

# *Honza Bláha*



*Show*

*Teaching*

*Training*

## *Honza*

Honza was born in the Czech Republic in 1977. He had always been attracted by horses, but it was not until the age of 9 that he got the chance to learn riding. His first mounts were Shetland ponies, but a long time has passed since then. Honza bought his first own horse called Gaston. He studied Natural Horsemanship with Pat Parelli and after discovering the possibility of teaching horses without reins he challenged his teachers and went his own way.

Honza found out it was possible to achieve collection using entirely no strings even when doing piaffe, passage, flying lead changes as well as pirouette... This discovery has effected Honza's approach to the training of horses as well as people.

*All learning is merely the beginning of much further learning.*



# *Gaston*

**Foaled:**

**15.4.1994**

**Breed:**

**Czech warmblood**

**Height:**

**150 cm**

**Sex:**

**gelding**



Gaston is Honza's first horse. Honza has been training him since 1997. The beginning was not easy at all as Gaston kept asserting his own nature and so became the best possible teacher for Honza. Although he hurt his right foreleg at the age of 4, he grew up to become a fit and skilful horse. In January 2002 he took Honza on a trip to the USA, where they spent two years and performed in Parelli's „Success with Horses Tour“. Now they are back in the Czech Republic. You can meet them live at various shows across Europe or see them on DVD Inspiration or Show Borová 2005. Gaston is Honza's best friend.



# Maxim

*Foaled:*

**25.6.2000**

*Breed:*

**Pure Arabian**

*Height:*

**150 cm**

*Sex:*

**gelding**



Honza bought Maxim in California as a two-year-old colt. It used to be the most anxious horse of the herd. Gradually, he and Honza became more and more courageous so that, nowadays on the shows, Maxim performs in harmony with Gaston.



## *Cookie*

*Foaled:*

**4.6.1998**

*Breed:*

**Arabian x Paint Horse**

*Height:*

**152 cm**

*Sex:*

**mare**



Honza received Cookie as a gift in Indiana (2003) from Pat Parelli's students. She was known as Cookie Monster, unrideable and untrainable. Cookie likes working with cattle stock and is trained in the western style. She and Gaston are the best friends and so they create a special liberty team Gaston - Maxim - Cookie.



## *Shows*

Honza & Gaston have both performed in many shows worldwide. The main highlight is their mutual relation and dressage elements without any rein or string.

Recently, new horses have come to join Gaston. Their names are Maxim and Cookie. After a synchronized liberty performance, all three show their gifts and individual skills separately.



## Teaching

Relation is the cornerstone of Honza's approach. The relation between man and horse can take many shapes, similarly as relations in a family. The secret of success is in the balance. Of course, balance alone is not enough. We need to gain authority, which is more than just the balance between trust and respect. The horse needs to know the reason why to set up a relation just with you.

Every horse has an individual and unique personality and therefore every relation with a horse has its own unique features.

To achieve your goal there does not exist a single proper way. The shortest way is not always the fastest one. Not always are the losses we suffer on our way made up by profit at the end.

And that is where we get back to the balance. A horse can be in balance only if you are in balance. You can be in balance only if your horse is in balance so that you are mutually joined in your relation. Which was first? Which is more important? Each horse needs an individual approach.



## Principy

*For a good balance a horse needs to master the following qualities:*

- Respect
- Impulsion
- Flexion

*Reasons a horse does not do what you want:*

- It does not understand
- It is afraid
- It does not want to

*Motivations of a horse:*

- Positive
  - Food
  - Comfort
  - Herd
- Negative
  - Steady pressure
  - Rhythmic pressure
  - Rhythmic movement



*There is one important rule saying that there are no rules.  
There are only principles and goals.*

## Basic Course

*What do I need to know?*

Nothing

*Tools:*

Halter, lead rope, stick

*What am I going to learn?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of ground work
- Control the horse from the ground: to halt/stand, not to be afraid, go forward, backward, yield by the hindquarters and by the front, circle, side steps, negotiate simple obstacles

## *Preparation for liberty*

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of ground work
- Short-term experience from groundwork

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Intensifying the control of the horse from the ground: halt/stand, not to be afraid, go forward, backwards, yield the hindquarters and the forequarters, circle, side steps, negotiating simple obstacles (revision)
- More practical tasks
- Improving the flexion of hindquarters/front
- Exercises to prepare the horse for obedience in free
- Negotiating difficult obstacles (bridge, barrels, plastic, going backwards over an obstacle, trailer loading)

## *Introduction into liberty*

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of ground work
- Sufficient experience with groundwork
- Mastering difficult tasks (trailer loading, barrels, plastic)

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Theory, concept and principles of liberty
- Improving control of the horse from the ground:
- Negotiating difficult obstacles
- Depart a free horse
- Calling your horse
- Attracting/keeping attention of a free horse
- Follow up
- Round pen control concept

## *Liberty - Distance*

*What do I need to know?*

- Theory, concept and principles of liberty
- Sufficient experience in groundwork with difficult tasks
- Calling your horse
- Follow up
- Supple hindquarters

*Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick

*What am I going to learn?*

- A safe free work not only inside the roundpen
- Control outside roundpen
- Simple tasks at a distance larger than 3 m
- Calling your horse from a greater distance
- Attracting/keeping the horse's attention at a great distance

## *Liberty - Refinement*

*What do I need to know?*

- Theory, concept and principles of liberty work
- Sufficient experience in groundwork with difficult tasks
- Experience with a horse in free
- Calling your horse
- Follow up
- Supple hindquarters

*Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick

*What am I going to learn?*

- Refinement of all tasks
- Turns on one foot in free
- A circle in free
- Controlling a free horse at walk, trot and canter
- Precise guiding of a free horse
- Work with obstacles (cavaletti, cones, bridge, barrels etc...)

