum collections is coming along. I was concerned about losing ground during the weeks I was gone for maternity leave. However, David Muhlena, who covered for me during my absence, made great progress. Not only did he keep up with current donations, but he also catalogued an *entire year* of backlog! Sheila also completed considerable work with the kroje. Unfortunately, Dave and Sheila both found full-time positions elsewhere. On the positive side, I will have at least one intern from Mount Mercy College this fall.

One area I am hoping to make progress on early this fall is in the immigrant home. The interior has not been cleaned in a while and we need to prepare an inventory of the items exhibited or stored in the home. Those

items which are specifically Czech or have a known Czech background and are appropriate to the Museum's mission will also be catalogued. (The immigrant home will also be catalogued, as it is technically one large artifact!)

As usual, I am involved in several other projects. Martha and I recently helped organize a disaster preparedness workshop with other area museums and libraries. The best way to prevent or decrease potential loss of artifacts or books and avoid personal injury is to be prepared! Besides working together to prepare disaster policies, we are exploring ways our organizations can share resources, including people, supplies, and space, in the event of a disaster.

We are also working diligently on preparations for the exhibition that will replace *A Thousand Years...* next year. I'm looking forward to completion of

this exhibition so we can focus our attention on other projects for a couple years.

While all this is going on, our collections continue to grow. More lovely textiles were donated to the Museum this summer, as well as men's leather shoes, pipes, corn husk dolls, decorated eggs, another Cermak painting, and many other items. Many thanks to all our donors!

On a personal note, we welcomed Nathan Paul into our family on June 25. Rick and I are amazed that someone so small can suddenly "rule the roost!" After spending several weeks with our guests from the National Museum in Prague, I am eager to find out how much Czech language he absorbed before he was born! ■

— Carmen Langel, Curator

## NEW INDIVIDUAL and CORPORATE MEMBERS

### INDIVIDUALS

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Frances Sonka  
Jane M. Souhrada  
Lorraine Stastny  
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Donald & Mary Taylor  
David & Rosella Tisl  
C. Forrest & Alexandra Tomes  
Thereasa Tonnesen  
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## Volunteer Hours Pay Additional Dividends

**D**id you know that recording your volunteer hours at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library helps make an even stronger case for funding when applying for grants from corporations and foundations? By keeping track of this information and having it available, we are able to show support from individuals and other constituencies associated with the museum. A strong volunteer base represents quality and diversity in the organization. It provides not only a broad pool of talent to assist with programming and activities at the museum and library, but it helps in the pursuit of grant opportunities as well.

The process is simple...all it involves is logging in your hours on the sign up sheet located in the volunteer station each time you volunteer at the museum and library. It only takes a minute of your time, but can pay big dividends for the museum and library in the long run. If you are currently a volunteer and wish to find out more about the exciting opportunities available, please call the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library at 362-8500. ■

— Judy Ostrander, Director of Development

## Over \$5,400 is Raised for Flood Relief Victims in the Czech Republic

**O**n July 24, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library hosted a fundraiser organized by Edward R. Kuba, President of the Federation of Czech Groups, for flood victims in the Czech Republic. The three-hour fund drive was a huge success! Sub sandwiches were provided by Joe Vondracek of Blimpies, and several others donated an assortment of desserts to cap off a nicely staged buffet for \$10/person. Contributions accepted throughout the evening totaled over \$5,400! If you wish to help the needy victims in the Czech Republic, please send your contributions to: Federation of Czech Groups, c/o Ed Kuba,

## Gala Kicks Off Czech Culture Exhibit

■ **Pictured top:** Parks Commission, Evan Hughes (left), Dr. Milan Stloukal, Director General from the National Museum in Prague (middle), and Congressman Jim Leach (right) taking part in the ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, May 24th, for the Grand Opening of the exhibit *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Riches from the National Museum in Prague*.

■ **Pictured center:** Milly Ortner, a board member at the Museum & Library, visiting with Dr. Milan Stloukal and his wife, Marta Stloukal, during the Gala Opening, the evening of May 22nd.

■ **Pictured lower right:** Pianist, William P. Whipple, III, performed during dinner at the Gala. There were 224 guests at the dinner catered by Zindrick's Czech Restaurant. Also performing was "The Paramount String Quartet" in the Grand Hall during the reception. Guests were welcomed on the Patio by Quentin Lewis, Czech Heritage Prince, playing the violin and Deb Rigel, the Czech Heritage Princess.

