



## The Prague Sonata

*Bradford Morrow*

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—**"Bradford Morrow is an astonishing writer."** Joyce Carol Oates

**"A treasure of a novel, a deliciously enveloping musical mystery."**—Diane Ackerman

Music and war, war and music—these are the twin motifs around which Bradford Morrow, recipient of the Academy Award in Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, has composed his magnum opus, *The Prague Sonata*, a novel more than a dozen years in the making.

In the early days of the new millennium, pages of a worn and weathered original sonata manuscript—the gift of a Czech immigrant living out her final days in Queens—come into the hands of Meta Taverner, a young musicologist whose concert piano career was cut short by an injury. To Meta's eye, it appears to be an authentic eighteenth-century work; to her discerning ear, the music rendered there is commanding, hauntingly beautiful, clearly the undiscovered composition of a master. But there is no indication of who the composer might be. The gift comes with the request that Meta attempt to find the manuscript's true owner—a Prague friend the old woman has not heard from since the Second World War forced them apart—and to make the three-part sonata whole again. Leaving New York behind for the land of Dvořák and Kafka, Meta sets out on an unforgettable search to locate the remaining movements of the sonata and uncover a story that has influenced the course of many lives, even as it becomes clear that she isn't the only one after the music's secrets.

Magisterially evoking decades of Prague's tragic and triumphant history, from the First World War through the soaring days of the Velvet Revolution, and moving from postwar London to the heartland of immigrant America, *The Prague Sonata* is both epic and intimate, evoking the ways in which individual notes of love and sacrifice become part of the celebratory symphony of life.

## The Prague Sonata Details

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Author : Bradford Morrow

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## From Reader Review The Prague Sonata for online ebook

### Dauida Chazan says

When part of a manuscript of what seems to be an 18th century piano sonata falls into Meta Taverner's hands, she decides she must find the missing pieces, and see if she can discover who wrote it, as well as attempt to return the full work to its rightful owner. Her search takes her half way across the globe, and gets her involved in an intrigue that might result in her losing everything. This is the latest novel from Bradford Morrow, and you can read what I thought of it in my review here. <http://drchazan.blogspot.com/2017/10/...>

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### Erin says

**Thanks to NetGalley for an advanced ebook in exchange for an honest review.**

**I have decided to not give this book a rating.** I dragged my feet on the reading of it and at the **34% mark admitted defeat.** This was perhaps the first NetGalley that I felt was assembled in a mismatch way because I could never make head nor tails of which dual storyline was unraveling. Although I am **really disappointed that this book didn't hold my interest, I can see that I am safely in the minority.**

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### Faouzia says

Stories about music are among my favorites. Stories about music set in cities i love and composers i really like are even better. So when i requested this book, The Prague Sonata, i was expecting a very pleasant journey in my favorite city. And i was not disappointed. It was kind of thrilling to be able to picture exactly the places mentioned and to recall the emotions and impressions that those same places conjured.

By some mysterious chance, a part of an 18th century music manuscript came into the hands of Meta Taverner, a young and passionate musicologist. It came with a specific mission to find the two other missing parts of this manuscript which was broken in the first days of the Nazi occupation of Prague, and finally return it to its lost owner.

From that started a journey both in time and space, as Meta started from New York to Prague to follow the incredible journey of this manuscript, and to follow the steps of the people related to it. It was also a trip back in the time, as the story was told in parallel, between the quest of Meta, and the life of the manuscript's owner and the people connected to it during the Nazi occupation period, the communist era and the post-war world.

I enjoyed this story, this quest, and all the people that were involved in it. I have to admit however that i struggled to like Meta at the beginning. I don't know why, but i couldn't connect with her or like her, until well past half the story. The other characters were mostly interesting.

The intrigue that came with such a quest was good, although i felt it was made a bit longer than necessary. The only think i had some reservations about was the use of a lot of musical metaphors. I mean, it gave a touch of poetry to the story, but since i was not really expert of music, merely an enthusiast, the use of some "technical" words made it that the metaphors were kind of lost on me, and that bothered me.

Overall it was a very enjoyable story, and i think NetGalley, the Publisher and Author for this copy.

