

Thalia Hall

Foreign Language Press Survey

Political Matters Denní Hlasatel, Mar. 22, 1905

A big Democratic meeting will be held in Thalia Hall, at Eighteenth and Allport Streets. In addition to Judge Dunne, the following persons will speak: Clarence S. Darrow, George P. Foster, Fred W. Blocki, candidate for city treasurer, and William B. Moak, candidate for city attorney. The Bohemian speakers will be Messrs. Joseph Kostner and Stanislavhalik

Political Meetings Denní Hlasatel, Mar. 31, 1915

All Democratic meetings held in our Bohemian wards have been surprisingly successful. Every one of them enjoyed huge attendance and showed real enthusiasm for Robert M. Sweitzer [German] and the whole Democratic ticket. Two such meetings took place yesterday.....One was a ladies' matinee at the Thalia Theater, the other an evening meeting in the hall of Sokol Havlicek-Tyrs on Lawndale Avenue.

The latter meeting was called by the Thirty-fourth Ward Democratic Organization for the benefit of the city ticket with Mr. Sweitzer at its head, and Alderman Winfield J. Held who seeks re-election in this ward.....The meeting was presided over by Deputy Building Commissioner J. Kostner, and among the speakers were Messrs. John A. Cervenka, O. Fuerst, Karel Vesely, and Alderman Held.....

The Thalia Theater was filled to overflowing with our ladies, and the meeting was as fine as any we have seen. Our candidate for mayor, Mr. Sweitzer....was welcomed by thunderous applause.....

Triner Host to Bohemian Quartette Denní Hlasatel, Jan. 7, 1906

While on its world tour the Bohemian Quartette, making its last American appearance at Thalia Hall, is enjoying the hospitality of Mr. [Josef] Triner, the well-known manufacturer of bitter wine. Mr. Triner is a true friend of Bohemian art and artists. Recently he bought and paid a neat sum for several paintings by Farske. In this respect, there is hardly another wealthy Bohemian who can compare with Mr. Triner.

A Brilliant Young Artiste Denní Hlasatel, Mar. 12, 1917

The popular singer and actress, Miss Libuse (Libby) Zdenkova had her day of honor in the Thalia theatre last night. Large crowds came to testify to their esteem for the young artiste, and to show their appreciation of the many patriotic services rendered by her to our cause. The hall was filled to its capacity, and many had to be turned away.

There was a burlesque on the program, "Reservistka" (The Girl Reservist), in which the songs gave Miss Zdenkova ample opportunity to display her manifold artistic virtues in the role of a newlywed, who follows her husband into the reserve maneuvers, and to this end dons the uniform, all this because she has doubts about his faithfulness. For this part, Miss Zdenkova brought out not only her exquisite and well trained soprano, but also a suitable sample of her surplus of temperament. The role simply seemed cut out for her especially. The other players proved excellent partners. The burlesque will be repeated next Sunday.

Concert by Mrs. Anny Lhotko Denní Hlasatel, May 25, 1903

Saturday our music loving public had the rare opportunity to attend a concert given by Mrs. Anny Lhotko in Thalia hall. Alas, there were many who allowed the opportunity to slip by, consequently only a few attended. However the entire concert was grand. Every number was very interesting, but decidedly best were the numbers, in which we were able to hear Mrs. Lhotko in solo. She sings beautifully, her voice is strong and the fresh and colorful tones give it a special charm. Those who attended were reluctant to depart, for it may be some time before they have another opportunity to hear music so beautifully and sympathetically rendered.

[History of Bohemian Theaters] Denní Hlasatel, Apr. 7, 1918

Fire has destroyed the building in which the Česko-Anglická Škola (The Czech-English School) was located, and with it went one of the oldest historic monuments of Czech-Chicago, if not all Czech-America. It was our oldest house in which clubs and associations used to hold their meetings and entertainments. The hall of the Slovanská Lípa (Slavonic Linden Tree), on De Koven Street, is older, true enough, and a landmark from the times of earlier Czech settlers, but it has outgrown its usefulness and does not serve its original purpose any longer. This hall on De Koven Street dates from a time when it was thought that Czechs would remain on the west side of the Chicago River, along Canal Street. Nobody imagined that the Czechs would push farther and farther west until the old Sokol hall on De Koven Street would stand abandoned. Its companion, the hall of the Tělocvična Jednota Sokol (Gymnastic Union Sokol), on Taylor Street, preceded it, and it would be difficult today to find the spot where it once stood. This hall escaped the great Chicago Fire of 1871, it is true, but many years later it did not escape destruction by fire. The building of the Česko-Slovanská Podporující Společnost (Czecho-Slavonic Aid Society), in which the Czech-English Free Thought school was accommodated, was erected when the need for assembly rooms arose some years later.

