

PRESS KIT 2014

# Let's Never Forget Series

Reception · Readings · Films · Gala · Panel Discussion

PlacerArts Presents

## *The Night and Hope of Arnost Lustig* *a Holocaust Survivor's story*

Inspirational & Educational Events Bringing Community, Arts and History Together

**Sept 4 - 6, 2014 Placer County, CA**



photo © Jaroslav Brabec

let's  
never  
forget

**SERIES INAUGURAL:** Multiple artful events explore the life and work of the Pulitzer Prize nominated Czech Jewish author who drew upon his harrowing experiences as a teenager in WWII to produce novels, short stories and films.



The Night and Hope  
of Arnošt Lustig:  
A Holocaust Survivor's Story

Sept 4 - 6 2014



**INAUGURAL YEAR OF LET'S NEVER FORGET TO FOCUS ON HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR**  
Inspirational & Educational Series Brings Community, Arts and Leaders Together

PlacerArts is please to present a new community event to engage and inspire - LET'S NEVER FORGET . The inaugural year's theme will focus on Holocaust survivor Arnošt Lustig.

The 2014 Let's Never Forget Series - ***The Night and Hope of Arnošt Lustig: A Holocaust Survivor's Story*** will be Thursday September 4 - Saturday September 6, 2014 at numerous locations in Placer County. Multiple events will be held to engage and inspire including - an Opening Meet & Greet reception at the Doug VanHowd Studio, Film Screenings, Literary Events and a Dinner Gala at The Ridge in Auburn. Additionally the LNF Series educational curriculum will be available to any interested school and is being kicked-off during the week at Placer High School and EV Cain Middle School in Auburn. The three-day event culminates with an intimate conversation with esteemed international dignitaries and experts at William Jessup University in Rocklin.

Arnošt Lustig, the Pulitzer Prize nominated Czech Jewish author, drew upon his harrowing experiences as a teenager in World War II to produce novels and short stories of young people who survived the Holocaust. It has been said by many that the questions Lustig explores were not just born of his experiences during the Holocaust, but are as old and universal as mankind's search for the meaning of existence. His stories evolved into award winning novels, short stories, radio plays and films. He also taught creative writing, literature and film history at The American University in Washington DC. Born in 1926, Lustig and his wife Vera had one son and one daughter. He died in Prague in 2011.

Working closely with PlacerArts *Let's Never Forget* Committee is Lustig's daughter, Eva Lustigová. Together with her brother Josef, they carry on his legacy through their own artistic creations and teachings, showcasing their father's life experience and resilience, as well as charismatic personality and love of the art of storytelling.

Watch for more exciting announcements on panelists, film titles and other community educational components in the coming weeks - visit us on Facebook *Let's Never Forget Series*. Sponsorships and Tickets are now available by contacting PlacerArts: [office@PlacerArts.org](mailto:office@PlacerArts.org) or 530.885.5670.

---

#### **ABOUT THE SERIES**

*Presented by PlacerArts the Let's Never Forget series will cover a changing theme each year based on culturally significant events in history. Each theme will have made a national or global impact and also had strong ties to the Placer County region. Multiple public intellectual and artistic events will engage the audience in contemporary dialog and discussion in the hopes to leave a lasting impression for the community to continue on their own exploration of the topic ... and Never Forget. The PlacerArts all-volunteer Let's Never Forget Series Steering Committee is chaired by Councilmember Dr. Bill Kirby and includes Harvey Roper, Chief John Ruffcorn, Elizabeth Sands, and Angela Tahti.*

let's  
never  
forget

# Series Events

## Welcome Reception

\$50 per person

Thursday September 4, 2014

Van Howd Studios Auburn, CA

Douglas Van Howd, former White House artist and world-renowned sculptor, is pleased to open his studios to honored guests and partners. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres as you mingle and view spectacular wild-life and western artistic creations in the 3000 sq. ft. gallery. View the US Premiere of the short film *The Little Rabbit* (1963) based on Lustig's story *The White Rabbit*. Kosher food options available.