## Bandit says

A while ago I read Morrow's *Forgers* and remember enjoying it within reason, but being somewhat underwhelmed. One of the most memorable things about that reading experience was the exhaustive amount of research the author has obviously put into it. Well, at 300some pages that was nothing comparing to this particular behemoth and all the musicology that went into it. Confession time...Music, I'm just not that into you. I'm not against music for the right occasion for a reasonable duration, but it's far behind other pleasurable pursuits like books and movies. And this book is about (and for, ideally) passionate music lovers. I do have an appreciation for classical repertoire, so I had a decent idea about the world of the characters, but my literary obsessed mind was definitely reimagining this novel as one where the object of pursuit was a book and not a sonata. Still, a pursuit is a pursuit, and one that spans decades and continents is certainly a compelling one. The coveted object is the musical equivalent of a previously undiscovered Shakespeare play. The setting is international. The narrative split in two alternating timelines, one tracing the original ownership, one following the present time young musicologist's quest to find it. Whatever your thoughts on music may be, as a work of historical fiction this is terrific. Guess you can tell which portion of the novel I preferred. Visiting Prague (armchair traveling or otherwise) is always a treat and Morrow does a splendid job of depicting the glorious city even at its direst moments. WWII has been kinder to Prague than other European cities, but still left its scars and this novel shines the light on that traumatic era. In general, this is a great representation of the 20th century Czechoslovakia, the struggles, triumphs and all. And as far as the dramatic writing goes, this is quite an engaging story, I spent (quite uncharacteristically) four days with it, mainly due to its girth, but it read very enjoyably. The characters were charming, likeable, particularly Otylie. Yes, if one has to offer some criticism, it was very long and occasionally overly sentimental or slightly overwritten, but these are really too minor of detractors for such a grand (in every way) total. Entertaining, immersive reading experience that plays to the mind the way its eponymous sonata must to the ear...lovely. Thanks Netgalley.

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## Angela M says

I thought I would like this more since at its core, this is story of courageous resistance against the Nazis during the German occupation of Prague. I've read stories before about how people have tried so hard under almost impossible circumstances, to save paintings. This time it's a music manuscript. For a moment I ask why - when your life and the lives of others are so much more precious. But it is a matter of saving a part of history, a part of one's culture, a part of oneself. Certainly meaningful, yet I felt like I've read this story before. Well, not this one in particular but stories like it. The structure is formulaic- alternating narratives between the past and present connecting characters, a common mechanism, but this felt somewhat disjointed. For me the older story is usually the most captivating and it was the case here as well. The modern story has a romantic relationship that isn't going well and the modern character could find the love of her life in the quest for the lost piece of art . The same story as some other novels.

Odylie and her husband Jakub, try to save themselves during the occupation of Prague. Odylie trying to save a valuable music manuscript left to her by her father, divides it in three parts. She takes one and gives one to her husband Jakub, and one to her friend Irena. Meta in the present day is at a time of uncertainty in her life, deterred by an accident from becoming the concert pianist she was destined for. She connects with Irena and becomes engaged in the search for the rest of the sonata. Sounds like a moving story so why just barely three stars? While I enjoyed the early stories of Otylie and Jakub, the descriptions of Prague, the courage of the

resistors and the meaning of saving the music from the Nazis, it was too long , too drawn out and the journey was like a wild goose chase with bad guy musicologists after the sonata as well. The story, just the story of finding the pieces of the sonata , the stories of Otylie and Jacub would have been enough. The execution of it was just too much.

This was the monthly buddy read with Diane and Esil. We gave up in our original choice but managed to stay the course with this one . I think we always hope for one we will all love so we're trying again next week with another book.

I received an advanced copy of this book from Atlantic Monthly Press through NetGalley.

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## **Liz says**

This book contains several of my favorite things- history, music, a love story and a good mystery. Meta, a musicologist, is given the second movement of an unknown 18th century sonata by Irena, a Czech emigre, and charged with finding the first and third movements.

The story travels back and forth in time, between Otylie being given the sonata by her father at the end of WWI, to her divvying up the movements during WWII to keep it out of the hands of the Germans, to her later life and then to the present day as Meta attempts to find Otylie and re-discover the other movements.

The writing here is lush; the tale vivid. Descriptions of Prague read like a perfect travelogue, making you feel you are walking the streets. I know enough about classical music to be dangerous. The book does a great job of educating the reader without pontificating. It made me want to seek out some of the music mentioned.

The middle of the book falls into the typical problem with stories involving searches. How to transmit the lack of progress and sense of futility, the many false starts and wrong turns, without settling into tedium? It's a fine line and one this book doesn't completely manage. Luckily, just at the point where boredom was starting to set in, the book picks up again.

The book is told from multiple points of view, including the good and bad guys, which helps advance the story. I especially appreciated understanding Wittman. The story is fascinating. A little bit better editing to tighten things up would have helped move it along at a brisker pace.

