



Fig. 1: Belvedere, Prag.

FERDINAND OF TYROL AND THE MUSIC CULTURE IN RENAISSANCE PRAGUE

Jan Bařa

ABSTRACT

Im Beitrag wird die Rolle Erzherzog Ferdinands von Tirol im Prager Musikleben des 16. Jahrhunderts beleuchtet. Die Aktivitäten seines Hofes auf musikalischem Gebiet sind schwer nachzuvollziehen, weil Quellen dazu in tschechischen Archiven sehr rar sind. Dennoch geben neu aufgefundene Dokumente Aufschluss über seine enge Verbundenheit mit der Prager Musikkultur während der Zeit, in der Ferdinand hier als Statthalter residierte (1547–1567). Auch nach seiner Übersiedlung nach Innsbruck blieb er dem Prager Musikleben verbunden: Er scheint kontinuierlich und aktiv an Hof-festlichkeiten teilgenommen zu haben, die über die Mauern der Prager Burg ausstrahlten und das Alltagsleben und die Musikkultur der Stadt beeinflussten.

In this paper we will try to answer the question concerning the role of the sojourn of Ferdinand of Tyrol (1529–1595) in the development of Renaissance music culture in the Bohemian royal capital. It is a theme which appears rather frequently in Czech musicological literature, however, in most cases, it does not go beyond general statements on the activities of Ferdinand's music ensemble at the Prague

Castle.¹ However, there are more links between Ferdinand and musical culture in Prague at that time and many of these links remained even after the Archduke returned to Innsbruck in 1567.²

Before paying attention to the governor and his court, it is suitable to sum up briefly what political and cultural atmosphere the young – only eighteen-year-old – Ferdinand of Tyrol entered at the beginning of 1548. The 1540's represent a rather dynamic period in the political history of Bohemia. In 1543, in face of King Ferdinand (1503–1564), the Czech estates unsuccessfully tried to enforce a religious reform which would consider the current situation and replace the more than one-hundred-year old standards which reflected the conditions close after the end of the Hussite wars. Increasing political tension ended at the beginning of 1547 at a moment when the sovereign tried to get the Czech estates involved in an armed conflict with the protestant opposition in the Empire. At that time the Czech estates rejected obedience to King Ferdinand and began getting ready for a direct military confrontation. However, Ferdinand's victory in the Empire entailed the end of the Czech estates' resistance which was followed by king's retaliation. The victorious Ferdinand I decided to inflict an exemplary punishment on the rebellious estates. However, his anger

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¹ To name Kouba, Jan: *Od husitství do Bílé hory (1420–1620)* [From the Hussite movement to the Battle of the White Mountain (1420–1620)], in: Černý, Jaromír et al.: *Hudba v českých dějinách. Od středověku do nové doby* [Music in the Czech History. From the Middle Ages to the Modern Era], Prague 1989, p. 104.

² See also Bůžek, Václav: *Ferdinand von Tirol zwischen Prag und Innsbruck. Der Adel aus den böhmischen Ländern auf dem Weg zu den Höfen der ersten Habsburger*, Wien–Köln–Weimar 2009.

affected only one part of the estates – namely the cities. He withdrew economic and political privileges they had laboriously acquired, strengthened the controlling capacities of royal power by newly introduced authorities (courts of appeal, royal bailiffs), introduced censorship and other restrictions. Although he returned some of the privileges to the cities in following years, they were never able to get such political and economic power as they had in the period before 1547. Nevertheless, or perhaps therefore, the citizens began to be more engaged in the field of culture and the second half of the sixteenth century became the time of a flourishing cultural patronage among them.³

It is also important to mention the religious situation to which Ferdinand of Tyrol came. Most inhabitants in Bohemia professed Utraquism which was based on the heritage of the Hussite revolution, nevertheless, itself was understood as a part of the Catholic Church although it was drawn apart from the Roman Church due to certain theological discrepancies. In the second quarter of the sixteenth century, Utraquism began to be influenced by the elements of Lutheranism and it led to the creation of an independent Czech Lutheran Church at the end of the sixteenth century. Besides the Utraquist majority, there was also the Catholic Church which had a greater influence in Moravia and also on the estates of Catholic noblemen; among whose leaders there were especially the Rosenberg family. These two professions (Utraquist and Roman Catholic) were legally allowed in the Kingdom of Bohemia and the preservation of religious freedom was one of the conditions under which Ferdinand of Habsburg was elected King of Bohemia. However, since the end of the fifteenth century the Unity of Brethren (Unitas Fra-

trum) had been spreading in Bohemia and, with the exception of a short period of freedom at the beginning of the seventeenth century it was always perceived as a dangerous denomination which should be systematically subdued.