Other honored guests at the gala included (not pictured) Hobart G. Cawood, President, Old Salem Museum, Winston-Salem, North Carolina and his wife, Addie Lou Cawood; Scholars from the National Museum in Prague were Dr. Vladimir Brych, Exhibition Coordinator, Dr. Jirina Langhammerova, Dr. Vera Prenosilova, and Dr. Eva Paulova. Our exhibit designer, Robert Bodnar, was also in attendance.

### Corporate Table Sponsors:

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### Gala Sponsors:

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- Peck's Flower and Garden Shop
- Bonnetts (Milan, Illinois)



- DeJong Greenhouses (Pella, Iowa)
- Len Busch Roses (Plymouth, Minnesota)

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## WITH APPRECIATION...

A wheelchair for visitors to use  
was recently donated by Sherlee Peterson  
and Fern Fackler, in honor of their  
mother, Leona Netolicky Kaplan.



# The Museum & Library Welcomes New Staff



**Suzanne Charipar, Museum Store Manager and Heritage Hall Coordinator,** has jumped into a very busy time for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. July was a record setting month in store sales. What better time to learn a new job! Suzanne was previously with the Five Seasons Hotel where she spent eight years in corporate sales. After visiting Prague for the first time in 1994, Suzanne and her husband began importing Czech glass and fancy leather goods from the Republic and sold them at Village Imports in the Czech Village. Being on staff here is a great opportunity to learn more about her heritage and contribute to the success of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. ■



**Denise Bowers, our new Administrative and Development Assistant,** comes to us from her previous position at Archer Daniels Midland. She was administrative assistant to the terminal manager of the trucking division. She was involved in most all aspects of daily operations such as payroll, human resources, computer operations, etc. She also coordinated most of the training involved for

new procedures being implemented in the trucking industry. Denise grew up in Center Point, Iowa. She is active in Open, Class A Softball, and traveling extensively for this sport. Denise also enjoys horseback riding, fishing, hiking, camping, and being with her family. An upcoming wedding is in the plan for Denise to John Harris on October 10th. ■



**Nick Schulte, Facilities Manager,** has his work cut out for him with the many activities going on at the Museum & Library. His experience has helped him settle quickly into his new position. Over the past ten years while being in mechanical and electrical maintenance, he's been drawn to the idea of caring for a building that commands less in the mechanical arena and has a cleaner environment. The Museum & Library shines like never before! ■



**Heather Gibson** began working for the museum in the Fall of 1991 as a tour guide. She returned to her home town of Hanesville, Wisconsin in the Spring

of 1994 after graduating from Coe College with a B.A. degree in English and history and secondary teaching certification in both areas. She returned to the museum in 1996 and presently works part-time as the Program Coordinator's assistant. Experiencing different cultures is a fulfilling aspect of Heather's life. She has studied abroad in Galway, Ireland and has traveled throughout Europe. Her other interests include activities with friends and family, reading, movies, and musicals. ■



**Shirley Rosencrans** began her part-time position early this past summer after having served the museum as a volunteer. She received her B.A. degree in Business Administration/Marketing from Mt. Mercy College in 1994. Over the years, she has worked in different aspects of the travel and tourism industry. Some of her past positions include working for the Chamber of Commerce, PBX, Five Seasons Hotel, and the Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival. Shirley strongly believes that one of the most important things she has learned is that the customer is your most valuable asset. Her hobbies include traveling, antiques, reading, bicycling, cooking and baking, racquetball, and collecting Czech pottery. Most of all, she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren. ■

### Most Definitely!

**D**efinitely! Absolutely! Emphatically! Gladly! Without reservation! These have been the overwhelming responses to the question on our visitor survey sheet that asks, "Would you recommend this exhibition to other friends and family members?"

The exhibition, *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Riches from the National Museum in Prague*, has been very positively received by museum-goers. Since its grand opening on May 24th, the exhibit has been viewed by over 15,000 visitors coming by car, school bus, and motorcoach. Approximately three hundred youngsters from schools, day care facilities, foreign language classes, summer educational programs, and scout troops viewed the exhibit in May, June, July and August. Exhibit guides helped the students as they "walked through" a thousand years of Czech history, learning about griffins, double-headed eagles, and two-tailed lions, chain mail, morions, and mace. They learned the

Czech word, "tolar," from which our American word, "dollar," was derived and when a "secretary" is not a secretary!

Motorcoaches have come from as far away as California and as near as towns in northeast Iowa. Tour companies and organizations have brought motorcoaches from Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. College alumni groups and high school and military reunions brought visitors from all over the United States.

