Vaclav Havel Library Foundation together with the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU) announce a contest for the students of drama and performance studies for the best mini-drama on the theme of “PTYDEPE”, the artificial language, of the play The Memorandum written by Vaclav Havel

Deadline: April 30, 2016

Vaclav Havel (1936-2011) was a playwright, political dissident, and the former president of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. He became well-known as a dramatist in the 1960s when his plays The Garden Party and The Memorandum were seen on world theatre stages. In the 1970s, he was one of the authors of Charter 77 - a manifesto calling for the Czechoslovak government to adhere to the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Agreement. In 1989, he became the leader of the two-month long Velvet Revolution, which culminated in his ascension to the Presidency of the re-established democratic Czechoslovakia.

The Memorandum is one of Vaclav Havel's most popular plays. An office has adopted a new official language, Ptydepe, in an attempt to make communication more scientific. But the new language may truly be a tool for power. Havel's play was able to slip by the Communist Czech censors in 1965, despite its veiled political commentary.

Award

A two-week residency in Prague with classes at different DAMU departments; visits to Prague theatres; stage reading of the winning play prepared by DAMU and Vaclav Havel Library in Prague; a round-trip air ticket to Prague and accommodation. The schedule at DAMU will be prepared individually according to the winner’s study focus and interests. Date: November 2016 (around November 17th, the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution).

DAMU is a modern, university-level school of the performing arts. It offers artistic personalities who have a broad cultural perspective and intense desire for profound learning the opportunity to integrate theatrical knowledge and skill with artistic experiment. DAMU is a highly selective school, providing professional education in all branches of theatre creation: acting, directing, dramaturgy, scenography, theory and criticism, theatre management, authorial creation, and drama in education in the fields of regular and alternative theatre, performance studies and puppetry.

Contest Rules

The contest is open to students of drama and performance studies who submit an original play that has not been published and will not be published before the announcement of the contest results. The contest is anonymous.

Plays should be sent in pdf format without the author’s name on the script to info@vhlf.org. The subject line should be “PTYDEPE”. Authors should submit a separate sheet with all contact information.

The winner will be announced in May 2016.

Evaluation Criteria

The Vaclav Havel Library Foundation together with the Dean of DAMU will name the jury. The jury will evaluate the creativity, thought-provoking story, understanding of Havel’s use of an artificial language, and the original way of applying it to current society as well as other common criteria such as clear structure and organization of the play and its effect on the audience.