My thanks to netgalley and Grove Atlantic for an advance copy of this book

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## **Nancy says**

What makes me love a book? Gorgeous writing. Great characters. An intriguing plot. Insights into our common humanity. Historical perspective. Encountering joy and love. Encountering horror, war, and villains. A story line that grabs me so I want to know what happens next.

Some books have one or two of those attributes. To find a book that wraps up all of these things is a happy day indeed. Bradford Morrow's The Prague Sonata offers the whole package.

The story is rich and complex, but also full of music and visual references that made me think, I can't wait to see the movie.

Protagonist Meta Taverner had dedicated her life to becoming a concert pianist when a fatal accident damaged her hand. Therapy has restored her ability to play only with "competence." Meta performs at an outpatient cancer facility, attracting the notice of patient Irena, who summons Meta to visit.

Irena has held the partial score of a piano sonata since her friend Otylie gave it to her to protect during the Nazi occupation of Prague. Irena also tasks Meta with returning the score to Otylie, hoping the entire manuscript will be reunited.

Mesmerized by the sonata, and hoping to find the missing sections and perhaps solve the mystery of who composed it, Meta takes up the quest. She puts aside her job and boyfriend to journey to Prague. There, she learns the tragic history of Czechoslovakia under the Nazi and Soviet regimes, encounters threats and intrigue, and discovers love.

The novel expands with reading, moving from the narrow academic world of musicologists to the deprivations of war and the occupation of Prague, to the refugee experience. What starts as a mild mystery turns into a quest, with elements of a thriller at the end.

Flashbacks fill in the story. Otylie's father was on leave from The Great War for her mother's funeral when he gave her the piano sonata. He told her, guard it with your own life; one day it will bring you great fortune. He soon after died.

Otylie is grown and newly married when Prague gives the keys of the city to the Nazis. Otylie wanted to keep the score out of the hands of the Germans so she divided it into three parts, distributing a section to her beloved husband, who was a part of the underground resistance, and another to her dear friend Irena. She kept the first section for herself. At the end of WWII, Otylie's husband is dead and Irena has left the country. Otylie first immigrates to England and then to America.

The sonata's beauty and innovation is amazing. In a copyist's hand, the score appears to be a true antique, but there is no indication of the composer. Is a lost work by Mozart, or C.P.E. Bach, or Hayden? The score ends with the beginning measures of the next movement, a Rondo.

Thirty-year-old Meta is naive and honest. She is driven by love of music and her pledge to reunite the sonata with its rightful owner. Her mentor has connected her with Petr Witman, a musicologist contact in Prague, who endeavors to undermine Meta by saying the sonata is a fake, hoping to get his hands on it. He sees fame and dollar signs. Witman is a man with shifting allegiances, doing whatever it took to stay afloat under the Nazis, the Soviets, and the new Federal Republic. He has no moral code.

Meta is supported by many people in Prague, including a journalist who falls in love with her. On their quest to find the third part of the score, they must keep one step ahead of Witmann. Meta's journey takes her across America, too, pursued by Witman.

I enjoyed learning about Prague and Czechoslovakia. In the 18th c it was the hub of culture and music, a city that loved Mozart.

I loved that music informs the novel and musical language is used in descriptions. Meta knows that the sonata represents a new chapter in her life. "If her own thirty years constituted a first movement of a sonata, she sensed in her gut that she was right now living the opening notes of the second." Morrow describes the second movement of the sonata given to Meta so well, one understands its "staggering power and slyness," the "quasi-requiem tones of the adagio" followed by the promise of joy indicated in the opening measures of

the rondo in the second movement.

When I started reading The Prague Sonata I was unhappy I had requested such a long book. What was I thinking? As I got into the story, I was actually drawing out my reading, unwilling to end the experience too soon. And that's about the best thing a reader can say about a book!

(Read more about Mozart in Prague in Mozart's Starling by Lyanda Lynn Haupt. Devastation Road by Jason Hewitt concerns Czechoslovakia after WWII. The Spaceman of Bohemia is sci-fi that also addresses life under the Soviets.)

I received a free ebook from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for a fair and unbiased review.