"It's exciting to have such a first class exhibit here in Cedar Rapids," was one viewer's response.

"...excellent storytelling of the ages through artifacts," was another visitor's reaction to the exhibition.

One of the most popular items with adult visitors has been the magnificent secretary with its beautiful inlaid decoration of typical Baroque design, on the front and sides. The overlay glass vase and the huge storage chest made of

spruce, iron, and leather are also favorites.

Children's choices are the puppet display, examples of armor and weapons used by the knights of the Middle Ages, and the President's flag. Some of the most intriguing objects, about which most of the questions have been asked, are the stove tiles. The exhibition displays a nice variety of both stove and floor tiles.

The tour of the gallery is self-guided with easy to follow text and object labels to identify each artifact. It is suggested that an hour be allowed for a gallery tour to fully appreciate the richness and the diversity of the items in the exhibition, which will be on view through December 31, 1997. Now is the time to take advantage of an exceptional opportunity to experience the history and culture of a remarkable people.

"We enjoyed it very much from the beginning to the end! Thank you!" ■

— Patricia Hikiji, Programs Coordinator

## LIBRARY NEWS & NOTES

**The Reading Room is Open** — The current periodicals section of the library is expanding and improving! I have been actively soliciting complimentary subscriptions to periodicals related to all things Czech & Slovak and have had some success. Please feel free to visit the library and stay awhile to read the latest news. One recent addition to the collection is *The Prague Post*, an English-language paper published in Prague. It is published every two weeks and makes very interesting reading. We also have a wide variety of newsletters from Czech & Slovak organizations in the US including the Czech & Slovak Embassies, American Friends of the Czech Republic, and many other groups. While the library is not officially open, I am here most weekdays and by appointment. Plan to visit soon.

**Visit the Web Site** — The new web site of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is up and running. I update the site at least once a month

with the latest calendar of events and new featured artifacts. On the library page, I want to add links to Czech & Slovak web sites and other sites of interest around the world. I am gathering a list of appropriate URLs. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome! You will find the web site at <http://www.ncsml.org>.

**General Notes** — Other library projects are progressing steadily. One super volunteer has helped me by sorting through many materials in the Annex. He has covered all the wooden shelves with material that is better for books. We hope to begin filling the shelves back up with books, but this time sorted into categories. Then we will have much better access to those materials while they are being cataloged. We are also in the process of building a classified, vertical file. This file will contain clippings, pamphlets, journal articles, maps and other materials not suitable for regular library shelves. Material will be separated

by subject for easy access. Right now these very interesting and useful materials are stored in boxes and not accessible to the public.

**THANKS to all library volunteers!** We could not do without you! Thanks also to the Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library for their recent gift of a most useful book truck. And finally, thanks to Bob Schaffer for his help and expertise at scanning all those images for our web site. ■

— Martha Wilding, Librarian





## Programming Schedule through December 1997

### October 6 — "Kava a Knihy"

Reading/Lecture/Discussion Series; Second Book Discussion  
• 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at Museum Library

### October 16 — Short Program "Learn at Lunch"

"Towers, Spires, Vaults & Arches"

• Noon – 1:00 p.m. at WFLA Heritage Hall

An introduction to the various architectural styles to be found in the constructions of the Czech Republic.

### October 18 — "Stories, Tales, Legends, and Lore"

Children's Story-time

• 10:00 a.m. at Museum Library

### October 24 & 25 — "Dozinky" Festival of Thanksgiving

• Saturday: *Evening with the Ambassadors*. 6:00 p.m. reception; 7:30 p.m. dinner.

### October 26 — Armchair Travelogue

"Land of Fairy Tales — Castles and Churches of the Czech Republic"

Slide Presentation by George (Max) Naxera, Jr.

• 2:00 p.m. at WFLA Heritage Hall

Enjoy the beauty and grandeur of the castles and churches of the Czech Republic with Max Naxera, avid traveler and photographer.

### October 28 — Czech Independence Day

November 3 — "Kava a Knihy" Reading/Lecture/Discussion Series; Third Book Discussion

• 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at Museum Library

### November 7 – 9 — "Haj Husicky" Ethnic Arts Demonstration and Sale;

• Hours to be determined, at WFLA Heritage Hall

The second annual holiday sale and gathering of artists and artisans will feature hand-crafted items in a variety of media, with a special emphasis on the fold arts.