## Let's Never Forget: Gala 2014

\$100 per person

Friday September 5, 2014

The Ridge Golf Club and Event Center Auburn, CA

Enjoy music by local musicians and a marvelous dinner prepared by The Ridge during this memorable evening with honored guests and esteemed international dignitaries. View the internationally acclaimed short film *A Bite to eat* (1960) based on the autobiographical short story *The Second Round*. View artwork and meet his daughter Eva Lustigová. Kosher food option available.

## Film Screenings and Readings

FREE to all

Saturday Afternoon September 6, 2014

Numerous locations Auburn, CA

Films and readings that focus on the Let's Never Forget theme will be screened throughout the afternoon, followed by a discussion with the audience moderated by a series volunteer. Please see locations and times on our "Tickets" page [www.placerarts.org](http://www.placerarts.org)

*Colette* – 125 minutes

*Diamonds of the Night* – 64 minutes

*Prayer for Katerina Horovitzova* – 67 minutes

## Film and Panel Presentation

FREE to all / \$25 preferred seating

"Reflections and Insights - An Intimate Conversation on  
The Night and Hope of Arnošt Lustig"

Saturday Evening September 6, 2014

William Jessup University Rocklin, CA

This film screening and panelist presentation will begin with a video introduction by Madeline Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State followed by the film screening of *The Presence of Arnošt Lustig*. After a short discussion with Eva Lustigová, the film's director, an international group of panelists then will bring another perspective on "what it took to survive" and how it applies to the current day.

### Panelists include:

IRENE WEISS - Holocaust Survivor & US Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer

ALEX ZUCKER - Editor and American Literary Translator

DESSON THOMSON - Obama Administration Speechwriter & Former Movie Critic *The Washington Post*

## Educational Curriculum

### ON GOING

Any Interested Schools

Let's Never Forget Series curriculum that compliments the week's theme and is geared toward students in grade 4 - 12. Interested schools may contact PlacerArts for more information.



let's  
never  
forget

# Arnošt Lustig

Arnošt Lustig (1926-2011) is considered to be among the most influential authors of the twentieth century. Recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Academy of Arts and Science, the Franz Kafka Prize, numerous American Jewish National Awards, and an Emmy Award for PBS News and Documentary Outstanding Individual Achievement as well as numerous international awards for films based on his screenplays, such as for the Czechoslovak television film *A Prayer for Katerina Horovitzova* at the International Film Festival in Cannes and Monte Carlo. Nominee for the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, Man Booker Prize for lifetime contribution to literature and several I short listings for the Nobel Prize for Literature. Lustig is author of over twenty major works of fiction translated into twenty-eight languages and was a screenplay writer, journalist, essayist and professor Emeritus of Literature.

Lustig was born in Prague on December 21, 1926. As a Jewish boy in Czechoslovakia during World War II, he was sent in 1942 to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, from where he was later transported to the Auschwitz concentration camp, followed by time in the Buchenwald concentration camp. In 1945, he escaped from a train carrying him to the Dachau concentration camp when the engine was destroyed by an American fighter-bomber. He returned to Prague in time to take part in the May 1945 anti-Nazi uprising.

After the war, he studied journalism at Charles University in Prague and then worked for a number of years at Radio Prague. He worked as a journalist in Israel at the time of its War of Independence where he met his future wife, who at the time was a volunteer with the Haganah. He was one of the major critics of the Communist regime in June 1967 at the 4th Writers Conference, and gave up his membership in the Communist Party after the 1967 Middle East war, to protest his government's breaking of relations with Israel. However, following the Soviet-led invasion that ended the Prague Spring in 1968, he left the country, first to Israel, then Yugoslavia, and later in 1970 to the United States.