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### **Esil says**

2.5 stars. As I read The Prague Sonata, I kept thinking "Please let this book end..." What a terrible reaction to what should and could have been a really good novel. The Prague Sonata is a good idea left untamed. It takes place throughout the 20th and early 21st century, and focuses on a found musical manuscript that is suspected of being by a famous composer. Just at the beginning of WWII, Prague resident, Otylie, who has inherited the manuscript from her father, must find a way to keep it safe during the war. In later years in New York, Meta comes into possession of part of the manuscript and goes on a quest to figure out its origin. The historical backdrop includes Prague as the Nazis were taking over and later as communism was coming to an end. Sounds pretty good, right? Unfortunately, rather than refining this idea into a tight readable narrative, the author and editors allowed it to flounder and wallow. The timelines and perspectives are choppy and disjointed. There are far too many uninteresting unnecessary bits and pieces -- especially in the contemporary timeline -- such as Meta's failing relationship in New York and her new romance in Prague. And there is a ridiculous contemporary intrigue amongst competing musicologists. But mostly, it's just way way way too long. How could an editor allow this one to be published without far more cutting and refinement? I am usually so happy to read books set in 20th century Eastern Europe, but this one was especially disappointing because it promised so much but failed to deliver. The only reason I'm not rating it a flat 2 stars is because I really liked the parts depicting Otylie and some of the older Czech characters. Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy.

This was another monthly buddy read with Angela and Diane. Thanks to both of you for making this tedious journey so much more tolerable.

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### **Diane S ? says**

What I liked?

The history, had read little before of the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, and none at all of The Velvet Revolution of the nineties.

The tour of Prague, fascinating city with a long history.

A few of the characters, Otylie, Sam, Garrett, Tomas and Irena. All interesting and touching, living in hard times and trying to survive the best way they could. Their lives afterward, what happened to them.

What was mixed? Love music, find searching and identifying lost things fascinating, this was, however, quite lengthy, and it was difficult to maintain my interest.

What I had trouble with.

The less than smooth transition from past to present.

I felt this story went on too long, some parts seemed like they could have been done away with, making a tighter less lengthy read.

Musical villains. Turning a historical into or rather trying to make it a thriller didn't work for me, the historical aspect alone held more appeal to this reader.

Something happens that I felt was a little unbelievable considering the gap in time between present and past.

So, as you can see this for me was a mixed read. I'm sure others who look for different things will find some of what bothered me, more to their liking. Only way to tell is to try it and see.

Our October buddy read, always special with Angela and Esil.

ARC from Netgalley.

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## **Maureen Carden says**

Lush, lovely, and lyrical would be an accurate way to describe Mr. Morrow's twenty year journey in researching and writing *The Prague Sonata*.

I was captivated from the beginning by the story of two women, born almost sixty years apart, in their quest to preserve, and then recover a sonata of unknown authorship but of unmistakable beauty and originality. A sonata is a composition written in three sections known as an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation. Otylie Laska's father gives her an eighteenth century manuscript of unknown provenance and authorship the night before he leaves to die in World War I. Music is war and war is music he tells her. She takes this to heart and refuses all contact with music although she treasures and cares for this manuscript because she recognizes the beauty and rarity of this music.

World War II comes to Prague in 1939. By then she has married a Jewish antiquarian, Jakub Bartsova who leaves Prague for the underground as the Nazis march into Prague. Otylie is determined to protect the sonata while at the same time keeping it from the Nazis. She divides the three sections of the sonata between herself, her husband Jakub and her very best friend Irena.

The year 2000 and Irena is dying. She manages to deliver a section to and fascinate a young musicologist, Meta Taverner, with the story of the sonata. Meta had been on her way to an illustrious career as a concert pianist. A car accident which damaged her hand has removed her far from the ranks of a first class pianist and into a career as a musicologist.

Meta is determined to travel to Prague and to find and unite all of the sections, plus determine the author of the sonata. The main drawback in determining authorship is the sonata is in a copyist's hand, not the original composer's hand.

If Meta's crazy theory of authorship is proven, the music world will be set on its head and years of research will ensue.

What I don't know about music can be told in one word: everything. Yet I did not find my ignorance much of a drawback. Yes, I occasionally wished for a better understanding of some of the terms, but Morrow helped me past those problems with his explanations and metaphors.

The story flows beautifully between different keepers of the sections and different historical times from World I through The Velvet Revolution. Prague is sometimes described as the most beautiful city in Europe. After reading about Prague during the time of the Nazi's and communists one begins to understand the miracle of Prague's survival.

There is a villain who loses all sense of himself in his quest to retrieve and own the sonata, but Morrow already knows this story is dramatic as it stands and the added drama is mild and well handled.

