

Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center

PRESS RELEASE

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CZECH BANDS TO BE HONORED AT TCHCC 2011 GALA IN NOVEMBER

La Grange—Lovers of Czech polka, waltz and country music remember the many Texas Czech bands that shared their talents and played their particular style of music to appreciative listening and dancing audiences. Dances on Saturday and Sunday nights, mostly the latter in farm communities in times past, were held in the wooden halls dotting the Texas countryside. These were gathering places for entire families. The dances still continue but primarily cater to an older audience now.

Although the popular bands of the past have been silenced by death and old age, the spirited music they created continues to live in the polkas and waltzes presented by a new generation of polka bands. The crowds enjoy the style and subject matter as much as ever even though few understand the lyrics expressed in the Czech language. But occasionally youngsters can be found joining the older crowds on the dance floors.

The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center's 2011 Gala to be held on Saturday evening, November 12, 2011, will honor four of the bands of the past that remain in the memories of the Czech and German descendants of immigrants to Texas.

This year the TCHCC will honor the Henry Brosch Orchestra, the Lee Roy Matocha Orchestra, Johnny Mensik and the Playboys and the Frank Migl Orchestra for their contributions to Texas Czechs.

A descendant from the families of Henry Brosch and Frank Migl recalls how the music that these two bands played influenced the avocation he has pursued. Eighty-eight year old Jimmy Brosch of Katy, Texas has kept their legacies alive throughout his long

career. Brosch says, “I feel so strongly about preserving their memory that I’ve devoted most of my time over the past two years to compiling and writing a history of twenty of the legendary bands. This is my tribute to those whom I knew so well.” The book is in the process of being printed.

Board member Bill Schovajsa, a local attorney of La Grange as well as the 2011 Gala Chairman, recently remarked that “The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center strives to preserve the traditions and artifacts of the early settlers to Texas. Sharing and telling our traditions to each new generation is important. Our upcoming gala is a very important milestone in the center’s 13 year history because it will kick off a three-year fundraising effort to endow the operation and maintenance of the center’s complex of buildings.”

The TCHCC now comprises a library, museum, gift shop and banquet hall building; the Texas Czech Music Museum building; TCHCC Sanford Schmidt Amphitheater and four other buildings depicting an early Texas Czech community.

The gala will be held at the old Fair Pavilion that is located adjacent to the TCHCC property and on the Fayette County Fairgrounds. The site is located a few hundred feet north of the Highway 71 bypass on the west side of Highway 77.

Newly installed Czech Ambassador to the United States, Petr Gandalovic, will be the featured speaker at the celebration.

For more information concerning the gala, or the center, contact the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center at 1-888-785-4500 or visit www.czechtexas.org.