Although Ferdinand I Habsburg had to promise religious tolerance at his election, he still tried to strengthen the position of the Catholic Church in Bohemia. That was the reason why, in 1556, he invited the first twelve Jesuit missionaries to Prague who laid the foundations of the unbelievable later success of this order in the Czech lands. Five years later, i. e. in 1561, the archbishopric of Prague was restored after long 140 years of *sede vacante*. Antonín Brus of Mohelnice (1518–1580), originally the Bishop of Vienna, became the first modern Archbishop of Prague.⁴

The cultural situation which the young Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol entered as the newly appointed governor should be also mentioned. Although the culture of the Renaissance had only just entered Bohemia during the rule of the previous Jagiellon dynasty, its expansion dates to the accession of the House of Habsburg.⁵ Italian Renaissance architecture began to penetrate late Gothic Prague during the rule of Ferdinand I who, between 1538 and 1563, had a summer house (Belvedere) built in the castle gardens for his wife Anna Jagiellon (1503–1547). It is the first truly Renaissance building in Prague (Fig. 1). Paolo della Stella (†1552), an Italian architect, participated in its construction and, after he died, he was replaced by Bonifaz Wolmut (†1579).⁶ A large fire in Malá Strana (Small Side) and the Prague Castle in 1541, substantially changing the look of the left-bank part of Prague, enabling new construction in the spirit of the Renaissance style which also helped to turn the late Gothic

³ For the latest and more comprehensive historical synthesis of this period see Pánek, Jaroslav: The Czech Estates in the Habsburg Monarchy (1526–1620), in: Pánek, Jaroslav/Tůma, Oldřich et al.: A History of the Czech Lands, Prague 2009, pp. 189–229.

⁴ Palmitessa, James R.: The Archbishops of Prague in Urban Struggles of the Confessional Age, 1561–1612, in: David, Zdeněk V./Holeton, David R. (Hg.): The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice, Vol. 4. Papers from the “IV. International Symposium on The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice” under the auspices of “The Philosophical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic” held at Vlá Lanna, Prague 26–28 June 2000, Prague 2002, pp. 261–273. See also David, Zdeněk: Finding the Middle Way. The Utraquists’ Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther, Washington, D. C.–Baltimore–London 2003.

⁵ For further information see Kaufmann, Thomas DaCosta: Court, Cloister & City. The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450–1800, Chicago 1995, p. 139ff.

⁶ The most comprehensive study of the Prague Belvedere was recently published by Jan Bažant. See Bažant, Jan: The Prague Belvedere (1537–1563), Prague 2011.



Fig. 2: Hvězda, Prag.

town into a Renaissance capital. Even Ferdinand of Tyrol himself left a significant architectural trace in Prague, having built a summer house called Hvězda (Star), sometimes referred to as a hunting lodge, in so-called New Royal Game Park at the White Mountain near Prague according to his own design. Between 1555 and 1562 the court builders Hans Tirol (1505/6–1575/6) and Bonifaz Wolmut created a unique six-pointed star-shaped building, amazing up to the present day with its precise geometrical proportions, decorations full of symbols and an ingenious setting within the game park (Fig. 2).