Most of the characters, even the one that appear for just a short while are multi-layered and fascinate with their own stories, the exception being a boyfriend, Jonathan, who was just a pleasant, then sad distraction. The writing is just beautiful and I could give example after example, but let me end with this stunning quote “Impatient to experience the music off the page and set it free in the air”

Thank you to NetGalley and Grove Atlantic for an ARC in exchange for a fair and honest review.

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## **Cindy Burnett says**

3.5 stars

I loved the base story line in The Prague Sonata; it was completely engrossing, clever and unique. My one complaint, which altered my overall thoughts on the book significantly, was that the book was WAY too long and included too much extraneous information. I ended up having to skim pages and pages to pick up the next section on the sonata story line. I thoroughly enjoyed the tale regarding the missing manuscript, and the resolution of that tale brought tears to my eyes. The Czech history was interesting too, but I felt it should have been briefer. Thanks to Grove Atlantic for my ARC; all opinions are my own.

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## **Phil says**

An anonymous piano sonata of unknown provenance and Prague, one of the most enchanting cities in the world – I simply loved the premise and read The Prague Sonata in great anticipation.

In brief, I was disappointed. The characters are not especially developed and the “bad guy” is not especially bad – just another vain, narcissistic academic. In places, it felt the author was simply copying off notes for a plot outline, and in others, the narrative was overwritten with flowery or five dollar words.

Mr. Morrow, the author, I found, I had written other novels, is a noted editor of a literary journal, and an academic. And I see his novels have enjoyed varying degrees of success in the past. So, perhaps it is I, for as I see from other reviews of the Prague Sonata Goodreads that I may be one of the dissenters.

On a positive note, I think the novel has great potential as a motion picture, complete with a lush musical score and stunning visuals of Prague, to seduce the senses.

My thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for permitting me to read an advance copy.

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## **Joyce says**

5 plus stars

Our story starts out in Czechoslovakia just after the ending of WWI. A little girl named Otylie is told by her father that there is music in war. He describes even the various types of military music, including the music that accompanies the start and finish of a battle. The young girl ponders this and decides she doesn't want

this haunting her. He leaves her a three part musical score. For Otylie this is the only thing that remains of her father.

It is now the late 1939 and Czechoslovakia is invaded by the Germans. Otylie knows she must guard the sonata from the avaricious Germans. They are destroying everything in their path – buildings, businesses and people. Neighbors are telling on neighbors in order to curry favor and to survive. Otylie gives one-third of the score to her friend Irene and cautions her to guard it with her life. She hopes that by splitting it up, the Germans won't know what she has or think that it is of any value. The other third she gets to her husband, Jakob. Jakob is on the run from the Nazis.

During the present day a part of an unattributed manuscript is given to Meta Tavener. She is a woman whose piano career was cut short by a devastating injury to her hand. The musical score appears to be authentic. It appears to have been written in the 18th Century. She meets Irena Svobodova Dorfman an elderly and very ill lady who has one-third of the musical score. She pleads with Meta to see if she can learn find the real owner and the other two parts of the score.

Meta travels to the former Czechoslovakia to see if she can locate the woman who Irena in New York hasn't seen since WWII.

What follows is a remarkable story of discovery. Meta also learns that she is not the only one looking for answers about the script. The story moves back and forth through time in a beautiful yet compelling manner. We learn interesting background information about several well-known characters that played a part in WWII.

This story is beautifully written and plotted. It is exciting and absorbing. It tells the story of love, loss and the vagaries of the human heart. The research that went into this book is exhaustive. This is my first Bradford Morrow novel, but I will certainly be looking into other ones he has written. I truly loved it. My only problem with the book was that the transitions were difficult to follow. The story jumped from present to past with barely a paragraph break. Hopefully, this is resolved before final publication. The musical references were a little disconcerting because I did not know them, but no distraction at all from the story.

I want to thank Netgalley and Grove Atlantic/Atlantic Monthly Press for forwarding to me a copy of this remarkable book to read.

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## Marita says

*“Then there was the matter of the manuscript, a piano sonata in three movements, its staves scored with musical notes in sepia ink by an anonymous hand sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. It had been her birthright and burden for these two decades since her father’s death. Birthright because it constituted her father’s most treasured bequest to his daughter.”*

**Prague Sonata** is a complex work of historical fiction set mainly in (surprise, surprise) Prague. Some of the action also takes place in England and in various locations in America. There is a mystery/thriller element as well as a modicum of romance, but it is by no means a romance novel. As the title indicates, there is also music. In fact the entire novel reverberates with music.\* The reader will find anything from Jimi Hendrix to Maria Callas, *“Jean-Yves Thibaudet’s rethinking of the complete keyboard works of Ravel and Debussy”*,

Mischa Maisky and Martha Argerich. However, the focus is mainly on eighteenth and nineteenth century composers whether they be famous or more obscure. There are many discussions about music.

