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### Březina's Toufar with Soňa Červená is guest starring in New York

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The chamber opera by Aleš Březina about the Roman Catholic priest Josef Toufar who 65 years ago was martyred by the State Security Service, is after guest performances in Nitra, Bratislava, Dresden, Litomyšl or Bucharest also coming to New York. The National Theatre will give two performances in the Bohemian National Hall on the 8th and 10th of May 2015.

The opera starring Soňa Červená, under the baton of Jiří Štrunc and directed by Petr Zelenka was created as part of an international project Parallel Lives, the 20th century through the eyes of the secret police, which was initiated by the Association of Theatrical Nitra. Since its premiere in September 2013 hundreds of people saw the opera in Prague at the Theatre Kolowrat and abroad.

The theme of the opera is political persecution and torture of priest Josef Toufar. Pretext for his arrest on 28 January 1950 was a rumour of a miracle, which has been reported by the parishioners of the Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary in Číhošť. According to their testimonies during Mass on 11 December 1949 and then again a fortnight later the cross behind the priest's back moved repeatedly. The Communist State Security immediately used this still unexplained phenomenon for their campaign against the Church, who represented one of their strongest opponents. Toufar was first accused of fraud, and later also of "homosexuality" and paedophilia (children were forced to false testimonies by Ludmila Brožova Polednová, known today mainly for the trial of Milada Horáková).

State Security filmed a staged document 'Woe betide the one, through whom comes nuisance'. Toufar was supposed to be a part of the filming process, however since he died during filming, he was replaced by another actor. On the other hand, the Catholic Church established a so called 'Wonders Commission' that tried to achieve his canonization. The documentary chamber opera Toufar is much like the author's successful debut Tomorrow There Will Be ..., based on historical printed, audio and video documents.

Part of the guest performance of Toufar in New York will be a screening of the film Tomorrow There Will Be ..., which was based on an opera of the same name by Aleš Březina with Soňa Červená in the lead role. A special guest of the screening will be Mrs. Jana Kánská, the daughter of the politician Milada Horáková executed by the communist regime.

The following Prague opera performances are scheduled for 18 and 19 November 2015 at the New Stage

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