The small Czech settlement on Canal Street contented itself with the use of a small hall on Van Buren Street for some time, but when the settlement grew, it began to feel the need for two halls.

Similar developments may be recorded for the Czech Pilsen district, whose colony was small, and which in those times seemed to be located as far from the original colony as Cicero is today. This small Pilsen colony was perfectly served by the old Čech's Hall, on 20th Street. There are today hundreds, nay, thousands of Czechs in the Pilsen district, none of whom knows that on 20th and Brown (now Sangamon) Streets once stood a two-story building with a hall where plays were given, where formal dances were arranged, and regular "artistic contests" were held by Sokol and other societies' amateur actors. The stage was so small that it looked overcrowded when a couple of amateurs started to walk about at the same time. Yet, even tragedies were played on that tiny stage. Selections requiring pomp and display were given without even the most primitive stage decorations; the very thought of it would make any stage manager's hair bristle with horror today. Still, everything went off smoothly, because there was nothing better on hand--our tastes were less pretentious and our demands more modest. If anyone desires to learn something about pioneering on the amateur stage, there it was in true form, and it existed under all sorts of circumstances, often of an adverse nature.

The Pilsen district grew, and if the old hall sufficed for theatrical performances, the demand for more places for meetings and social affairs became stronger, so that by the seventies, there already stood the first building of the Czech-English Free Thought school. It was built of wood, as were all dwellings in the Pilsen district, but it burned in the year of 1878. A new, much larger building, took its place one year later. It was erected by the Patronat (Trustees) and was thought to meet the demands of the community for quite a number of years. The second building was of brick, but contained only two schoolrooms and one hall in which meetings and entertainments were held.

In 1883, the flaming guest again visited the building, devouring it entirely. A new building rose a year later, this time with a large stage and comfortable rooms. It became the adornment of the Czech community, and it certainly gave a strong stimulus to the development of the district. It became the center of Czech Chicago's life, for in those times the "Czech California" district was not much more than a Czech village. Many important rallies, memorable meetings, brilliant social affairs, and concerts took place under its roof, and our Czech amateur theater went through a golden era. There were performances every Sunday by both professional actors and amateurs. The Narodni Druzstvo (National Troupe), the Kolar players, and the Thalia theater all competed vigorously for artistic laurels. There were not so many artists in those times as there are today, but they played with zest and enthusiasm, and if some people contend that there was more sociability in those times than now, they may not be far from the truth.

Club and society life was more virile in those times. Members showed more interest in their organizations and attended meetings more regularly, regarding their membership as something more than a mere life insurance policy. Briefly, our social life went through a period of fruition which should soon return, as it is particularly needed in these critical times.

The growth of the Pilsen district and the expansion of our social life made certain improvements on the building imperative, and the Patronat heeded these demands.

The general satisfaction with these new conditions made us forget that "fire never forgets". It has come again and has damaged the building, just at a time when the World War is exacting many sacrifices. This, however, cannot distract the Patronat's attention from its aim to construct a new building.

Benefit for Mr. Klapka Denní Hlasatel, Jan. 14, 1918

Ice-cold weather and blizzards certainly are not conducive to theatergoing. Again yesterday we had one of those days when one dislikes to leave the cozy corner near the fireside at home. This was the reason why not too many people had to be turned away from the box office of the Ludvikovo Divadlo (Ludvik's Theater) at Thalia Hall.

Mr. Klapka is the most popular actor appearing in comedies on our Chicago Czech stage. The evening was for his benefit and should have, as usual, been overcrowded.