## *Liberty - Relaxation*

### *What do I need to know?*

- Theory, concept and principles of liberty work
- Sufficient experience in groundwork with difficult tasks
- Sufficient liberty experience
- Negotiating simple obstacles in free

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Theory of a relaxed horse (a relaxed horse is not a sleeping one)
- Head low, which way, how much, when and why?
- The difference between a reaction and a response
- A horse keeping his eye on the inside of the circle
- Going forward, backwards, to the left and to the right with a relaxed horse
- Negotiating obstacles with a relaxed horse
- A relaxed horse in various gaits

## *Preparation for riding*

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of ground work
- Short experience with groundwork
- The horse must have at least 300 hours of riding

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick
- A saddle (Western, English)

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Refinement of controlling the horse from the ground: halt/stand, not to be afraid, go forward, backward, yielding the hindquarters and the forequarters, circle, side steps, simple obstacles (repetition)
- More practical tasks
- Difficult tasks (bridge, barrels, plastic, going backwards over an obstacle, trailer loading)
- Lateral flexion
- From saddle with one rein: depart, stop your horse, back up

## *Introduction for riding*

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of ground work
- Sufficient experience with groundwork
- Lateral flexion
- The horse must have at least 300 hours of riding

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick
- A saddle (Western, English)

### *What am I going to learn?*

- The theory of riding with a halter
- Connection between preparation on the ground and riding.
- From saddle: stop your horse, back up, yield the hindquarters and the forequarters, turns, and simple driving your horse

## *Basic obedience for riding*

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of riding
- Sufficient experience with groundwork
- Short experience in riding with a halter
- The horse must have at least 300 hours of riding

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, stick
- A saddle (Western, English)

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Stop a straight horse
- Circles
- Back up a straight horse
- Horse control refinement
- Turns around the hindquarters
- Turns around the front
- Simple obstacles and tasks
- Slalom
- Straight lines
- Introduction into impulsion

## Freestyle

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of riding
- Sufficient experience with groundwork
- Sufficient experience in riding with a halter
- Stop your horse by a lateral flexion in all gaits
- Straight lines, circles
- The horse must have at least 300 hours of riding

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, 2 riding sticks
- A saddle (Western, English)

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Doing without reins: stop, back up, turns around the hindquarters, straight lines, circles, simple obstacles

## Gymnastics

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles of riding
- Sufficient experience with groundwork
- Sufficient experience in riding with a halter
- Stop your horse by lateral flexion in all gaits
- Straight lines, circles
- The horse must have at least 300 hours of riding experience

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, 2 riding sticks
- Saddle (Western, English)

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Improvement of lateral flexion
- Intensify the vertical flexion
- Suppleness of head, front, hindquarters
- Fundamentals for shoulder-in and hindquarter-in
- Exercises for more suppleness

## *Relaxation*

### *What do I need to know?*

- Basic theory, concept and principles
- Sufficient experience with groundwork
- Sufficient experience in riding with a halter
- Suppleness of three zones (head, front, hindquarters)
- The horse must have at least 300 hours of riding

### *Tools:*

- Halter, lead rope, 2 riding sticks
- A saddle (Western, English)

### *What am I going to learn?*

- Relaxing the horse from the ground
- A relaxed horse is not a sleeping one
- Relaxing of head and neck
- Relaxing the horse under the rider
- Suppleness of the horse's back

## *Collection under the rider, liberty collection, specialization...*

### *What do I need to know?*

- All the theory, concept and principles
- Sufficient experience with groundwork
- Sufficient riding experience

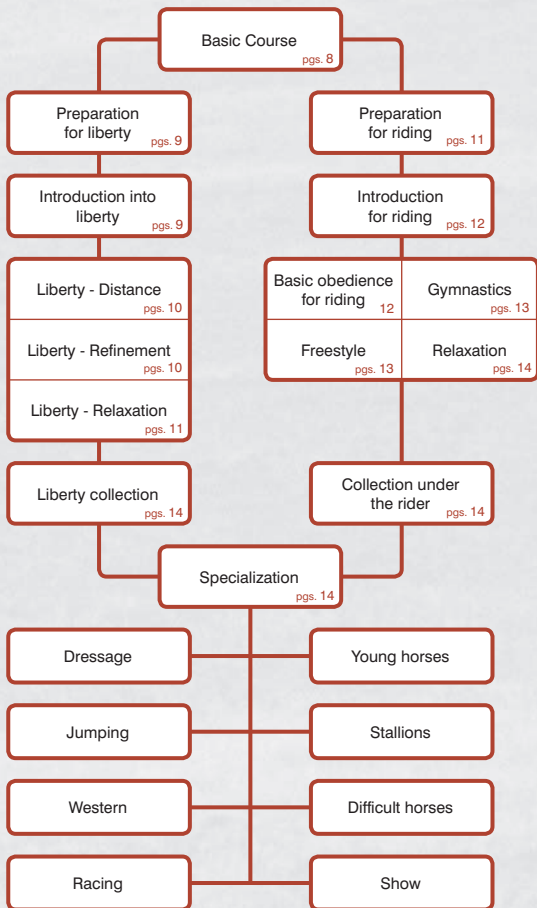
### *Tools:*

- In accordance to your personal style

### *What am I going to learn?*

- To understand the way the horse thinks about specific topics
- Context of the previously learned exercises
- Proper proportion/mixing of certain exercises in order to reach your goals

# Honza's teaching syllabus





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