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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MORE PEAS PLEASE! Festival Inspires with Science**

September 14 – November 2, 2017 | [www.mutualinspirations.org](http://www.mutualinspirations.org)



The Embassy of the Czech Republic announces the *Mutual Inspirations Festival 2017 –Gregor Mendel*, celebrating the father of modern-day genetics, from September 14–November 2, 2017, with over 20 events at prestigious venues in the Washington, DC, community.

The *Mutual Inspirations Festival (MIF)* is an annual initiative organized by the Embassy of the Czech Republic, concentrating on the mutual influence between Czech and American cultures and the feats of personalities who have led the way. In its previous seven years, the festival has highlighted such personalities as President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (2010), composer Antonín Dvořák (2011), filmmaker Miloš Forman (2012), President Václav Havel (2013), writer Franz Kafka (2014), author Karel Čapek (2015), and tennis legend Martina Navrátilová (2016).

For its eighth year, the *Mutual Inspirations Festival* honors founder of genetics Gregor Mendel (1822–84), marking the 195<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. This humble genius was born and conducted his groundbreaking research on the same land he sowed and loved, today's Czech Republic. While experimenting with pea plants, he wrote his rules of heredity, referred to as Mendelian inheritance and considered worldwide as seminal work for the foundation of the new science – genetics. Beyond his pioneering conclusions, Mendel is revered for his protracted years of meticulous and painstaking experimentation. Mendel died with little recognition, but stated, “*I am convinced that it will not be long before the whole world acknowledges the results of my work.*” Today, he is lauded for his trailblazing work.

The festival pays tribute to Mendel's scientific achievements and the vibrancy of his homeland, bringing science and the arts alive through a variety of programming. Festival highlights include the symposium *Mendel's Peas and Today's Genes* at Georgetown University on the ethical issues and possibilities of modern genetics; lectures by Director of the Mendel Museum in Brno Ondřej Dostál, Villanova University Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics Edward Guinan, and renowned geneticist and holocaust survivor Renata Laxova; a garden concert in the U.S. Botanic Garden with U.S. Mandolin Champion Radim Zenkl; a performance of the Libor Šmoldas Organ Trio mixing jazz, blues, soul and funk at the Kennedy Center; the U.S. premiere of Lenka Lichtenberg's album *Masaryk* inspired by the folk music of Moravia; a “Great Experimenters” film series at the National Gallery of Art showcasing the early works of Czech filmmakers, and the exhibition opening of *Czech Scientists and Their Inventions* at the Czech Embassy.

This September–November, delve into the festival garden filled with a colorful bouquet of events to inspire.  
**MORE PEAS PLEASE!**

## FESTIVAL LAUNCH

- On September 14, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic launches the *Mutual Inspirations Festival* with lectures by Director of the Mendel Museum at Masaryk University Ondřej Dostál on *Mendel and the Laws of Inheritance* and Villanova University Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics Edward Guinan on *Beyond Peas and Genetics – Gregor Mendel's "Other Sciences: Bees, Sunspots, Meteorology and Tornadoes."* The opening of the exhibition *Gregor Johann Mendel – Science, Beliefs, Politics* will follow the Q&A. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://mendelscience.eventbrite.com>.

## SYMPOSIUM

- On September 28, at 10 am, the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University presents the symposium *Mendel's Peas and Today's Genes: Healthcare, Ethics, and Genetics* in the Fisher Colloquium at Georgetown, with opening remarks by Czech Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček. The keynote address on Gregor Mendel and his legacy will be delivered by Ondřej Dostál, Director of the Mendel Museum in the Czech Republic, followed by an expert panel discussing topics such as inherited breast cancer by Lombardi Senior Genetics Counselor Beth Peskin, reproductive ethics by legal expert Susan Crockin, genomic medicine by Oncology Professor Kevin FitzGerald, and eugenics by Kennedy Institute of Ethics Professor Emeritus LeRoy Walters. Admission is free. RSVP required <https://geneticstoday.eventbrite.com>.

## GARDEN & STAGE CONCERTS

- On September 29, from 6:30-8:30 pm, the U.S. Botanic Garden will showcase U.S. Mandolin Playing Champion Radim Zenkl, in an evening of mandolin, mandola, ethnic flutes, didgeridoo, and vocal music in the Conservatory Garden Court. During the performance, Zenkl will play original music crossing the tracks of folk, bluegrass, jazz, new age, gypsy and classical music, combined with Czech and Eastern European traditional songs and instrumentals. Admission is free. Registration required: <https://www.usbg.gov/events/2017/08/21/special-event-mandolin-music-and-more>.
- On October 3, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will introduce Czech award-winning jazz guitarist Libor Šmoldas, performing songs from his album *Blue, Šmoldas Plays Ježek*. The evening will include the renowned hits *Tmavomodrý svět (Dark Blue World)*, *Klobouk ve křoví (Hat in the Bushes)*, among others. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://liborsmoldas.eventbrite.com>.
- On October 4, at 6 pm, the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage will feature the Libor Šmoldas Organ Trio, comprised of jazz guitarist Libor Smoldas, organist Gregory Hatza, and drummer Leland Nakamura in an evening of jazz, blues, soul and funk. The program will include original compositions mixed with jazz classics. Admission is free. Reservations are not required.
- On November 2, at 6 pm, Czech-Canadian folk artist Lenka Lichtenberg will premiere songs from her newest recording album *Masaryk* at the Czech Embassy. This award-winning artist melds traditional songs with her own contemporary compositions, combining folk, jazz and world into a unique celebration of her roots. She won the Traditional Singer of the Year at the 2012 Canadian Folk Music Awards. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://lenkalichtenberg.eventbrite.com>.