Let us turn our attention to music culture. What music background awaited the governor? Music life in Prague in the sixteenth century was especially determined by the rhythm of the liturgical year with all its feast days and festivities but also by events of purely secular character like the famous entries of the sovereign and delegations, tournaments of knights and other distractions.⁷

As far as the institutions providing the music for the liturgy are concerned, the situation was similar to that in other Central European cities. In addition to an organist, there were choirs at churches consisting of pupils from local schools which took care of the musical part of the liturgy on a daily basis; this music included Gregorian chant as well as polyphonic compositions. There was also a kind of specialty in Bohemia, namely groups of educated and music-loving citizens, the so-called literati brotherhoods which formed at the end of the fifteenth century as an imaginary heritage of the Hussite emphasis on greater participation of the laity in the liturgy.⁸ In addition to their musical role (accompaniment of liturgy), these brotherhoods, working virtually in every large church, also played a significant social role like other religious brotherhoods. They had expensive manuscript songbooks made for their musical activities, often including polyphonic music alongside Gregorian chant.⁹ They also paid attention to printed music production which was coming to Bohemia from all over Europe.¹⁰ Monastic communities – unlike in the rest of catholic Europe – lived rather poorly in that period and played only an insignificant role as far as music life is concerned. Only the Jesuits were a striking exception; coming to Prague – as we have already mentioned – in 1556 upon an

⁷ For the iconographical documents see Salmen, Walter: *Musikleben im 16. Jahrhundert* (= *Musikgeschichte in Bildern* 3/9), Leipzig 1983; Volek, Tomislav/Jareš, Stanislav (Hg.): *Dějiny české hudby v obrazech. Od nejstarších památek do vybudování Národního divadla* [The History of Czech Music in Pictures. From the Earliest Monuments to the Building of the National Theatre], Prague 1977.

⁸ See Horyna, Martin: *Vícehlasá hudba v českých v 15. a 16. století a její interpreti* [Polyphonic Music in Bohemia in the 15th and 16th Centuries, and its Interpreters], in: *Hudební věda* 43, 2006, pp. 117–134 (with extensive German summary).

⁹ A broad survey of these manuscripts was made by Barry Frederic Hunter Graham, which, however, does not include all categories of preserved sources (see Graham, Barry F. H.: *Bohemian and Moravian Graduals, 1420–1620*, Turnhout 2006). For the most comprehensive tool see the on-line database project developed by Jiří Žurek – LIMUP – The Database of Liturgical Manuscripts of the Utraquist Provenance Preserved in the Czech Republic. Available from the WWW: <http://www.clavmon.cz/limup>.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive list of printed sources preserved in Bohemia see Daněk, Petr: *Tisky vokální polyfonie, rané monodie, hudební teorie a tabulatur v českých (1500–1630). Soupis dochovaných a v českých uložených tisků* [Prints of Vocal Polyphony, Early Monody, Music Theory and Tablatures in Bohemia (1500–1630). A Catalogue of Extant Prints Preserved in Bohemia], dissertation thesis, Charles University in Prague 2005.



Fig. 3: Prag, 1562.

invitation from Ferdinand I they gave an entirely new dynamism to the local spiritual and music life.¹¹

The musical accompaniment at municipal festivities of a secular character was provided mainly by city trumpeters who were able to play simple signal music as well as polyphonic instrumental pieces. They, too, could often be found in churches where they helped to raise the prestige of music at liturgy on the most important feast days. However, music could be also heard in pubs and other public spaces as well as in private houses. It is obvious from preserved citizens' inheritance inventories which include sheets of music (both prints and manuscripts) as well as musical instruments – most often lutes and virginals.

After this more extensive introduction we can ask: What was the role Ferdinand of Tyrol could play in the development of Prague music culture? We have seen that the music situation in Prague at that time was, except for some specific aspects, similar to that in other Central European cities. What new could Ferdinand of Tyrol bring to this environment? (Fig. 3)

It was the music ensemble which he supported as a part of his court and which performed there as a permanent body, contrary to the imperial music chapel which visited Prague only on the rare occasions of the sovereign's visitations. The ensemble was established in 1564 and, thus, stayed in Prague only three years. It consisted of a Kapellmeister, six descant boy singers, four altos, four tenors and four basses.¹² Until then, Ferdinand had only a choir of trumpeters at his disposal – at least according to current literature. The number of trumpeters varied between one and two players. The maximum was reported in 1560 when a list of twelve trumpeters survives.¹³

