

Notes:



Image by Ilona Kohlová

The **6-Minute** Challenge, #20

April 30, 2026
Bohemian National Hall
Manhattan

The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU), New York Chapter, is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization promoting Czech and Slovak intellectual history and heritage through cultural events with the support of the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association (BBLA).

Produced and moderated by Suzanna Halsey

PRESENTERS *(in order of appearance)*

Dušan **Prištic**

Roman **Heczko**

Lenka **Wooten**

Viktor **Kryštůfek**

Dino **Dvořák**

Věra **Dvořák**

Branislav "Braňo" **Briňarský**

Antonín **Fajt**

Q&A

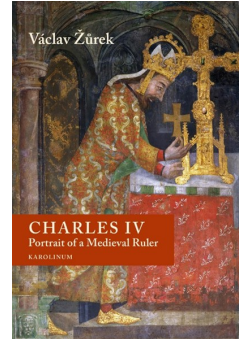
Wine reception

Please hold your questions until the Q&A, after the last presentation.

The event will be recorded and later posted on our YouTube Channel.

The SVU 6-MINUTE CHALLENGE is a series conceived in 2015 by Suzanna Halsey for SVU New York. Artists, professionals, scholars, students and scientists of Czech and Slovak descent are challenged to present their talent, the subject of their work, project, research or studies in a short presentation limited to six minutes.

Upcoming



Wednesday, May 6 at 7 pm

Charles IV: Portrait of a Medieval Ruler
An author book presentation by Václav Žůrek, PhD
Centre for Medieval Studies at the Institute of Philosophy
of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague



Wednesday, May 20 at 6:30 pm

Anti-Nazi Theatre on Radio Waves:
Unique Broadcasts by Voskovec and Werich during WWII
A presentation by Filip Šír
National Museum, Prague

Organized by the Czech Consulate in New York

Special thanks to

Věra Dvořák, Kim Halsey, and Jiří Mírovský



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newyork@svu2000.org

We welcome your comments, suggestions, skills, and/or donations.

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YouTube





Branislav "Braňo" Briňarský began his musical studies at the age of six in his home town of Sečovce in Zemplín County in Eastern Slovakia. While at the University in Košice, he performed with the *Jahodná Folk Ensemble* playing bass, traditional wind instruments *gajdice*, *dvojačka*, *fujara*, and singing. After receiving his master's degree at Košice University, he moved to the United States in 1998, where he immediately founded the Slovak folk band *Pajtáši*, which he currently manages. *Pajtáši* has performed throughout the East Coast at numerous Slovak and Czech cultural events, and also provides music for the Slovak

folk dance groups *Limborá* and *Limboráčik* in New York City. For many years, Braňo has also collaborated with other East European bands (Hungarian, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Klezmer) in the tri-state area and with *Harmonia* band in Cleveland. In addition to his folk music endeavors, he performs with the Bensen-Scott Big Band and participates in other musical projects in New York.

Interests and Hobbies: hiking, travelling, movies, skiing

Contact: Facebook: LH Pajtáši z NYC



Antonín Fajt is a Czech-American composer, pianist, and electronic producer. Born in Brno, Czech Republic, he moved to the U.S. at age fifteen. Drawing on his Moravian and other heritage, his work explores rhythmic and melodic nuances in folk songs, interpreting and translating them into an improvisational language informed by classical composition, South-East Asian rhythmic concepts, Persian Radif, and jazz. He currently teaches music at Bard High School in Brooklyn, collaborates with Iranian musicians Niloufar Shiri and Bahar Badietabar, and is working to build a non-profit for Czech and intercultural projects based in New York City. For this event, Antonín will perform his latest piano compositions.

Interests and hobbies: reading Homer and drinking coffee, discovering interesting places in nature, discussing the world before 1970, films, and trying to outrun my friend's dog in the park

Contact: www.antoninfajt.com



Dušan A. Prištic, a native of a spa town Piešťany in Slovakia, worked at Jaslovské Bohunice Nuclear Power Plant as an engineer. After emigrating from communist Czechoslovakia to Austria, he worked in an architecture studio designing subway stations in Vienna. He then moved to New York City, studied at NYU and later worked for the engineering company WSP as senior engineer on world-famous buildings, including the Petronas Towers twin skyscrapers in Kuala Lumpur, the Arthur Ashe Tennis Stadium, the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, the narrowest 43-floor high-rise building at 785 Eighth Avenue, and the highest residential building in the world at 432 Park Avenue. He

also designed Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall. In 2015, he was a guest of Pavol Demeš on the Slovak TASR TV program *Svet Tu a Teraz*. He also volunteers as Director and Chairman of the Building House Committee at the Bohemian Hall and Beer Garden in Astoria, Queens. More than skyscrapers, he loves only his wife.

