

# HAVEL

BOHEMIAN PRESIDENT







“

NO ONE CAN TORTURE YOU  
MORE THAN YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE.

# INTRODUCTION

“Havel” is the first major fact-based biopic about the global human-rights icon and Czech president Vaclav Havel. The film spans three decades, from the tumultuous Prague Spring of 1968 through Havel’s rise to leadership of the Czech nation. Focusing on Havel’s formative years, the film unearths lesser known events from Havel’s life and bridges gaps in the official Havel biography.

At the center of the film is Havel’s gradual transformation from introspective and celebrated playwright in the 60’s, to the banned and jailed human rights activist in the 70’s, to national hero in the 80’s. It’s the story of a self-doubting intellectual torn between his reckless passions and his sense of duty to his country and his ideals. To command a nation Havel must first take command of himself.

More than a simple biopic, the film is infused with Havel’s signature absurdist humor, his irreverent theatricality, and his profound understanding of human nature. Havel was the rarest of artists: he was both a man of the theater and a man of action. He was a great entertainer, but his determined bravery inspired millions to political engagement. His words and his actions literally changed the world.

# H A V E L

**DIRECTED BY:** Slavek Horak  
**WRITTEN BY:** Slavek Horak & Rudolf Suchanek  
**STARRING:** Viktor Dvorak  
Anna Geislerova  
Martin Hofmann

**RUNNING TIME:** 103 min.

**BUDGET:** 2,4 mil. EUR

**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** TVORBA films

**PRODUCER:** Slavek Horak

**LANGUAGE:** Czech

**FORMAT:** 1:2,35, color, digital

**FILM FINISHED:** June 2020

**PREMIERE:** July-August 2020  
(Czech republic)

**INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE:** TBA





# SYNOPSIS

It's the summer of '68 and the young Czech playwright Vaclav Havel is enjoying the heady atmosphere of new-found freedom as the iron grip of Soviet repression gradually loosens throughout Eastern Europe. In Havel's Prague, politics are as exciting as theatre, sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. Havel, though, is a comfortable and acclaimed playwright, and he's determined to avoid conflict that might upset his world. He resists confrontation with the political authorities – led by the celebrated politician Alexander Dubcek – and he tries to carry out his romantic escapades without undermining his marriage to his beloved Olga. Havel's fling with freedom comes to an abrupt and violent end when Soviet Russia invades Czechoslovakia. When Havel refuses to sign a regime-sponsored document approving of the Russian occupation, the government removes him from his theater and from his prestigious position at the pinnacle of Czech cultural life.

The now-banned author retreats from the limelight to his cottage in the Czech countryside, where his suppressed creativity leads to the slow degeneration of both his spirit and his relationship with Olga. With the Soviets in firm control of the country, and with no other opportunities available to him, Havel accepts a job as a laborer in a brewery. This

brush with life outside the cloistered world of the theater inspires him to begin writing and directing again, though at first only for an audience of his trusted allies.

As his writing gradually revives him, Havel begins attracting a group of likeminded artists. When he learns that the persecution of his friends is even harsher than his own, he begins to organize a diverse group of isolated critics of the regime into an underground resistance movement. Emboldened, Havel begins to write and speak more openly, and he even approaches Dubcek, who, disappointingly, refuses to meet him.

Havel's growing outspokenness eventually becomes too much for the Czech puppet government, and Havel is sent to prison. Havel doesn't take well to prison life. He eventually capitulates into the regime's pressure. In exchange for his release, he agrees to give up all political activity.

Humiliated by his own cowardice, and despite his agreement with the regime, he recommits defiantly, and at great personal risk, to renewed political activity. Once again he's imprisoned.

Havel is now determined to resist a second submission at

any cost, and in the harsh confines of the prison his health begins to fail. The authorities offer to release him if he'll just give in, but he refuses. As Havel nears death, the authorities are forced to back down, and Havel emerges from prison a defiant hero in the eyes of the Czechs. And, more importantly, in his own eyes he's redeemed himself. But his triumph is short-lived. His relentless unfaithfulness has proven too much for Olga, and she's left him for another man.

Though his home life has collapsed, Havel's political awakening is now complete. Havel is prepared to lead, but one man stands in his way – his old nemesis Alexander Dubcek. Measured against Dubcek's popularity, Havel is an outsider, a mere political novice. But Havel is determined to confront the old regime and bring fresh energy to Czech politics, and to do so he's willing to give the world he loves – the theater.

With his stature growing, Havel reconciles with Olga. He confronts his rival Dubcek and, through the sheer weight of Havel's well-earned moral authority, Dubcek's support crumbles. Havel becomes the new Czech leader, euphorically hailed by the masses as a true hero.





# SLÁVEK HORÁK

DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER, PRODUCER

Slávek Horák was born on 12.1.1975 in Zlín, Czech republic. He studied directing at FAMU Prague film academy.

In 1995 he worked as 2nd AD on Jan Sverak's feature "Kolya", which won Best Foreign Language Academy Award in 1996.

After that he directed commercials all over the world for 20 years.

In 2015 he wrote, directed and produced his debut feature film - "Home Care", which represented Czech republic at Academy and Golden Globe Awards 2016. "Home Care" won Best Actress awards at Karlovy Vary IFF, Palm Springs IFF, Czech Lions film awards and numerous awards at other festivals (Heartland IFF, Arras, Phoenix, Bergamo, Valladolid, Plzen etc.).

VARIETY MAGAZINE NAMED SLÁVEK HORÁK

ONE OF "10 DIRECTORS TO WATCH" IN 2015.

<https://variety.com/2015/film/features/10-directors-to-watch-slavek-horak-home-care-1201668744/>


VARIETY "HOME CARE" REVIEW:

<https://variety.com/2015/film/festivals/home-care-review-karlovy-vary-1201536425/>

FEATURE FILMOGRAPHY:

Home Care (2015)

Havel (2020)



TVORBA FILMS  
Masná 699/15  
110 00 Praha 1  
Czech republic  
[info@tvorbafilms.cz](mailto:info@tvorbafilms.cz)

SLÁVEK HORÁK  
[slavek@sandalz.net](mailto:slavek@sandalz.net)  
Cell: +420-603-206-038

INTERNATIONAL PR  
Tatiana Detlofson  
MEDIAPLAN PR  
[tatiana@mediaplanpr.com](mailto:tatiana@mediaplanpr.com)  
Cell: +1 310-663-3465