Samberk's "Elektrická Ruka Pani Haty" (Mrs. Agatha's Electric Hand), known also by the name "Kulatý Svět" (The Round World), was selected by Mr. Klapka. This piece offers great opportunities for Mr. Klapka as the janitor "Motak," and also for Mrs. Ludvik (directress of the theatrical group), who played "Mrs. Hata". Mr. Klapka's humor and histrionic skill, as well as his adeptness at singing couplets, are known to our theater-loving public.

Last night's performance went off very smoothly. Some of the more important roles have changed hands. Mr. Horlivý was entrusted with the character of "Samec," Mr. Skalický played "Mrinka," Mrs. Splavec "Crescence". Other players were Mrs. Kozlanská, Mr. Novák, Miss Fric, Messrs. Stach, Dvůrak, Ludvik, Brejla, Kubový, and Lerch. The stage management was in the experienced hands of Mrs. Ludvik.

The spectators evidently enjoyed the evening very much. Professor Capek, who with his orchestra presented an artistic program, deserves part of the credit for the success of the evening.

Theatrical Plays - Denní Hlasatel, Dec. 17, 1917

Last night the Ludvik theatrical troupe played in the Thalia auditorium. "From Step to Step" which is a drama of everyday life [author not mentioned], was presented. Mrs. M. Skalická appeared again after several years of absence from our foremost Czech-American stage. She played the role of "Floret", a mirthful carefree girl. The main part, "Mary", was played by Mrs. Horlivý, who portrayed well the character of a poor girl suffering from the consequences of a venture into easy life.

Professor Capek directed the orchestra in its rendition of several interesting numbers, among which was a new composition by Sousa.

Ludvik's Theater Denní Hlasatel, Dec. 3, 1917

The Czech theatrical troupe called Ludvikovci [named after the veteran actor, Frantisek Ludvik, who was its first director] was favored with an extraordinarily large audience when it gave the drama "Vojnarka," by Jirasek, in the Thalia theater last night. Large audiences are rare among us nowadays because of the many obligations imposed by the War. However, the announcement that the proceeds of the performance will benefit Mrs. Otilie Splavec, a well-known and excellent artist, attracted throngs of admirers of her art.

"Vojnarka" is one of the best of Jirasek's works, and yet it is reduced to the grade of a Cinderella in the flood of plays of German origin on our scene. This fact alone gave yesterday's performance a festive glamour, which was augmented by a truly brilliant display of the histrionic abilities of the actors.

"Praha Je Praha" [Given by Ludvik Artists]Denní Hlasatel, Nov. 12, 1917

That delightful play "Praha Je Praha" (There Is Only One Prague) was given by the Ludvik theatrical group in the Thalia Hall last night. It is a well-known dramatic piece, and it is always welcome on our stages, particularly when it is so well played as by the Ludvikovci [popular name for the Ludvik theatrical group]. It sparkles with genuine humor; it describes the experiences and depicts the surprises of a young husband who was transferred from the bustling metropolis into a small country town. The audience evidently enjoyed it immensely. Mr. Stach was new in the role of "Mr. Plaminek" and presented a splendid performance.

Ludvik's Theater Denní Hlasatel, Nov. 5, 1917

The Ludvik theatrical group returned to the Thalia auditorium, where it gave Moliere's classic play, "The Miser," last night. A large audience welcomed it at this performance, which is its first this season. Mrs. Bohumila Ludvik, widow of the former director, was in charge of the stage management. The play is a novelty as far as the Chicago Czech stage is concerned, although it is a product of the seventeenth century. It is a play that requires detailed acting in order to please the audience as much as it does the reader.

The performance was evidently a success, judging from the frequent applause. This was good proof of the care that the performers took to depict this classic.

Harpagon, the title role, was played by Mr. J. Skalicky, who has again appeared after an absence of several years from our stage. He was greeted as a skillful actor who is again to be a valuable asset to the group. He presented a character into whose traits he had delved very thoroughly; it is really the only important role of the play, though other figures are also depicted in an interesting fashion. These other characters were cleverly represented by Mmes. Splavec, Ludvik, Horlivy, Novak, and Stetina, as well as by Messrs. Dvorak, Stach, Klapka, Horlivy, and Brejla. Professor Capek directed the orchestra. The audience had to pay the war tax for the first time, and did it with obvious pleasure.