It is not surprising that there is so much music, as the plot centres around a valuable music manuscript of unknown origin which during 1939 is torn into three sections - each containing one movement of the sonata referred to as the Prague Sonata - in an attempt to keep the precious document out of the hands of the Nazis. In more recent times in America a section of the manuscript lands in the hands of Meta\*\* Taverner, a gifted pianist turned musicologist, and she sets about:

- a) finding the missing sections,
- b) discovering who the composer is, and
- c) finding the original owner of the manuscript.

There are several strands to the plot, and an interesting cast of characters. The novel is well written and researched. There is a fair amount of history of Prague, and as I mentioned previously there is plenty of music. The time shifts are seamless and easy to follow. The mystery element concerns the who and where of the manuscript (see a-c above), but there is also a thriller element as competition to find the information results in deadly shenanigans.

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**\*besides the many discussions of music, sound fills the pages:**

*"So many different tones of fear, she thought. Chromatic scales of terror, dissonant chords of dread."*

*"Several heavy pounding sounds in the distance and a roar went up from the crowd. A drumbeat, also far away. And did she hear the strains of an ambulance or was that the cat crying?"*

*"Yet the people continued to sing. Singing was their sole salvo against this tyranny. They sang as if music were a kind of fusillade, as if their voices rising together could meet in battle against the clatter of tank treads and jackboots."*

*"His festival went on, at least for a while. Bach and Beethoven and Bruckner—celestial music filled the city as the secular sirens bawled and jackboots beat the paving stones."*

*"You need to understand that all great pianists are heliocentric. They're both the sun and what the sun shines on. The world is divided right down their center. Their left hand is one hemisphere, and their right is the other. ..."*

*"If her own thirty years constituted a first movement of a sonata, she sensed in her gut that she was right now living the opening notes of the second."*

*"Cloaked in music, he climbed the hill to face his sometime master and his marrow-deep shame."*

*"The silence that fell between them was, she thought, as deafening as the John Cage piece in which silence was the music."*

*"Silent, with no words or music to accompany her, she crossed the threshold from her old life into this new one about which she knew little, but fully understood she had to enter."*

Even romance is cloaked in music terms:

*"A duet that wanted to evolve into a fugue. One whose harmonic and rhythmic structures moved toward the same resolution."*

*"This man had become music for her."*

### **\*\*Meta Taverner**

“Meta, whose parents had been young sixties idealists, named their only child with this high in mind. From the Greek μετά, her name also means *with*, or *after*, or *beyond*, something Meta had found curious when she looked it up, since how could a single word mean both *with* and *beyond* at the same time? In English usage, *meta* is a prefix signifying a concept that is an abstraction of another concept. In epistemology the prefix gets a little more complicated. Here it modifies words in such a way that they become about what they are about. Language as a mirror in which the letters are reflected not backward, but inside out. Metacognition, for instance, is thinking about thinking.”

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### **Patricia Doyle says**

The Prague Sonata was extremely well researched. Unfortunately, more often than not, this research read like a history book with countless facts or much like a telephone book filled with Czech names. It reminded me of Cliff Clavin, from television’s ‘Cheers’. Cliff knew everything about everything (“It’s a little known fact that ...”) and told you all of it. There were more details in this book than I ever wanted to know.

There were too many Czech names and street names. There were too many references regarding old composers – some famous, some not – along with their histories and innumerable details about their works. And there were too many other needless details about needless details.

In the first half of the book, there was not enough story. In fact, the premise itself was farfetched to think someone could go knocking on doors more than a half century later to find what she was looking for. The disappointment after disappointment at them not finding answers got annoying and eye-rolling. It became very tedious reading.

Thankfully, the story did pick up the second half. The wrap-up, however, was very contrived; a lot had to come together for the ending to work.

Mr. Morrow has a vast knowledge of words, using big ones every chance he got. And he definitely knew his stuff about Prague, Czechoslovakia, and composers. I have no doubt that he put his heart into this novel. Kudos for that. Sadly, though, I do not recommend The Prague Sonata to my reading friends.

Thank you to NetGalley for the opportunity to review The Prague Sonata.

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