

## *The First Opera Repertoire of the Castle Theater in Český Krumlov*

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The South Bohemian city of Český Krumlov was first mentioned in 1253 as an estate of the Lords of Krumlov, a branch of the Vítkovci family. After these first owners died out, another branch of the family, the Rožmberks, took over the property as their familial residence. Next to the sovereign, they were the most powerful noblemen in all of Bohemia. Considerable economic development of the whole region took place around 1600 during the reigns of the last two members of this family, Vilém and Petr Vok. The former medieval stronghold was reconstructed and turned into a Renaissance residence suitable for a family of noble position. The city's wealthy citizens copied the tastes of their lords by adorning the walls of their homes with paintings and by building entrances with stone facings. Both hitherto independent settlements—the extramural one called “The Latrán” and the inner city—were also united into a single administrative and economic entity at this time.

Before he died, Petr Vok sold the castle, with its accompanying town and estate, to Emperor Rudolph II of Austria. After an uprising of the Czech nobility had been suppressed in 1622, the estate was given to the Austrian nobleman Johann Ulrich von Eggenberg. The family's successors sold the property in 1719 to the Schwarzenbergs, who undertook further modifications of the castle and its surroundings. The old aristocratic system broke down in 1848, with the onslaught of a new era. When the new Czech settlers took control of the area after the Second World War, the city's monuments were in poor condition. However, a number of buildings of historical interest have been saved, and others will be renovated in the near future during a general reconstruction of the city. Český Krumlov has been declared a historic shrine and has become a center of lively tourism in the southern Šumava mountain range.

The period of most interest musically is that encompassed by the life of Joseph Adam von Schwarzenberg (1722–82). His reign was marked by extraordinarily intensive building activity and a busy social and cultural life. The additions of this era contributed a great deal to the beauty of the castle and fortress.

After his father's unexpected death,<sup>1</sup> Schwarzenberg spent the rest of his youth in Vienna and touring in other European countries. He subsequently endeavored to utilize on his estate the experience he had acquired in the imperial residential city and abroad. He did so not only in the economic sphere but also in purposeful construction, initiated by his fascination for social and cultural reforms. The castle premises were enriched by numerous paintings, statues, and other *objets d'art*. In 1742 the Prince had his personal

Council of Grenadiers transferred from Hluboká nad Vltavou to Český Krumlov. Two years later a winter riding school designed by Andrea Altmonte was built on the slope above the castle. A beautiful Masquerade Hall was appended to the castle complex in 1748, and more adjustments were made in the following years. The castle chapel was rebuilt and has kept its appearance to this day. In 1755–56 a pavilion called Bellaria was added to the decor of the castle garden, and in 1759–60 a new stone bridge was constructed in front of the castle entrance next to the Bear's Pit. In 1764 a stone bridge, situated in the upper castle and adorned by statues of saints, replaced a hitherto wooden one that was called "Na Plášti" (On the Coat).

All of these modifications and innovations were crowned by the building of a new castle theater. Theatrical presentations in Český Krumlov Castle had always been a favorite pastime of the inhabitants, and accurate reports on performances originate from the years toward the close of the 16th century. The first permanent theater was designed by J. M. Schaumberger in 1682 and was built shortly thereafter during the reign of Prince Johann Christian von Eggenberg. The Prince had his own ensemble, whose members were part-time professional actors, part-time castle employees.<sup>2</sup> No records of the repertoire of this theater have been preserved. In the castle archives, however, there are some manuscripts of Italian operas which date from the end of the 17th century and which were probably performed in the castle theater at this time.

Music was, in any case, an important aspect of the theatrical pursuits in which the noble family engaged. The death of Prince Johann Christian in 1710 unfortunately caused a discontinuation of the theater life in Český Krumlov. Endeavors to renew it were made in the first half of the 18th century when Joseph Adam von Schwarzenberg became acquainted with French *opéra comique* in Vienna.

By 1756 the old theater had fallen into a bad state of disrepair. Even in good condition, its technical equipment would have been incapable of fulfilling the requirements of the period. If performances in the theater were ever to be resumed, a total renovation would have to take place. Designs for the reconstruction of the theater were in preparation from 1760 on, but actual construction did not commence until 1765. In the meantime a smaller stage in one of the great castle halls was used until work on the theater proper was completed in 1766.