Acclaim Czech Actress Denní Hlasatel, Apr. 23, 1917

Many of our people crowded the Thalia Theatre last night to acknowledge the art of our foremost dramatic actress Mrs. Otilia Splavec. The artist appeared in one of her great roles "Carmen," which is better known in opera than in drama; the latter is less effective than the opera, but it happens to serve as an excellent vehicle for Mrs. Splavec's unusual talent. The actress recently suffered a heavy blow through the death of her husband. She has recuperated, however, and was able to impart to the character all her artistic passion and power; stormy applause, and floral offerings were her reward. The cast of the Ludvik group played very well under the able stage management of Mrs. Ludvik. Professor Capek had prepared a musical overture and he also furnished other incidental music.

A Rare Anniversary Denní Hlasatel, May 11, 1914

Karel Splavec, one of the foremost Bohemian-American actors, celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of his activity on the stage yesterday evening--so many years of service to Thalia!

We say "Bohemian-American actor," although Mr. Splavec spent about one third of this period as an actor in Bohemia. Nevertheless, he grew up artistically in America with the Ludvikovo Divadlo (Ludvik's Theatrical Company) where he has risen to great artistic heights.

Mr. Splavec is well known to every lover of the Bohemian theater in Chicago. He is an actor of highest caliber, an artist who, in the years of his activity, created many a fine character on our stage, and whose artistry can be judged only by those who often visit the Ludvik Theater.

In that way only can we evaluate the development of his artistry and his versatility in the presentation of the many contrasting characters which he depicts so realistically: at one time a tragic type, and then just the opposite, a figure full to overflowing with so-called inborn comedy.

In each of these roles Mr. Splavec excels by his distinctive and carefully worked out characterization. The result is that a person who has seen him in one role fails to recognize him in another. And it is not exclusively the leading roles in which he excels: The presentation of certain inconsequential episodes also enables him to reveal his real artistry.

We could name a whole series of remarkable characterizations by which Mr. Splavec has endeared himself to the hearts of all true friends of the Bohemian theater, and has proved that he realizes with due seriousness the requirements of his difficult profession, and clings to it by choice.

His playing is never based on a superficial study of a role, but always on a deep, thorough study of the character to be portrayed. In his accomplished working-together of speech and action every figure portrayed by him really comes to life.

Yesterday Mr. Splavec again gave proof of his artistry by his portrayal of the farmer "Juan" in the classical comedy "Kral A Sedlak," (The King and the Farmer), by Lope De Vega, as translated by Jaroslav Vrchlicky.

Our audience had had the opportunity to see this comedy only once before, and that was many years ago, when a member of the Narodni Divadlo (National Theater) in Prague, Mr. Josef Smaha, was the guest of Bohemian Chicago. From that time until the present, the play had not been produced until yesterday, when Mr. Splavec chose the comedy for his anniversary celebration.

As is the case with all the plays written along these lines, it is very difficult to produce and hardly ever is selected, except when a showy part is needed to display the exceptional ability of an actor. To play the part, a real artist must be secured if the comedy can really be called a success--and this is especially true among us.

Mr. Splavec's characterization of "Juan" was not soon to be forgotten, for it was thought out in every detail. The actor seems to grow on you from one act to the next, and in the last two acts he attained great dramatic heights.

The supporting cast gave of their best efforts to help in a well-rounded play.

The attendance was enormous. Every seat in the house was sold, and the audience filed out well pleased.

For the success of yesterday's performance, credit is due also to the excellent performance of Professor Čapek's orchestra.

Fifteen Years of Histrionic Activity. Denní Hlasatel, Sept. 18, 1907

The Ludvik Theatrical Association opened its fifteenth season by Jos. Stolba's "Jeji System" (Her System) last Sunday. The Bohemian audience assembled in Thalia Hall; it showed that it intends to support future performances, that it has retained its predilection for dramatic art which, especially in our new homeland, should be a school for us Czechs, and a place of sociable recreation and intellectual delight. Diverse human traits are represented upon the stage, the good ones and the bad; it may, therefore, be called "The Theatre of the World."

Every lover of the art eagerly anticipates the opportunity to visit the theatre. Not only may he enjoy a laugh if the performance is good, but he will always carry away a bit of instruction, while the gestures and words of the actor may linger in his memory for his lifetime. The theatre is a necessary item in human life, and for some a downright

indispensable one. The public fills the house, and then it is up to the actor to prove his value.

