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Charles University organized a festive concert in the Great Aula of Karolinum on 15th November at the occasion of the International Student Day and the Day of Fight for the Freedom and Democracy. The rector of Charles University Václav Hampl and a postdoctoral student Alla Tymofeyeva spoke prior to the resounding of Dvořák's Mass in D Major and other small compositions.

Prof. RNDr. Václav Hampl, DrSc. held his speech first in the busy hall of Great Aula of Karolinum. He recalled both the November event of 1939 as well as the student demonstration of 1989 which started the "Velvet Revolution." "It was a demonstration of academically educated non-violence, which requested bigger respect of the state towards civic rights of the inhabitants with distinct reference to Czechoslovakian state traditions and rich university history. It was a demonstration of moral demands against (in the end powerless) brutal might of violence. In prospect it was a demonstration for democracy as a state of society, in which the nonmanipulated law and generally respected norms anchored in morality dominated all individual and group interests and claims," Prof. Václav Hampl said.

The rector underlined in his speech the success of the university in the 23 post-revolution years, but he also drew attention to the financial limitations which the university has due to its location in a „richer“ city. *“We do not live in material luxury. The absurd severance of the major part of our university from the European structural funds, even more palpable as not compensated from the side of the Czech state, is an anomaly that hinders us. Regardless, the criteria of our work and our aspiration for the development of our almae matris must remain the most important task on the quality of creative – scientific and educational like – efforts. The financial limitation must not force us to a deduction from the ethical standards or leaving the big and binding traditions of the academic functioning, in its importance widely overstepping the limitations of the university lecture halls or laboratories. The role of Charles University is traditionally much bigger and far reaching in the society. We are not only a school but a 664 years long existing community of those who met to study, research and discuss important questions.”*

Rector Václav Hampl simultaneously warned before disinterest, unconcern and careless satisfaction to which the cheery branches from a faded ideological garden could be ingrafted, in which we had drugged in the lack of freedom and were drowning in smallness and futility. "It is not plausible that the elites, responsible for marking the way we are walking in this country, deafened by their particular interests, lead us back and leave the rotten ideas to soak back from the gutter, in which are marked many wasted lives and destinies of those who tried to resist – and whom we are also remembering today. I would be glad, if we would therefore all understand today's commemoration not only as piety but, due to the red coloured smoke signals in our strange political scene, more as an appeal and moral imperative," he addressed the auditorium.

In the end of his speech Prof. Hampl accentuated that in the modern world it is impossible to survive long enough without qualities such as academic truth, responsibility for the quality of one's effort and prestige of the entirety of the community. The remembrance of the ethical dimension of student demonstrations should be a commitment to not give up this aspiration.

A graduate of Faculty of Law of CU and current postdoc, JUDr. Alla Tymofeyeva, Ph.D., was asked to give a short speech representing the students of Charles University. She finished with the quotation of John Paul II: Science has its sense, if it is understood as the way to the truth and the truth as the good of the man. *“I believe that human rights are the minimal, most fundamental groundwork for a good life. I would like to wish to all gathered here that human rights shall always be honoured in the Czech Republic and that Charles University will be able to bring up new generations of experts with high moral standards.”*

The rest of the festive evening was arranged by the Choir and Orchestra of Charles University led by the conductor Haig Utidjian.