Interests and hobbies: tennis, skiing, photography

Contact: duanpr@gmail.com



Roman Heczko, born in Třinec, Czechoslovakia, moved to the United States at age twelve and was raised in Kansas. He later earned a BA in Architecture from Kansas State University. Today, he is the principal of Mor He Art Tectonics, based in Brooklyn. Heczko's work blends mid-century architecture, art, and philosophy. His furniture designs are rooted in sacred geometry, emphasizing spatial hierarchy, comfort, beauty, and a sense of visual well-being aligned with present-moment awareness. Tonight, Roman will unveil his new designs, collaborations, along with innovative high-end building techniques.

Interests and hobbies: art, spirituality, travelling the world, sailing, and climbing

Contact: IG [@romanheczko](https://www.instagram.com/romanheczko)



Lenka Wooten is a contemporary Czech author, best known for her Young Adult (YA) novels and contemporary romance. She writes under the pseudonym Lena Valenová. Her stories explore identity, relationships, and the complicated beauty of growing up. Born in Tábor in South Bohemia, she later studied Economics and Management in Prague and Hotel Management at the University of Seville, Spain. After her studies, she moved to London, where she wrote the first book of her YA series *Moře nálezů a ztrát* (*The Sea of Salty Memories*). While working on the second book, she relocated to New York, a city that continues to influence her creative work. Since then, she has published twelve YA books in her native language. In spring 2023, a film adaptation of one of her novels premiered in cinemas before streaming on Netflix and Amazon Prime (US). Lenka has been a guest author at major Czech book fairs, including Svět knihy and HumbookFest in Prague.

Interests and hobbies: traveling, reading, dance, photography

Contact: www.lenavalenova.cz, IG @lenavalenova

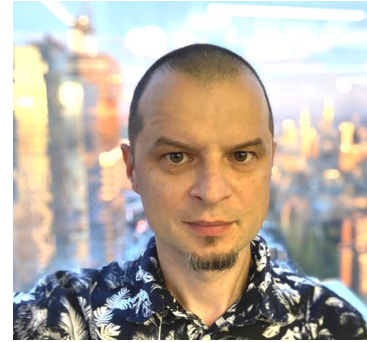


Viktor Kryštůfek, DACM, Dipl. OM, LAc, born in a small Moravian town of Moravská Třebová, is a holistic clinician, educator, and global health advocate based in New York City. He is the founder and clinical director of a Fifth Avenue acupuncture and integrative medicine clinic, specializing in pain management, longevity, and evidence-informed mind-body medicine. With over a decade of clinical and leadership experience, he served as President of the Acupuncture Society of New York, supporting professional development and legislative advocacy. Dr. Kryštůfek collaborates internationally with organizations such as the United Nations, Google, and Sotheby's, and presents at global

medical conferences and health expos. He teaches acupuncture to healthcare professionals worldwide, focusing on clinical application, interdisciplinary communication, and integration of Eastern and Western medicine. His clinical expertise includes neuro-acupuncture for neuromuscular rehabilitation and pain modulation, alongside philanthropic initiatives benefiting underserved populations globally.

Interests and hobbies: travel, hiking, yoga, meditation

Contact: www.acudoctor.nyc, IG/FB @acudoctornyc



Dino Dvořák, PhD, grew up in Rychnov nad Kněžnou under the Eagle Mountains (“Orlické hory”) in Eastern Bohemia. He earned his MSc in Biomedical Engineering from the Czech Technical University in Prague and his PhD through a joint program between SUNY Downstate and the NYU Tandon School of Engineering in Brooklyn, NY. During his postdoctoral work at NYU’s Center for Neural Science, he studied neurocomputational mechanisms underlying autism-associated cognitive inflexibility. In industry, Dino worked at Bio-Signal Group, developing hardware and software for assessing brain activity and behavior in animals and humans, and now serves as Senior Director of Translational Biomarkers at Gilgamesh Pharma. Gilgamesh develops psychedelic medicines for brain disorders, such as depression, schizophrenia, and addiction. Outside of work, he is interested in the origins of biological intelligence, the future of machine intelligence, the human condition, and transgressive subcultures.

Interests and hobbies: mountain biking, gravel biking, skiing, techno, death metal, and gardening

Contact: www.linkedin.com/in/dinodvorak, www.gilgameshpharmaceutical.com



Věra Dvořák, PhD, native of Moravské Budějovice, is the Senior Manager of Machine Learning Operations at Yext, a tech company headquartered in Chelsea, NYC. A formal linguist by training with an academic background in generative grammar, she has published research on topics at the syntax-semantics interface. After entering the industry, Věra has led numerous annotation projects in Natural Language Processing, the specialized branch of AI that bridges the gap between human communication and computer understanding. Her work centers on scaling machine learning pipelines through rigorous data labeling management and responsible AI oversight. Most recently, she has shifted to the

evaluation of Large Language Models to develop and optimize tools for digital marketing, brand visibility, and answer engine optimization. A woman of many hats, she is also an active board member of SVU New York and a founder of Czech School New York, which offers online courses for kids whose heritage language is Czech.

Interests and hobbies: afternoon tea, dark chocolate, lilac perfumes, old post-cards, Moravian folklore, jazz, organizing (of any kind)

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www.czechschoolnewyork.com