The good actor, the artist, reigns over the audience. Our Theatrical Association has been active among us Czechs for fourteen years-a long span of time. The public manifested its esteem for the actors, and many of those who support them today have been, during the fourteen years, educated by them.

For the fifteenth time the Association assures the Bohemian public of its earnest intention to keep the Czech Muse of the drama upon a pedestal, the highest possible.

The public and the actors will take this proclamation to their hearts, and we hope the Bohemian people of Chicago will give the efforts of the actors their enthusiastic support.

The play, "Her System," chosen for the opening, was written by Stolba in the year of 1905, and represents one of his most recent works.

Stolba is known to theatrical circles as a dramatist of remarkable genuineness and individuality.

The study of his characters means a hard nut to crack for every actor; his figures are full of healthy humor; we meet them all in his "Her System." But there is no caricature in the plays; an actor given to exaggeration and extemporizing is amiss.

Opening of Theatrical Season. Denní Hlasatel, Sept. 5, 1901

Ludvik's Theatrical Society will open this season on Sept. 15th at its headquarters in Thalia hall, corner 18th and Allport Streets. Several new artists, whom Mr. Ludvik had engaged in Bohemia, will have arrived by that time.

Ludvik's theatrical company will endeavor further to increase the favor it has gained during the eight years of its past existence.

Card Images

Ludwik Company Goes through Scenes of the Last Supper, Betrayal, Crucifixion, and Resurrection
Chicago Tribune, Apr. 9, 1901

The "Passion Play" in Bohemian was presented by the Ludwik Theatrical Company last night at Thalia Hall, Eighteen Street and Allport Avenue. The different scenes of the passion week, the last supper, the betrayal in the garden, the trial before Pilate, the crucifixion, and finally the resurrection, were depicted with great care by the large company of Bohemian players. The part of Jesus Christ was taken by Mr. Horlivy, who was attired in a blue and white robe and wore long hair and beard as represented in the paintings by old masters. The apostle John was impersonated by Miss Splavcova, who wore the yellow hair of a Raphael angel, Judas was arrayed in yellow.

The audience was deeply affected by many of the scenes, and there were sobs and tears at the parting of Christ from Mary Magdalene and at the crucifixion scene. The play will be repeated every night this week. The Ludwik Company is composed of actors from Bohemia who present a play every Sunday night at Thalia Hall.

Celebration of Fiftieth Anniversary of First Bohemian Theatrical Performance in Chicago
Denní Hlasatel, Feb. 23, 1913

It was fifty years ago yesterday when the Bohemian language was heard from a stage in Chicago for the first time. This event marks not only the beginning of Bohemian theatricals, but also the beginning of activities toward the development of Bohemian national life in Chicago in general. It cannot be denied that the Bohemian amateur stage work has carried on successfully the important mission of uniting and centralizing our national life in Chicago for years, and that the actors of those days merit sincere thanks and a profound recognition of their efforts. The present anniversary is a particularly suitable occasion for the expression of our thanks.

Amateur actors have done a great deal for the Bohemian cause in Chicago. The value of their work will be fully recognized when we realize that the Bohemian theater was practically the only source of entertainment and education for the small Bohemian community in Chicago in those days. Around it was formed a group of all the self-sacrificing national worker who devoted much of their time and effort to the promotion of everything that was good, useful, and genuinely patriotic. It was they who laid the foundation for the continued, undreamed-of development of the spiritual life in the Bohemian community in Chicago; and it is they who deserve credit for the continuous

functioning of one permanent Bohemian stage during the past twenty years, and also for the two more recently established and prospering Bohemian theaters.