He spent the academic year 1970-1971 as a scholar in the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. After the fall of eastern European communism in 1989, he divided his time between Prague and Washington, D.C., where he continued to teach at The American University. After his retirement from The American University in 2003, he became a full-time resident of Prague. He was given an apartment in the Prague Castle by then President Václav Havel and honored for his contributions to Czech culture on his 80th birthday in 2006. In 2008, Lustig became the eighth recipient of the Franz Kafka Prize, and the third recipient of the Karel Čapek Prize in 1996.

His most renowned books are *A Prayer For Katerina Horovitzova* (published and nominated for a National Book Award in 1974), *Dita Saxová* (1962, trans. 1979 as *Dita Saxova*), *Night and Hope* (1957, trans. 1985), and *Lovely Green Eyes* (2000, trans. 2001 and nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 2003). Many of Lustig's short stories and novels have been filmed in Czechoslovakia into award-winning films based on his screenplays, such as *Second Round* (film *A Bite to Eat*), *Darkness Casts No Shadow* (film *Diamonds of the Night*), his acclaimed first collection of short stories "Night and Hope" (film *Transport from Paradise*), *A Prayer for Katerina Horovitzova*, and *Dita Saxová*. His short stories have also been adapted into Czechoslovak television films (*White Rabbit*, *Blue Day*). In 2013, his best-selling novel *Colette: A Girl from Antwerp (1992, currently being translated by Alex Zucker into English)* was made into a feature film in the Czech Republic.

Lustig was married to Věra Weislitová (1927), also imprisoned in Theresienstadt. Unlike her father, she and her sister were not deported to Auschwitz. Věra published a collection of poems entitled "Daughter of Olga and Leo" about her experience in World War II. Arnošt and Věra had two children, Josef (1951) and Eva (1956).

let's  
never  
forget

# Selected Readings and Film Screenings

## **SELECTED READINGS SAT SEPT 6 · 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Locations TBD**

Enjoy selections from various Arnošt Lustig's short stories and of poems in *The Daughter of Olga and Leo* (1994) by his wife Věra Weislitzová

**FEATURE FILMS TO BE SHOWN SAT SEPT 6 · 9 a.m., 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.** At the end of each film screening there will be a few moments of discussion with the audience moderated by one of our honored guests or panelists.

## **Colette Placer High School Theater**

2013 Feature, 125 minutes, Film Altyazi, Czechoslovakia

Based upon Arnošt Lustig's novel, *A Girl from Antwerp*, **Colette**, draws on the author's personal Nazi Concentration Camp experience and his own recollection of several escape attempts from the hell of Auschwitz. The story of The Pulitzer Prize nominee Lustig, is about the power of love under an extreme life circumstance. It is the story of young lovers and their vigorous determination to escape from a hopeless life condition and their courage to face death.

## **Diamonds of the Night Auburn City Hall Room 10**

1964 Feature, 64 minutes, Film Studio Barrandov, Czechoslovakia

A critically acclaimed, singular masterpiece of the Czech New Wave directed by Jan Němec. Based on a story by Arnošt Lustig and screenplay.

The film takes us to World war II. Its main characters are two exhausted, impoverished boys who succeed to escape from a transit train to a concentration camp. The vision of freedom is intoxicating though the torment does not end with their escape.

## **A Prayer for Katerina Horovitzova Auburn City Hall Chambers**

1965 Feature, 67 minutes, Film Praha, Czechoslovakia

This film was adapted from the novel by Arnošt Lustig, which he wrote in only 2 days. A group of wealthy American Jewish businessmen have been captured by the Nazi SS and are told that they are to be traded to the American army for several SS officers. However, these hostages are being required to pay bribes for the transportation costs in order to ensure that the businessmen will be more cooperative in paying up, a beautiful female singer is placed in their midst as a bargaining chip. The group of hostages are then placed on a train which is supposed to take them to the ship that will deliver them to freedom, but a series of "mishaps" delays their escape.

