

November 17, 2009: 20 Years without the Curtain

A reason to celebrate? Speak out! at Albertov at 3 PM

The celebration of 20 years without the Iron Curtain and the positives the Velvet Revolution brought will start at Albertov with a 30-minute overview of the present. The speakers will be former and current students, artists and visitors from the countries where the freedom is not taken for granted.

The representatives of the Inventory of Democracy initiative will share with us the feelings of today's students: *"We will read the manifesto formulated by the students of several universities at public meetings throughout this year. Its theme is what the current students see as the biggest problems of our democracy,"* explain Lukáš Tóth and Jiří Boudal. On the other hand, Šimon Pánek, the former student and participant in the November 1989 events, will introduce the honored guests from abroad who to this day personally experience the terror of the totalitarian regimes governing their countries. *"We feel the urge to celebrate; however, at the same time we are aware of the burning issues of today. Democracy is not a foregone conclusion, it can only work when we participate in it. 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."* Marek Vocel from Opona, the organization promoting the event, explains their motivation. The serious part of the program will be balanced by the artists' performance. On the stage will appear Tomáš Matonoha, David Koller and Honza Ponocný a.k.a. Cirkus Ponorka.

After the last performance is over, the parade will set off along the historic route to Národní Street. The parade will be headed by the allegory wagon with the actor from the Minor Theater Jiří Laštovka and his megaphone. *"We invite everybody who was there twenty years ago as well as the general public from all over the country. The more people come, the happier we will be because it is something to celebrate,"* says

Laštovka adding in a postscript: *"Wear warm clothes!"* Apart from that, the organizers do not tell people what they should wear on November 17, and they don't ask for any banners or costumes. On the other hand, they emphasize that the imagination has no limits and any initiative is welcome. The public can also check out the project's social networking website on FaceBook. The organizers have set up a public profile "20 let bez opony".

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The program at Albertov is part of the most extensive celebrations of the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Iron Curtain, which will take place in the streets of Prague on November 17, 2009. Under the title "20 Years without the Curtain – a Reason to Celebrate" the nonprofit organization Opona has organized the parade starting at Albertov to Národní street, following the route the students took twenty years ago. The parade will end on Národní Street with a unique concert. For more information go to www.20letbezopony.cz