

“Let’s not rest on our laurels!” Opona calls upon you.

On November 17, the streets of Prague will be the place where people will not just celebrate, but also debate. The organizers of the event *20 years without the curtain* call upon everyone who wants to commemorate the day the totalitarian Communist regime collapsed to come at 3 PM to Albertov where it all started. **“Opona’s mission is to recall how hard it is to achieve democracy and how easy it is to lose it. We feel the need to celebrate; however, we are also aware of the burning issues of today. “Democracy cannot be taken for granted. It can only work if we participate in it,”** explains Martin Kotas from Opona. The organizers consider it significant that the guests from abroad, the dissidents from countries with totalitarian regimes, will have a chance to speak. At the same time, they remark that to attain democracy, it is necessary for every individual, every citizen to take an active role.

The program includes the overview of the present, the parade after 20 years, happenings and the concert with an after-party. **“We invite everybody who was there 20 years ago as well as the general public from all over the country. We will be glad if you come in large numbers because it is a reason to celebrate,”** adds Katerina Riley from Opona. Due to an expected high turnout, Opona has closely cooperated with all institutions concerned with public safety. **“One of the proofs that it is something to celebrate is the fact that this parade, unlike the one marching 20 years ago, will be protected by the police. We hope that the great turnout of people will signal to the extremists that we do not want a return to any totalitarian regime,”** says David Gaydecka, another member of Opona. The streets will belong to all of those who will come to celebrate.

Albertov 3:00 PM A reason to celebrate?? Speak out!

“By celebrating and reflecting on the past, we make an impact on the future,” Marek Vocel from Opona reminds us. **“If you can, come early. Music will be playing from 2:30.”**

The former students Pavel Lagner and Milan Zitny confirmed their participation at Albertov, and the students of today’s generation will be represented by Inventory of Democracy. David Koller, Tomas Matonoha, Cirkus Ponorka and actors from Vosto5 theater will perform.

The representatives from abroad – namely Oleg Orlov from Memorial and Gao Yu, journalist and the signatory of Charter 08 from China will be greeted by Simon Panek.

“Apart from solving our local problems, we feel the obligation to help those who do not live in a democracy, just as others helped us,” explains Marek Svoboda from the nonprofit organization People in Need which helped to prepare the event at Albertov.

The parade takes off at 3:30 PM

“More than a manifesto, we see the parade as an artistic commemoration. There will be drummers, flag bearers, puppets larger than life. The parade will be headed by a wagon allegorizing the State police, based on Petr Sis drawings. We even managed to get several Trabant cars,” states parade leader, actor Jiri Lastovka, adding: ***“Bring your kids, even those in carriages and show them what happened 20 years ago. If you yourself were just a kid back then, bring your parents or friends.”***

The parade ends with a group photo and the fall of the curtain

Two happenings are planned for the parade’s finish. ***“Imagine a photograph of the A0 size of Narodni Street full of people and you can find yourself in the picture,”*** Tomas Trestik, the photographer for Reflex magazine, describes the group photo of 20 years after. Marek Vocel adds: ***“We invite not only those who were there then or joined the parade this year, but everybody who support the event. I don’t want to forget to thank everyone on the long list of individuals who deserve credit for preparing the event. I hope they will come to the happening, and the group picture will be a nice way of expressing our thanks.”*** The symbolic fall of the curtain will open the concert and will turn Narodni Street into a unique music party.

Narodni Street 6:00 PM concert 20 Years without the Curtain

“The concert will feature the artists and musicians from the past regime who had something to say and did not lose face as well as the young musicians who do not really remember those times. We will hear, for example, Perfect Day by Lou Reed, Misik’s Variation on the renaissance theme, Sun grave, Hey Jude sung by Tonya Graves, Plastic People of the Universe, DG307, Prazsky vyber, Karel Kryl, Get out of here by Jasna Paka and many more songs.” Roman Holy from Monkey Business band who will accompany all performing artists describes the concert.

Narodni Street 7:20 PM Afterparty

The following music program will be provided by Mardosa, the founder and bass player of the Tata Bojs. He has prepared a special selection of songs for the afterparty.

The concert goes and those attending the after-party will be taken care of. Unpasteurized beer Bernard will be available for a symbolic 17 crowns. “I am glad to be part of the celebrations of November 17. For 20 years, the Czechs have savoured freedom and good beer. We are convinced that 20 years without the Iron Curtain is a very good reason to celebrate. November 17 symbolizes the undoubted break point in our history and that is why we are selling it for the symbolic price,”

Stanislav Bernard commented on the partnership of the Bernard Family Brewery and Opona. There will be many more stands with drinks and snacks. Rock Café and Modra Zahrada will move their bars outdoors. Also invited was a nonprofit organization Dekomunizace who will have available their t-shirts "T-shirts against Communism".

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On November 17, the Prague streets will hold the biggest celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of Iron Curtain. Under the title "20 Years without the Curtain – a Reason to Celebrate!" the nonprofit organization Opona has organized a parade from Albertov (meeting at 3 PM) to Národní Street. The parade will begin at Albertov with 30 minutes program and will end on Národní Street with a unique concert (starting at 6 PM, arriving from the river). For more information go to www.20letbezopony.cz or see the FaceBook profile "20 let bez opony – Mame co slavit!"