## **The Little Rabbit (to be shown at the Sept 4 Reception @ Van Howd Studios)**

1963 Short Film, 12 minutes, Director Dušan Klein, Czechoslovakia

The US premiere of this short film based on Lustig's story *The White Rabbit*, marking with poignancy and sensitivity a moment of life in the Theresienstadt Ghetto through children's eyes.

## **A Bite to Eat (to be shown at the Sept 5 Gala @ The Ridge )**

1960 Short Film, 10 minutes, Director Jan Nemeč, Czechoslovakia

This internationally acclaimed short film is based on the autobiographical short story *The Second Round*. Virtually silent, it depicts a man's desperate attempt to steal a loaf of bread from a train guarded by Nazi soldiers.

# Panelists

## Introduction

**MADÉLINE ALBRIGHT – Former U.S. Secretary of State (video-taped in Washington D.C.)**

Madeleine Jana Korbel Albright (born Marie Jana Korbel on May 15, 1937) is a Czech-born American politician and diplomat. She is the first woman to have become the United States Secretary of State. She was nominated by U.S. President Bill Clinton on December 5, 1996, and was unanimously confirmed by a U.S. Senate vote of 99–0. She was sworn in on January 23, 1997. Secretary Albright currently serves as a professor of International Relations at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service. She holds a PhD from Columbia University and numerous honorary degrees. In May 2012, she was awarded the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama. Currently, she serves as a chair of the National Democratic Institute. Secretary Albright is fluent in English, French, Russian, and Czech; she speaks and reads Polish and Serbo-Croatian as well.

## Host

**JONATHAN BRENT – CEO YIVO Institute for Jewish Research**

Jonathan Brent is a historian, publisher, translator, writer and teacher. In 2009, Brent became Executive Director and CEO of The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Brent lectures widely on Jewish, Soviet and East European history. He has made three documentaries about his work: *Stalin's Last Plot* (2009); *Stalin: Man of Steel* (2003); and *Declassified: Stalin* (2006). His books have been translated into French, Swedish, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Polish.

For eighteen years (1991-2009) he was editorial director at Yale University Press where he established the Annals of Communism series. His books include *Stalin's Last Crime* (2003); and *Inside the Stalin Archives* (2008). Brent has translated poems of Joseph Brodsky and teaches history and literature at Bard College. He is currently writing a biography of the Russian writer, Isaac Babel, and finishing a novel.

## Moderator

**LESLEY WEISS – Chair of U.S. Heritage Commission**

Lesley L. Weiss studied under Arnošt Lustig at the American University in the 1970s. She is the daughter of Irene Weiss, a Holocaust survivor and currently works for the Deputy Director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and received a Presidential appointment as Chair of the White House Committee on the Preservation of American Heritage Abroad. In May 2014, Ms. Weiss received the National Jewish Heritage Appreciation Award at the U.S. Capitol. As Deputy Director, Ms. Weiss travels frequently to the former Soviet Union, where she coordinates democracy initiatives, community education and outreach efforts, and promotes partnerships between American Jewish communities and communities in the region.

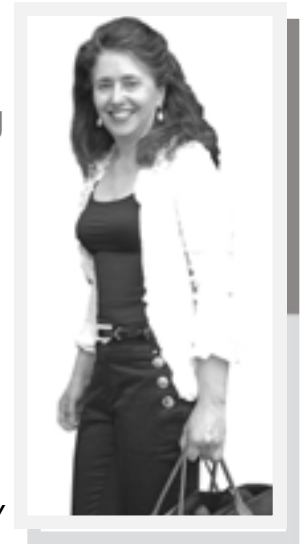
With extensive experience in program development and fundraising, community relations, legislative outreach, hate crimes training, combating anti-Semitism, and Holocaust education; Ms. Weiss has worked closely with the governments of the former Soviet Union and the Jewish communities in the region on the restitution and preservation of Jewish communal property.