## LECTURES

- On September 14, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will feature Villanova University Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics Edward Guinan, who will give the lecture *Beyond Peas and Genetics – Gregor Mendel's "Other Sciences: Bees, Sunspots, Meteorology and Tornadoes."* Guinan is world-renowned for his research in stellar and solar astrophysics. In 1982, he and his colleague found evidence of rings around Neptune. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://mendelscience.eventbrite.com>.
- On September 18, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic, in collaboration with the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU), will host a lecture by Holocaust survivor and renowned Czech-American geneticist Renata Laxova, who will share her story of escape as a Winton Kindertransport on the eve of WWII and her return to her homeland and pursuing a career in genetics during Communism. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://renatalaxova.eventbrite.com>.
- On September 27, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic welcomes the Director of the Mendel Museum Ondřej Dostál for a talk giving insight into Mendel and his contributions to science, followed by the screening of *Mendel: The Legacy*, a recorded video-mapping multimedia extravaganza. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://mendellegacy.eventbrite.com>.

- On September 29, from 12-1 pm, the U.S. Botanic Garden will present Radim Zenkl's lecture on *Slavic Trees* in the Conservatory Classroom. In his lecture, Zenkl will discuss the varieties of Slavic trees, how to recognize them, and show samples of leaves from the highlighted trees. Admission is free. Registration required: <https://www.usbg.gov/events/2017/08/21/lecture-slavic-trees>.

## PRESENTATION

- On October 17, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will host a presentation on the South Moravian Region of the Czech Republic with South Moravian Region Vice-Governor Jan Vitula and Director of South Moravian Center of Innovation Petr Chládek. Gregor Mendel spent most of his life, studying and conducting his research in this fertile wine region. To this day, the area is dotted with romantic villages, majestic castles, and UNESCO Heritage sites; yet, it is also booming with progress and prominent universities and research institutes on the verge of the world's next great scientific discovery. The presentation includes an evening of music, discussion and Moravian wine tasting. RSVP required: <https://southmoravia.eventbrite.com>.

## EXHIBITIONS

- On September 14, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will open the exhibition *Gregor Johann Mendel – Science, Beliefs, Politics* with guest lectures by Director of the Mendel Museum at Masaryk University Ondřej Dostál on *Mendel and the Laws of Inheritance* and Villanova University Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics Edward Guinan on *Beyond Peas and Genetics – Gregor Mendel's "Other Sciences: Bees, Sunspots, Meteorology and Tornados."* Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://mendelscience.eventbrite.com>. The exhibition will be on view until October 5. For viewing hours, email [czech\\_events@yahoo.com](mailto:czech_events@yahoo.com).
- On October 10, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will open the exhibition *Czech Scientists and Their Inventions*, a series of caricatures depicting renowned Czech scientists and their discoveries. The exhibition is part of the Open Science Projects of the Czech Academy of Sciences to shed light on the pioneering steps these researchers took and recognize their achievements. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://czechscientists.eventbrite.com>. The exhibition will be on view until December 15. For viewing hours, email [czech\\_events@yahoo.com](mailto:czech_events@yahoo.com).
- On October 16, at 5:30 pm, the Delegation of the European Union will feature photographer Liba Taylor's exhibition *Grannies in Kroj*, which documents the lives of women from Moravia that still wear the traditional folk clothing called kroj as part of their everyday lives. Czech Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček and South Moravian Region Vice-Governor Jan Vitula will give opening remarks. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://granniesinkroj.eventbrite.com>.

## DOCUMENTARY / EXPERIMENTAL FILM

- On September 21, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will feature the documentary *Mendel – The Father of Genetics*, examining Mendel's twist of fate through his failures, which led him to succeed and discover an entirely new science, genetics, in his garden. (Dir. Otakáro Mario Schmidt, 2016, 52 min., in English) Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://mendelfather.eventbrite.com>.
- On September 27, at 6 pm, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will screen *Mendel: The Legacy*, a recorded video-mapping multimedia extravaganza, originally projected on the Augustinian Abbey where Mendel conducted his research. The video features animation by Emmy and BAFTA winning animator Drew Berry accompanied by a full-orchestral score by composer Duncan Hendy. (2015, 23 minutes, animated/experimental) Special guest Ondřej Dostál, Director of the Mendel Museum in Brno, will discuss the project and give insight into Mendel's contributions to science. Admission is free. RSVP required: <https://mendellegacy.eventbrite.com>.