Fifty years ago the Bohemian theater started with the performance of "Pan Strojcek" (Uncle), a comedy by Bendix, translated by J. K. Tyl (Bohemian playwright of the first half of the eighteenth century). The performance took place in the German Hall on the southwest corner of Canal and Van Buren Streets, in the immediate vicinity of the then small Bohemian settlement. It was not a large hall and had no theatrical facilities. The men and women who took the initiative in putting on this show had a task on their hands, the difficulty of which our present day amateurs can hardly imagine. The first director, Mr. Jan Praus, got together a small number of theater enthusiasts who started their self-less work at the beginning of January. However, the task was not easy. There was no adequate stage, no scenery, not even a sufficient theatrical library on hand from which to select a suitable play for the first night. There was no other way to meet the initial expenses but to undertake a collection of voluntary contributions from a small group of patriots. Soon, however, a play was selected, the roles distributed--mostly to people who had never acted before--and rehearsals were in full swing. What they lacked in experience was made up by good will, enthusiasm, and love of art.....

The culmination of all these efforts--the performance itself--was a huge success marked with enthusiasm both on the stage and in the audience. [Translator's note: Here follow the names of the actors, and the article continues in giving the titles of the subsequent performances with remarks concerning their merits, etc.]

On these modest beginnings, important and widespread national activities were built. During the very first year, the first Bohemian hall in Chicago was erected, the old Slovanska Lipa (Slavonic Linden Tree) at Clinton and Van Buren Streets. This early building had a decent stage. There was not more than \$300 in the treasury at that time, and the building cost \$3,500. But our patriots overcame all such obstacles easily. In two years the debt was paid, and the first Bohemian hall in Chicago was perhaps also the first one to be free of debts. In those days it was the center of all national life, and it will be of interest to note that the historical Bohemian-Slavonic convention of fifty delegates of all the Slovanske Lipy in existence at that time was held here....

In 1867 the old Lipa at Van Buren Street burned down, and in 1869 building activities were started on a new hall at Taylor Street between Canal and Beach Streets. This latter street has long since been absorbed by the tracks of railway companies. The hall was the property of the Slovanska Lipa, and the Telocvicna Jednota Sokol (Sokol Gymnastic Union) was a branch of the Lipa until 1871. Thereafter it became

independent. The first performance in the new hall was "Sobeslav, Knize Selsky" (Sobeslav, The Peasant Duke). In 1871, on the day of the great Chicago fire "Sirotek Lowoodsky" (The Orphan of Lowood) was being given....when a little girl--later one of the foremost amateur actresses--came running into the hall shouting, "Fire"! She announced the terrible catastrophe which befell our city. The Lipa was saved, but later on it met a similar fate--it was destroyed by fire just twenty years ago last Christmas; and today it is difficult, even for the oldest settlers, to find the site of the second Bohemian hall in Chicago.

The hall of the Cesko-Americky Sokol (Bohemian-American Sokol) on De Koven Street, the Slovanska Lipa of our days, was built in 1869. It is now the oldest Bohemian public building in Chicago. It probably is not a very great mistake to say that the Cesko-Americky Sokol hall is perhaps the oldest piece of existing Bohemian property in this city. It was dedicated July 1, 1869, and since then it has been used, almost without interruption, for amateur theatricals. A handful of theatrical pioneers still keep faith with their old love and give plays occasionally in the old hall, notwithstanding the fact that it is almost entirely out of reach of the Bohemian center and does not meet with modern theatrical requirements. Perhaps it is out of piety toward the cradle of the Bohemian theatre, so to speak, that the Sokol hall is still the headquarters of the old amateurs, and that it is the site of this year's anniversary celebrations.

The Slovanska Lipa and the Cesko-Americky Sokol hall were the scenes of many a theatrical success. They educated innumerable amateurs who in turn were founding new theatrical societies which, some twenty-five years ago, were at the height of their worthwhile activities. Here we must mention the amateur theatrical society Thalia which was founded in 1874 and was active without interruption until the time of the final decline of amateur theatricals in the Pilsen district. In 1889 Thalia celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and presented on that occasion Subert's "Probuzenci"(Those Who Have Awakened) under the direction of C. V. Jerabek. Many an old Bohemian amateur participated in this performance. Another exceedingly active group was that of "Kolar" [name of a Bohemian patriot of the first half of the eighteenth century who was particularly interested in the theater as a means of reviving the dormant national consciousness in Bohemia] which started in the old hall at 20th and Brown (now Sangamon) Streets and then moved to the Cesko-Americka Svobodomyslna Skola (Bohemian-American Free Thought School). For several years the Kolar group was active as an independent body, but later it merged with Thalia, the combination being known as the Thalia-Kolar society.