Present literature has worked mainly with sources preserved in Austrian archives; much less relevant material survives in Prague archives. Yet these can also add to our knowledge in an important way. Petr Vorel, a Czech historian, has recently drawn attention to an important source preserved in the National Archives in Prague.¹⁴ It is an account book of Ferdinand's governor's court in Prague, recording the receipts and expenditures for the year 1551 as they were written down by

¹¹ Trolde, Emilián: Jesuité a hudba [Jesuits and Music], in: Cyril 66, 1940, pp. 53–67, 73–78; Baťa, Jan: Jezuité a hudební kultura předbělohorské Prahy. Glosy ke vzájemné interakci na příkladu klementinské mariánské sodality [Jesuits and Prague musical culture before the Battle of White Mountain. Remarks on a mutual interaction on the example of Marian Congregation at the Clementinum College], in: Cemus, Petronilla (Hg.): Bohemia Jesuitica 1556–2006, Vol. 2, Prague 2010, pp. 1003–1009; Honisch, Erika Supria: Sacred Music in Prague, 1580–1612, dissertation thesis, University of Chicago 2011, passim.

¹² Senn, Walter: Musik und Theater am Hof zu Innsbruck. Geschichte der Hofkapelle vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zu deren Auflösung im Jahre 1748, Innsbruck 1954, p. 67.

¹³ Senn: Musik und Theater am Hof zu Innsbruck (wie Anm. 12), p. 63.

¹⁴ Vorel, Petr: Místodržitelství dvůr arciknížete Ferdinanda Habsburského v Praze roku 1551 ve světle účetní dokumentace [The Governor's Court of the Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg in Prague in 1551 in Light of the Accounting Documentation], in: Folia Historica Bohemica 21, 2005, pp. 7–66.

Ferdinand's main accountant Leonard Giennger.¹⁵ According to Petr Vorel, it is the first independent financial statement of the Archduke's Prague court after its accounting was formally separated from that of the imperial court.

The accounts imply that among 134 persons at Ferdinand's court during the year 1551, there were two trumpeters (Trumetter), the first one named Virgilius Aquilla (Adler) with a monthly salary of 13 guldens, the second one – Christoph Grässel with 10 guldens.¹⁶ However, the account book also captured many other interesting details related to the musical culture at that time. They are all included in the column "extraordinary costs".¹⁷ In addition to references about musical performances held during Ferdinand's stay at the Imperial Diet in Augsburg in January and February 1551, the book documents musical activities not only at the governor's court in Prague but also during Ferdinand's frequent tours outside Prague, no matter if it was for business or for amusement. In this respect, there are very interesting references to musical performances of Italian violin players (Wällsche Geiger), the number of whom varied between four and six persons and who seem to have already performed at Ferdinand's court at that time on a long-term basis (there is evidence at least from June to December 1551).¹⁸ Other permanent music guests included cathedral singers (Cantorei im Schloss Prag), who, like the Italian violin players, also amused the governor either in front of his room or at table (zum Tafelstuben).¹⁹ During Ferdinand's frequent tours around Bohemia there was hardly any stop which could do without the presence of music. These performances were always provided by local musicians, regardless of whether they were a literati brotherhood, school choir (Cantorei) or city trumpeters (Trumetter). None of these musical amusements was left

without remuneration. The extensive list of expenses spent on Christmas Eve is the most interesting record.²⁰ The music accompaniment at the governor's table was provided not only by the Italian violin players and the cathedral choir but also by singers from several Prague churches – St. Adalbert and St. Andrew. However, fifteen other choirs are mentioned, coming from all three of Prague's cities – Staré Město, Nové Město and Malá Strana (the Old Town, the New Town and the Small Side). Contrary to Petr Vorel, we do not think that the mentioned ensembles participated in a sort of gala evening to entertain the young governor.²¹ It was more probably a charitable gift to these churches on the occasion of Christmas; and might have been a commemoration for encounters in the past year. In any case it is a remarkable evidence of Ferdinand's cordial relations with Prague's music culture which could hardly be found in any other Habsburg sovereign.