The equipment for the change of coulisses, curtains, and other stage settings, which is still preserved intact today, was made by the Viennese carpenter Lorenz Mak and displays the ingenuity of its designers and creators. Wall and ceiling paintings, the curtain, and drapery, as well as the coulisses, represent the work of the Viennese theater painters Johann Wetschel and Leo Merkl.<sup>3</sup> Both artists also decorated the walls of the small theater hall called The Gold Room. "Plays started as soon as the construction of the new castle theater was concluded and the stage and auditorium provided with the necessary equipment," states a contemporary

record from the year 1767.<sup>4</sup> One special presentation of note, which took place in the summer of 1768, was a gala opera in honor of the wedding of the castle owner's son, Johann von Schwarzenberg.

After twenty brilliant years of existence the theater outlived its term of usefulness and ceased to be popular. The number of performances kept dropping from year to year and, by the end of the 19th century, had stopped altogether. After the Second World War a few opera performances took place, but the old glory of the Český Krumlov Castle Theater should be reborn when the present repairs are concluded.

Although archival research dealing with the past of the Český Krumlov Theater has been rather successful, exactly who the actors were has not yet been clearly established. There was no resident company attached to the castle; however, some of the castle employees did participate in performances. Neither is there evidence of regular entertainments provided by a foreign company, although there are records of occasional performances by visiting artists who were reimbursed by the Prince for their services. Judging from the documents and literature of the period, one may assume that the company was really a domestic amateur ensemble composed of the Prince's family and, sometimes, their aristocratic friends. Thus, some of the facts about the theater have been ascertained, but much remains to be explained.

Music from the second half of the 18th century preserved in the state archives gives evidence of frequent operatic presentations which took place in this charming setting. These spectacles were usually supplemented by ballet pieces. There are about 300 music manuscripts in the castle library from the period which show signs of use during a past era. Whoever had such a theater built and equipped with costly furnishings then saw to it that the music available in the library for performances in the theater was indeed used.

Information on the composition of the repertoire is given by an inventory originating from the second half of the 18th century, i.e., the first years of the theater's existence. It contains elementary records of operas and ballets and states that the manuscripts were deposited during that period in Český Krumlov Castle. The most remarkable thing is that, with very few exceptions, all the mentioned compositions have been preserved and are now part of the Český Krumlov music collection.

The repertoire divides itself easily into certain primary types of compositions. There are French comic operas (called *opéras comiques* in the inventory), Italian operas (*opere serie* and *opere buffe*), and ballets. On the whole, the origin of the above music is evident. The Prince was often in Vienna and attended performances there. He became acquainted with everything connected with the theater. In his memoirs Count Khevenhüller-Metsch gives an impressive and detailed account of these Viennese performances.<sup>5</sup>

In the following listings<sup>6</sup> the composer is included, together with his dates and the name of the work. If no composer was given for a particular work but research has since determined his identity, the name is listed in

brackets; a question mark in brackets indicates that authorship of the work remains unknown. Opera titles have been left as they appear on the manuscripts, although the more usual names have been added where there are major differences. Information such as the date of the first performance in Vienna or nearby Laxenburg has also been included. The numbering of the manuscripts in the old inventory has also been kept. Accordingly, each of the works has been provided with a call number indicating its place in the collection.

There are twenty-seven French *opéras comiques* recorded in the inventory, twenty-six of which are still intact in the castle library. With regard to the dates of these operas, the music was probably brought to Český Krumlov during the first performances, while the works were still part of the Vienna theater repertoire. The composers' names are not mentioned for the majority of these operas, but most have been determined and are listed.

The *opere serie* form another important category in the inventory. These operas did not seem to have been too popular in the castle of Český Krumlov, because their performance required a large number of singers and actors. Altogether, there were six works of this type in the collection, all originating from the 1760's, and five of them have been preserved. Three are manuscripts, and two are printed. The manuscripts are works by Johann Adolph Hasse, and the printed operas are works by Christoph Willibald Gluck. The missing opera was also composed by Gluck.

Most of the performances staged in Český Krumlov belong to the *opere buffe* group. To the audience they were the most acceptable ones, easy to understand and not requiring much scenery. During the first years of the theater's existence, this type of opera represented the dominant artistic trend in Vienna. It must have been easy to procure the music, as well as organize theater company tours to a small but interesting provincial place like Český Krumlov. A number of performances were supplemented by other topical works and frequently by ballets with serious subject matter. Everything was inspired by fashion, and it would be wrong to suggest that theater life in Český Krumlov did not depend largely on foreign models.