Ms. Weiss is a graduate of the Baltimore Institute for Jewish Communal Service (now the Darrell D. Friedman Institute). She received a Bachelor of Arts in Jewish Studies from American University, a Master's Degree in social work from the University of Maryland School of Social Work and a Master's Degree in modern Jewish history from the Baltimore Hebrew University.

## Film Director

### **EVA LUSTIGOVÀ – Director, Author and Daughter of Arnošt Lustig**

Eva Lustigová lived in Czechoslovakia with her father Arnošt Lustig, mother Vera and brother Josef until the Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. She grew up on three continents. For more than twenty years, she has been working in Switzerland in the field of international health and management. She holds an M.A. in International Business Management from George Washington University and a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology from The American University. In her free time, she returns to her roots through cultural projects such as the documentary film *The Presence of Arnošt Lustig*, which was also published as a book (Mladá fronta, 2012). In 2011, she published *Short Stories, An anthology of texts by father and daughter* (Mlada fronta). She is preparing a collection of poems written by her mother and her.



## Panelists

### **IRENE WEISS – Holocaust Survivor & U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer**

Irene Fogel Weiss is a survivor of Auschwitz concentration camp and an Arnošt Lustig family friend. A recent interview with Mrs. Weiss on *CBS Sunday Morning* has been nominated for a 2014 Emmy Award. Mrs. Weiss was born November 21, 1930, in Bótrágy, Czechoslovakia (now Batrad, Ukraine) to Meyer and Leah Fogel. In April 1944 Hungarian authorities rounded up tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews, including a then 13-year-old Irene Fogel, her parents and five siblings. All the children were required to shave their heads and she was given a scarf to wear by her mother, which made her look older and may have saved her life in a later selection at Auschwitz – where they were sent to in May.

Upon arrival at the camp, strong prisoners were selected and given jobs; the weak were not as lucky. Of the Fogel family only Irene, her sister Serena and her father made the selection. Her mother, three younger siblings, and older brother were killed. The girls were used as forced labor and after a short time learned that their father had been killed when no longer able to perform his tasks. In January 1945, the Nazi SS forcibly evacuated the sisters and their two maternal aunts on foot from Auschwitz to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in central Germany. Three weeks later, the SS transported them to Neustadt-Glewe camp. One day during morning roll call, the SS separated Serena and other prisoners from the group, deeming them too weak and emaciated to work. Irene said to a camp guard, “She is my sister,” and was then allowed to go with Serena. The sisters heard from other inmates that they would be sent back to Ravensbrück, where there were gas chambers. They were locked in a room with other prisoners to await the transport truck, but it never arrived.

As Soviet troops approached, the SS personnel fled, leaving the camp unguarded, and the prisoners gradually left. Irene, Serena, and their one remaining aunt found temporary shelter in an empty house in a nearby town. Soon after, the three women made their way to Prague to look for relatives or other survivors.

Mrs. Weiss immigrated to New York in 1947 and married Martin Weiss in 1949. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from American University and taught in the Fairfax County Public School system in Virginia for 13 years. She has three children and four grandchildren



## Panelists (cont.)

### **ALEX ZUCKER – Editor and American Literary Translator**

During his years in Prague, Alex Zucker worked as editor-translator for the English language section of the Czech News Agency and for the English-language newspaper *Prognosis*. He has also been the copyeditor for *Swing*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Interview* (magazine) as well as for Aperture publishing house and *Bookforum*.

Mr. Zucker taught Czech at the NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies. In 2010, Zucker won the National Translation Award for his translation of Petra Hůlová's debut novel of 2002, *All This Belongs to Me*. And in 2011, he received a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts to support his translation of the 1931 Czech novel *Marketa Lazarová* by Vladislav Vančura. He is currently translating Arnots Lustig's novel *Colette*; in 2013 this novel was adapted into a feature film. He is also active with Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation.