The Archduke Ferdinand also played an essential role at the construction of the new organ in the St. Vitus's Cathedral. The instrument was commissioned by his father, the Emperor Ferdinand, from the German organ builder Friedrich Pfannmüller (c1490–1562) in 1553. As in other cases, the Archduke acted as an extended hand of the Emperor who authorized him to supervise not only the construction of the instrument but also the construction of the loft where the organ was situated. The construction of the organ was protracted over twelve long years (it was finished in 1565) and, in addition to Pfannmüller, there were several other organ builders working on it including the master of the Innsbruck organ – Jörg Ebert († before 1582). The organ of St. Vitus – with three manuals, pedal and 45 registers one of the biggest instruments of its time – suffered from many

¹⁵ Prague, National Archives, collection Komorní knihy [Chamber Books], Ms. 1898.

¹⁶ Prague, National Archives, Ms. 1898 (wie Anm. 15), pp. 85–87. On the personalities of Adler and Grässel see also Senn: Musik und Theater am Hof zu Innsbruck (wie Anm. 12), p. 139.

¹⁷ Prague, National Archives, Ms. 1898 (wie Anm. 15), pp. 215–272.

¹⁸ Prague, National Archives, Ms. 1898 (wie Anm. 15), p. 234: "Item 27. Junij [1551] Funf Wällfichen Geiger. fo der F[ürstlichen] g[nade] mit Iren Infrumenten ain Zeittlange gediennt [...] geben [...] xxiiij g[ulden] xx kr[euzer]."

¹⁹ Prague, National Archives, Ms. 1898 (wie Anm. 15), pp. 226, 228, 250, 258, 261, 267.

²⁰ Prague, National Archives, Ms. 1898 (wie Anm. 15), pp. 265–269.

²¹ Vorel: Mistodržitel'ský dvůr (wie Anm. 14), p. 60.

imperfections due to the frequent changes of organ builders and repairs extending over many years which were the reason for the discontent of imperial organists, which is well described in specialized literature.²²

Ferdinand of Tyrol, however, interfered with the environment of the city in another, very distinctive, way – as an organizer and active participant in secular festivities. In particular these included Triumphal Entries into the capital and tournaments of knights. One of the famous Entries was especially recorded in the history of the city as it was depicted in several detailed contemporary descriptions, humanist poetry and incidental songs.²³ It was held on November 8 and 9, 1558 during the Prague celebration of the imperial election of Ferdinand I.²⁴ The Emperor received a welcome from eight thousand riders outside the city walls and then proceeded with the procession through the streets towards the Castle. On his tour he encountered nine singing muses performed by students of leading Prague schools. There were twelve trumpeters and drummers performing; the Emperor was also celebrated by polyphonic vocal compositions. The participation of Jewish musicians was a remarkable music feature of the festivities; they sang polyphonic arrangements of some Hebrew psalms for the by-passing Emperor. Also Jesuits were rather active participants and this event marked one of the first occasions for their performing in public. The finale of the first festive day included a theatre performance in front of the Prague Castle gates, symbolizing a triumphal procession of Bacchus. The next day another, even more impressive, production took place in front of the royal sum-

mer house with huge decorations depicting the victorious fight of Jupiter with five Giants. The theatrical production, which was a sort of allegory of the rule of Ferdinand I, had several symbolic levels. The imperial level included the fight against dangerous Turkish threats while on the level of local politics one could read allusions between the lines to the recently suppressed uprising of the Estates which the audience must have vividly remembered. In addition to its entertaining effect, Ferdinand's theatre production had also the function of propaganda. When reading comprehensive descriptions of the festivities of 1558 a question arises: what was the music which was performed on such occasions? Unfortunately, there are mostly only indirect sources available, like the texts of songs and motets mentioned in the descriptions of festivities. With a few exceptions, musical compositions had the same destiny as the decorations of triumphal arches which art historians include under the category of ephemeral architecture.