## BEER & FILM

- On September 19, at 7 pm, Bistro Bohem will screen the musical *Rebels (Rebelové)*, a love story of two rebellious youth whose paths happen to cross. The looming tension in the film foreshadows the 1968 Soviet Invasion. (Dir. Filip Renč, 2001, 109 min., Czech with English subtitles) Admission is free. RSVP required: [bistrobohem@gmail.com](mailto:bistrobohem@gmail.com).
- On October 24, at 7 pm, Bistro Bohem will show the musical *Green Gold (Starci na chmelu)*, a romantic story that unfolds one summer while students are hop-picking. Their bond strengthens when they are expelled from school because of a jealous rival. (Dir. Ladislav Rychman, 1964, 88 min., Czech with English subtitles) Admission is free. RSVP required: [bistrobohem@gmail.com](mailto:bistrobohem@gmail.com).

## CONTEMPORARY FILM

- On October 11, at 8 pm, the Avalon Theatre will project the dark comedy *Schmitke*, about an engineer who travels to a town to repair a seemingly unrecoverable wind turbine. While there, he must contend with a mysterious growling in the forest and the villagers themselves. A Q&A with screenwriter Tomáš Končinský follows the screening. (Dir. Stepan Altrichter, 2014, 97 min., Czech with English subtitles) Tickets are available at the door or online at <http://www.theavalon.org/films/schmitke/>.

## GREAT EXPERIMENTERS IN FILM

- On October 21, at 1:30 pm, the National Gallery of Art will feature director Vladislav Vančura's experimental film *On the Sunny Side (Na sluneční straně)*, about two children thrown into boarding school and lacking the supervision of their parents, in the East Building Auditorium. The script, composed of leading Czech avant-garde writers of the period, including Surrealist novelist Vítězslav Nezval. (Dir. Vladislav Vančura, 1931, 72 min., Czech with English subtitles) Admission is free. Reservations are not required.
- On October 21, at 2:45 pm, the National Gallery of Art will screen director Carl Junghans' *Such is Life (Takový je život)*, a portrait of working-class Prague, in the East Building Auditorium. The psychological drama follows the tragic story of a woman overwhelmed by everyday life and her abusive alcoholic husband, utilizing the power of close-ups and montage to tell the story. (Dir. Carl Junghans, 1929, 63 min., silent with English intertitles) Admission is free. Reservations are not required.
- On October 22, at 4:30 pm, the National Gallery of Art will present director Gustav Machatý's *Ecstasy (Exstase)*, one of the most widely viewed films of all time, in the East Building Auditorium. In the film, Eva (Hedy Lamarr) abandons her marriage to find happiness in the arms of a handsome engineer (Aribert Mog). The film was highly controversial for its time for being the first to show nudity on the big screen. (Dir. Gustav Machatý, 1932, 83 min., Czech with English subtitles) Admission is free. Reservations are not required.
- On October 28, at 2:30 pm, the National Gallery of Art will show the melodrama *Tonka of the Gallows (Tonka Šibenice)* in the East Building Auditorium. In the film, a prostitute (played by famed actress Ita Rina) finds love in her small town, but returns to the brothel and agrees to accompany a condemned man on his last night. The film uses elements of expressionism such as double-exposures to reveal the heroine's descent. (Dir. Karl Anton, 1930, 81 min., Czech with English subtitles) Admission is free. Reservations are not required.
- On October 28, at 4:30 pm, the National Gallery of Art will highlight director Miloš Forman's feature debut *Black Petr (Černý Petr)*, introduced by Czech National Film Archive Director Michal Bregant in the East Building Auditorium. The film centers on a shy but sympathetic young store clerk who, assigned to apprehend shoplifters, lacks the nerve to confront anyone. The film was selected as the best picture of 1963 by Czech film critics. (Dir. Miloš Forman, 1963, 85 min., Czech with English subtitles) Admission is free. Reservations are not required.
- On October 29, at 4:30 pm, the National Gallery of Art will present director Gustav Machatý's early "talkie" *From Saturday to Sunday (Ze soboty na neděli)*, introduced by Czech National Film Archive Director Michal Bregant, in the East Building Auditorium. The screening is organized in cooperation with the Embassies of Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein. In the film, two secretaries go out for an evening on the town. One eludes the advances of a salacious man, stumbling into a bar where she encounters a man who just might capture her heart. This film was a masterpiece of the sound era. (Dir. Gustav Machatý, 1931, 85 min., Czech with English subtitles) Admission is free. Reservations are not required.