

Voices from the Czech Republic

This year some of Czech literature's most outstanding writers are visiting the Book Fair together with literary scholars and translators. We look forward to interesting discussions on the state of literature today, and the presentation of several new works in Swedish translation, including an anthology of contemporary short stories. Two decades after the fall of Communism, Czech literature has developed into an exciting and multifaceted world with a colourful melange of established authors and innovative novices, a world which, with few exceptions, has remained unknown to Swedes. Visitors to the Book Fair have a wonderful opportunity to get to know this literature in seminars, at readings and through meetings with the writers and their works at the Czech exhibit. This exciting venture has been set up by the Czech Centre in Stockholm and Stockholm University.



▲ Miloslava Slavičková

Miloslava Slavičková is a professor emerita in the Czech language. Her research focuses on the Czech author Bohumil Hrabal's writings, with particular emphasis on the usage of the collage method in his literary works, which are often compiled of quotations from other author's texts.

During the Communist era Miloslava Slavičková worked for many years together with the Charta 77 Foundation and edited the journal *Voices from Czechoslovakia/Czech and Slovak Voices*. She was also instrumental in founding the Jaroslav Seifert Literary Prize, and serves on the jury for it. Nowadays she works on cultural exchanges between Sweden and the Czech Republic in conjunction with the Czech radio station Vltava. The most recent contribution is a programme about Czech themes in Swedish literature, illustrated by excerpts from Carola Hansson's and Steve Sem-Sandberg's work.

Czech seminars at Göteborg Book Fair 2009



Thursday

13.00–13.20 Swedish-Czech cultural contacts

15.00–15.45 The future for literature 20 years after the Wall

16.30–16.50 Letters from Hrabal

Friday

10.00–10.20 On European history

13.00–13.20 In velvet footsteps

Seminars in red are held in Swedish.

▼ Jaroslav Rudiš

Author, journalist and musician Jaroslav Rudiš' big breakthrough came with the novel *Nebe pod Berlínem* [The Sky under Berlin], which won the Jiří Orten Prize for young writers and was one of the bestselling books in the Czech Republic in 2002. Together with the illustrator Jaromír 99, he has published a cult trilogy of graphic novels about a lonely railway employee who watches trains from all over Europe pass by his little station. Rudiš, who was born in 1972, is also host of the literary music show EKG at Prague's Archa Theatre, and plays in the rock band U-Bahn.



▲ Jáchym Topol

Poet, prose-writer and rock-music lyricist Jáchym Topol was one of the prominent figures in the Czech underground scene during the Communist era, and is seen today as a cult writer in his homeland.

Topol was born in 1962 into a well-known literary family. His father is Josef Topol, the renowned dramatist and Shakespeare translator. Topol was not allowed to study at university and instead made a living through various jobs including as a stoker and warehouse worker. In 1985 he co-founded the samizdat magazine *Revoler*, which is still one of the most important literary magazines in the Czech Republic today. He signed the Charta 77 manifesto as an 18-year-old and was active in the Velvet Revolution.

Since 1989 Topol has worked as a journalist and author. His major literary breakthrough came with the novel *City, Sister, Silver* in 1994, after which he has published many more novels and established himself as one of the most significant contemporary authors in the Czech Republic – and Europe – today. His books have been translated into many languages. *Noční práce* [Nightwork] has been particularly acclaimed, both at home and abroad and is now available in Swedish translation, *Nattarbete*.



▲ Dagmar Hartlová

Dagmar Hartlová, born 1951, is a translator from Swedish and Norwegian, and has taught modern Swedish Literature and literary translation at Charles University in Prague. She has translated over thirty novels, plays and children's books, as well as an anthology of Swedish poetry. She worked on the publication and translation of August Strindberg's selected plays (2000, 2004) and was editor and member of the collective which compiled the comprehensive Nordic writers dictionary. Between 1984 and 2002 she worked at the Swedish Embassy in Prague on cultural exchange issues.