Ferdinand of Tyrol happened to be an organizer of Prague festivities even after he left the governor's office and moved to Innsbruck. For example, at the turn of February and March 1570, he organized a spectacular tournament featuring a theatre performance on the Staroměstské (Old Town) square in the presence of many noblemen from the Empire and the display of a live elephant seen for the first time in Prague.²⁵ Fifteen years later, he stood behind the organization of a celebration of the Order of the Golden Fleece at the Prague Castle which was captured not only in a description but also in pictures.²⁶

²² Quoika, Rudolf: Die Prager Kaiserorgel, in: Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch 36, 1952, pp. 35–46; Ders.: Der Orgelbau in Böhmen und Mähren, Mainz 1966, pp. 19–23, 42–43.

²³ Among others Collinus, Matthaeus/Cuthenus, Martinus: *Brevis et succincta descriptio pompae in honorem sacratissimi ac invictissimi Imperatoris Ferdinandi primi [...] exhibitae a [...] Ferdinando, archiduce Austriae etc. et ab ordinibus totius Regni Boemiae, octava Novembris, anno 1558, Pragae 1558*; Mattioli, Pietro Andrea: *Le solenni pompe i superbi, et gloriosi apparati, i trionfi, i fuochi, [...] fatt alla venuta dell'invittissimo imperadore Ferdinando primo, dal Sereniss, suo Figliuolo l'Archiduca Ferdinando, nella Real citta di Praga l'octavo giorno di Novembre, M.D.LVIII, Praga [1559]*.

²⁴ For an extensive description with further bibliography see Bažant: *The Prague Belvedere* (wie Anm. 6).

²⁵ *Ordenliche beschreibung des Gwaltigen Treffenlichen und herrlichen Thurniers zu Roß und Fuß [...] So am Sonntag Oculi Anno 70 [...] zu Prag in der Alten Statt [...] gehalten worden ist, Augsburg 1570 (VD16: O 869)*; Pánek, Jaroslav: *Der Adel im Turnierbuch Erzherzog Ferdinands II. von Tirol. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Hoflebens und der Hofkultur in der Zeit seiner Statthalterschaft in Böhmen*, in: *Folia historica bohemica* 16, 1993, pp. 77–96.

²⁶ *Ordenliche Beschreibung mit was stattlichen Ceremonien und Zierlichkeiten [...] den Orden deß Guldin Fließ in disem 85. Jahr zu Prag und Landshut empfangen und angenommen, Dillingen 1587 (VD16: Z 225)*; Seipel, Wilfried (Hg.): *Wir sind Helden. Habsburgische Feste der Renaissance*, Wien 2005, pp. 21–22.

In conclusion, let us answer the question of what the role was that Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol played in relation to the music culture in Prague and Bohemia in the sixteenth century. As an eighteen-year-old man he entered an environment which had specific political, religious and cultural features. Soon, he was able to find his own way and ceased to play the passive role of the executor of his father's instructions. He became an independent and creative stimulator for musical and cultural life. Through his cordial relationship to music and the arts he compensated for the missing royal court. His cultural ambitions could be fully expressed in organizing secular festivities like outstanding royal entries, knightly tournaments and theatrical productions. He did not

interrupt his close cultural relations to the Czech environment even after he left for Innsbruck in 1567. Many guests from Czech noble circles could be found at his Ambrass castle.²⁷ Many noble sons also spent their juvenile years in Innsbruck, among others Kryštof Harant z Polžic (1564–1621), later a music composer.²⁸ Thus Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol played a prominent role in the development of Renaissance music culture in Bohemia. However, the evaluation of his impact will of necessity be the subject for further more detailed research.

Translated by Nora Hodečková, the translation revised by David R. Holeton.

²⁷ Bůžek, Václav: Der böhmische und mährische Adel am Hof Erzherzog Ferdinands von Tirol in Innsbruck und Ambras, in: Noflatscher, Heinz/Niederkorn, Jan Paul (Hg.): *Der Innsbrucker Hof. Residenz und höfische Gesellschaft in Tirol vom 15. bis 19. Jahrhundert* (= Archiv für österreichische Geschichte 138), Wien 2005, pp. 425–438.

²⁸ Quoika, Rudolf: Christoph Harant von Polschitz und seine Zeit. Ein Kapitel aus der böhmischen Musikgeschichte der Renaissance, in: *Die Musikforschung* 7, 1954, pp. 414–429.

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