Also the Ceske Narodni Ochotnicke Druzstvo (Bohemian National Amateur Association) was founded some twenty-five years ago. Its leadership in the theatrical field is well

known. Of equally long existence is the society of Boleslav Jablonsky [again a name of an old patriot]. Also our amateurs in the Town of Lake district have done and are still doing a good deal of useful work. The Tyl society and other successful, though smaller, groups should also receive mention here. There are a number of active Bohemian amateur theatrical societies still in existence in Chicago, but their activities at present are limited. However, they have not perished, and it is to be hoped that they will at least keep on in communities where they are needed most.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of Bohemian theatricals in Chicago was celebrated in 1888 in the hall of the Telocvicna Jednota Sokol on Taylor Street.....

Since then, of course, many changes have taken place. Amateur societies are dwindling, but they have not disappeared altogether. The old enthusiasts still cling to the stage with as much devotion as they did in their youth. They all look forward to another chance to perform--perhaps for the last time--and our public will be glad to see them, if for no other reason than to show our appreciation for their splendid work in promoting the Bohemian cause in Chicago.

Children's Theater. Denní Hlasatel, Mar. 28, 1906

p. 1, col. 1.. Children from the Bohemian children's clubs and nursery will present a very well known play called "Snow White." This play is especially prepared for children although adults will also find it very humorous and interesting. It will be staged today in the Thalia Hall located at 18th and Allport Streets.

Parents of the children which are participating in this program are requested to be present so that they may see what their children are taught at these Bohemian clubs and the nursery. The general public is also invited to come and above all to bring as many children as possible. This play was arranged and will be conducted by the teachers of the children's clubs and nursery.

"Prodana Nevesta" in Thalia Denní Hlasatel, June 6, 1914

Smetana's comic opera, "Prodana Nevesta," which has spread the good name of Bohemian music throughout the world and has had splendid success on the American

stage, was given recently at an open-air performance in the delightful valley of Sarka near Prague.

Motion pictures were taken of this performance, and they can be seen this week at the Thalia Theater, on the corner of 18th Street and Allport Avenue.....

Card Images

The Slet in Thalia TheatreDenní Hlasatel, Nov. 20, 1912

There are certain things which make such a deep impression that they can never be forgotten.....

Many of us have read and heard about the Slet (Sokol Mass Convention) in Prague and have pictured the magnificent scenes which our more fortunate people could see in reality. But probably none of us would really believe what we heard until we saw the motion pictures of the Slet shown in the Thalia Theater.....

Last Rites for Karel SplavecDenní Hlasatel, Mar. 24, 1917

The doors of the Thalia Theatre opened yesterday at noon to allow the throngs of people assembled to enter the auditorium and view with grief the remains of Karel (Charles) Splavec, the well-known and beloved actor. The body lay in state, in front of the state, upon which the deceased had stood so often during the deceniums of his activity in the service of the good and the beautiful. All of the colleagues of the departed, actors of the "Ludvikovci" (Ludwik Theatrical Group), were there among hundreds of friends and admirers, their eyes filled with tears. Among the mourners appeared members of the Singing Society Lyra, for which Splavec had a great liking and an ever helping hand; there were many of our artists. After a dirge sung by the Lyre Society, the spokesman of a large group of Croatians delivered a farewell address. After this, Mr. Jaromir R. Psenka, publisher and editor of the Denni Hlasatel, spoke for the Czech fellow-countrymen of the dead artist.

A climax in the emotions of the mourners was reached when the orchestra, under the direction of Prof. J. K. Capek, intoned the overture to the play "Strakonicky Dudak" (The Bagpiper of Strakonice), by Antonin Dvorak. The composition has two main subjects:

"Kde Domov Muj?" (Where Is My Homeland?), the Czech national anthem, and "Na Tom Nasem Dvore" (Out There in Our Yard), a folk song. Professor Capek could not have made a better selection - the role of "Kalafuna" in the play was one in which Splavec paraded, one of the best in his vast repertory. The funeral march by Chopin closed the obsequies.

Splavec has ended his earthly pilgrimage. He is no more, but his name will live among us, and his memory will be treasured as an artist of unusual qualities and as a man with a heart of gold. His remains have been laid at rest in the Bohemian National Cemetery.