### November 15 — "Stories, Tales, Legends, and Lore"

Children's Story-time

• 10:00 a.m. at Museum Library

### November 19 — Short Program "Learn at Lunch"

"Glass Magic" by Robert Schaffer, Czech Cottage

• Noon – 1:00 p.m. at WFLA Heritage Hall

Learn about the history, the technique for creating hand-blown, hand-painted glass, Christmas ornaments from the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

### November 22 — Christmas Crafts Classes for Adults

• 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., at WFLA Heritage Hall. Learn how to make traditional Czech holiday decorations and centerpieces. Pre-registration required.

### November 29 — "Fun with Christmas Crafts"

Crafts sessions for children

• 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., ages 6 – 8; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., ages 9 – 12 at WFLA Heritage Hall. Pre-registration required.

### December 3 — Short Program "Learn at Lunch"

"Czech & Slovak Christmas Customs and Traditions"

Patricia A. Hikiji, Program Coordinator, Nation Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

• Noon – 1:00 p.m. at WFLA Heritage Hall

Follow the Czech and Slovak Christmas calendar and learn about the events, customs, and traditions significant to the month-long Christmas season.

### December 6 — Sv. Mikulas: A Celebration of Christmas Customs and Traditions

• 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. • The Grand Hall will be the setting for ethnic crafts demonstrations. A puppet theater performance will entertain young and old alike. Join the singing of "Vanocni koledy" (Czech Christmas carols).

### December 13 — "Stories, Tales, Legends, and Lore"

Children's Story-time

• 10:00 a.m. at Museum Library

## Red Cedar Chamber Music Launches Premier Season at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

The idea for Red Cedar Chamber Music was sparked by a successful performance at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library last November, so it is only fitting that this new arts organization launches its premier season with the program *Folk Inspired Classics* on Sunday, November 9th at 4:30 p.m. in the museum's magnificent Grand Hall.

Red Cedar Chamber Music is the brain child of guitarist John Dowdall and flutist Jan Boland, veteran performers in the Cedar Rapids Community.

This year's performance features Boland & Dowdall as performers, and will intertwine folk music of the Czech and Slovak Republics, Ireland, Hungary, Spain and Latin America with pieces of classical music whose composers were inspired by folk idioms.

The concert will feature a new composition for flute and guitar based on some Czech and Slovak folk music unearthed in the Museum's very own sheet music collection (donated to the museum last year by the Lyra Society, a long-standing all-male Czech choral society in Chicago.)

Tickets are \$6 and will be available at the Czech & Slovak Museum in advance or at the door. A light reception will follow the concert.



■ Flutist Jan Boland and guitarist John Dowdall are featured in Red Chamber Music's upcoming performance.

# NATIONAL NEWS

## ◆ 6th Annual Genealogical/Cultural Conference of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

• Oct. 1 – 4 • Radisson South Hotel, Bloomington, MN. The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society Int'l is proud to present the premiere genealogical and cultural program in the U.S. This conference will include an entire week's worth of activities beginning with a tour to Cedar Rapids, IA to see the exhibit, *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture*. A choice of ethnic tours are available Wednesday and Thursday led by experienced guides. A dual track of sessions will be given on Thursday afternoon, followed by the evening Area Networking Sessions. Then on Friday and Saturday, choose from 32 sessions given by experts in their fields.



For additional information, contact P.O. Box 16225, St. Paul, MN 55116-0225; or call Paul at \_\_\_\_\_ or Dave at \_\_\_\_\_ . E-Mail inquiries can be sent to: \_\_\_\_\_ or CGSI@aol.com

Further updates on the conference or the Society can be found on the CGSI homepage (<http://members.aol.com/cgsi>).

## ◆ 1997 Maryland Czech and Slovak Festival

• Oct. 19, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m. • Food, music, dancing, and entertainment in the Czech and Slovak colors will be featured in this festival sponsored by the Czech & Slovak Heritage Association. Don't miss out on kolacky, knedliky, zeli, veprove maso a pivo!

For more information, call Charles Supik at \_\_\_\_\_

## ◆ Antonin Dvorak Celebrations in New York: Antonin Dvorak In Photography

• Sept. 15 – Nov. 21, Czech Center, 1109 Madison Avenue at 83rd St., NYC Tue. – Fri., 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

An exhibition of photographs, letter facsimiles, musical scores, and contemporary documents from various stages in the life and work of Antonin Dvorak, including his "American period." This exhibition is being held in conjunction with the unveiling of the Dvorak statue in New York City's Stuyvesant Square Park.



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