Mr. Zucker was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey and received a master's in international affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, with a certificate from the Institute on East Central Europe. He currently lives in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

### **DESSON THOMSON – Obama Administration Speechwriter and Former Movie Critic for *The Washington Post***

Desson Thomson, who grew up in Surrey, England; currently works in for the U.S. State Department as Speechwriter and Senior Advisor for Content Development for the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. He studied literature and film under Arnošt Lustig at The American University, and was an acclaimed movie critic for the Washington Post for 20 years. Mr. Thomson has been a speech writer for Former U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and the White House. He currently lives in Washington D.C.





Photos © Jaroslav Brabec

***“There are more mice than mouse traps. That is my philosophy.”***  
***~Arnošt Lustig, The Presence of Arnošt Lustig***

**MEDIA FILES, PHOTOS AND ADDITIONAL QUOTES AVAILABLE BY CONTACTING PLACER ARTS**



# The Night and Hope of Arnošt Lustig: A Holocaust Survivor's Story



Thursday, Sept 4 – Saturday, Sept 6 | 2014 | Various Placer County Locations

**JOIN US** as we present the inaugural year of **Let's Never Forget**. For 2014 this inspirational and educational series focuses on author and Holocaust survivor, Arnošt Lustig.

Multiple events will be held to engage and inspire including, an Opening Meet & Greet Reception at Van Howd Studio on Sept 4, Film Screenings, Literary Events and a Gala Dinner at The Ridge in Auburn on Sept 5. The three-day event culminates with a Panel Presentation of esteemed international dignitaries and experts at William Jessup University in Rocklin on Sept 6.

### TABLE SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:

- \$10,000 • TITLE SPONSOR** • 16 tickets to: Meet & Greet Reception at Van Howd Studio, Gala Dinner at The Ridge, Premier seating at William Jessup University, and recognition at all events and in media communications
- \$5,000 • CORPORATE SPONSOR** • 8 tickets to: Meet & Greet Reception at Van Howd Studio, Gala Dinner at The Ridge, Premier seating at William Jessup University, and recognition at all events
- \$1,000 • CHARTER SPONSOR** • 2 tickets to: Meet & Greet Reception at Van Howd Studio, Gala Dinner at The Ridge, Premier seating at William Jessup University, and recognition at all events
- \$50 • SERIES FRIEND** • Friends of the Series receive special seating for two at William Jessup University, a free event

- TICKETS:**
- \$50** • Meet & Greet at Van Howd Studio / Thursday, Sept 4 (Limited Availability)
  - \$100** • Gala Dinner at The Ridge / Friday, Sept 5 (Limited Availability)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY WEBSITE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

***"Whoever steps on a caterpillar, kills a butterfly." — Arnošt Lustig***

Remit by MAIL, FAX or ONLINE SUBMISSION via [PlacerArts.org](http://PlacerArts.org):

CHECK ENCLOSED     CHARGE MY CARD for \$ \_\_\_\_\_     VISA     MC     Discover

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

CARD BILLING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**ABOUT Arnošt Lustig** • It has been said by many that the questions Arnošt Lustig explores were not just born of his experiences during the Holocaust, but are as old and universal as mankind's search for the meaning of existence. The Pulitzer Prize nominated Czech Jewish author, drew upon his harrowing experiences as a teenager in World War II to produce novels and short stories of young people who survived the Holocaust. Born in 1926, Lustig and his wife Vera had one son and one daughter. He died in Prague in 2011.

**ABOUT THE SERIES** • Presented by PlacerArts, the **Let's Never Forget** series will cover a changing theme each year based on culturally significant events in history. Each theme will be of a national or global impact and with strong ties to the Placer County region. Multiple intellectual and artistic events will enable public engagement and contemporary dialog and discussion.

**PlacerArts.org** 808 Lincoln Way | Auburn, CA 95603

phone: 530.885.5670 | fax: 530.885.0348 | [office@placerarts.org](mailto:office@placerarts.org)



PlacerArts is a 501(c)3 organization. Event Sponsorships are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!