A separate list of five operas—*bernesche*—was later added to the existing register. The *bernesche* are of obvious Italian origin. In the inventory they are placed between the lists of *opere serie* and *opere buffe*. Of these five *bernesche*, one, an anonymous opera, was lost. One *opera buffa* out of twenty-three listed titles is missing at present. The only non-Italian composer is the Czech Florian Leopold Gassman, who first brought Salieri to Vienna. In one case, No. 11, the original printed libretto is preserved apart from the music. Research as to the time of creation of these operas has established that most of them were composed at the end of the 1760's and the beginning of the 1770's, i.e., exactly at the time when the Český Krumlov Castle Theater began its performances. Such discoveries give proof of a lively and interesting Czech musical tradition which can still be seen today through the successful

performances of modern Czech artists all over the world and through the international renown of Czech composers.

*Opéras comiques*

1. Ciampi, Vincenzo Legrenzio, 1719–62. *Li tre gobbi rivali* (arias). The work is better known under the title *La favola dei tre gobbi*. The premiere took place in Venice in 1749.  
Sign. No. 28<sup>1</sup>/2/5 K 16.
2. Dauvergne, Antoine, 1713–97. *Les Troqueurs*. The first Vienna performance was in 1758.  
Sign. No. 28<sup>1</sup>/2/3 K 16.
3. [Duni, Egidio Romoaldo, 1709–75]. *Ninette à la cour* (airs accompagnés). The full title of this work is *Le Caprice amoureux ou Ninette à la cour*. The first Vienna performance was in 1760.  
Sign. No. 19<sup>1</sup>/2/3 K 14.
4. [—]. *L'Isle des foux* (ariettes). The first Vienna performance was in 1761.  
Sign. No. 27<sup>1</sup>/2/20 K 16.
5. [Galuppi, Baldassare, 1706–85]. *Filosofo di campagna* (arias). The first Vienna performance was in 1763.  
Sign. No. 24<sup>1</sup>/2/7 K 15.
6. Gluck, Christoph Willibald, 1714–87. *L'Arbre enchanté* (airs nouveaux). The premiere took place in Schönbrunn in 1759.  
Sign. No. 24<sup>1</sup>/2/6 K 15.
7. —. *Le Cadi dupé* (airs nouveaux). The premiere took place in Vienna in 1761.  
Sign. No. 27<sup>1</sup>/2/21 K 16.
8. [—]. *Le Chinois poli en France* (airs accompagnés). The premiere took place in Laxenburg, near Vienna, in 1756.  
Sign. No. 26<sup>1</sup>/2/17 K 15.
9. —. *La Cythère assiégée*. The first Vienna performance was in 1759.  
Sign. No. 24<sup>1</sup>/2/10 K 15.
10. [—]. *La fausse esclave*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1758. The work is missing from the collection.
11. [—]. *L'Isle de Merlin* (airs accompagnés). The premiere took place in Schönbrunn in 1758.  
Sign. No. 28<sup>1</sup>/2/1 K 16.
12. [—]. *La Rencontre imprévue*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1764.  
Sign. No. 18<sup>1</sup>/2b/1 K 13.
13. [—]. *La Rencontre imprévue*. See No. 12.  
Sign. No. 18<sup>1</sup>/2b/2 K 13.
14. —. *Les trois sultanes* (ariettes). There is no record of Gluck having

provided music for this work. It is perhaps *Soliman second ou les trois sultanes* by Paul César Gibert, 1717–87, based on a text by Charles Simon Favart. *Soliman second* was first presented in Paris in 1761.

Sign. No. 24 K 14.

15. ——. *L'Yvrogne corrigé* (airs nouveaux). The premiere took place in Vienna in 1760.

Sign. No. 24<sup>1</sup>/2/8 K 15.

16. [Maldere, Pierre van, 1729–68]. *Les Amours champêtres* (airs accompagnés). This is a parody of *Les Sauvages*, part of *Les Indes galantes* by Jean Philippe Rameau, 1683–1764. The text is by Charles Simon Favart, and the first Vienna performance of *Les Amours champêtres* was in 1755.

Sign. No. 26<sup>1</sup>/2/13 K 15.

17. [Monsigny, Pierre Alexandre, 1729–1817]. *Le Roi et le fermier*. The first Vienna performance was in 1763.

Sign. No. 23<sup>1</sup>/2 K 14.

18. [Pergolesi, Giovanni Battista, 1710–36]. *La Servante maîtresse*. This is a translation of *La Serva padrona*. The first Vienna performance, in French, was in 1758.

Sign. No. 26<sup>1</sup>/2/19 K 15.

19. [Philidor, François André Danican, 1726–95]. *Le Diable à quatre*. The first performance in Laxenburg, near Vienna, was in 1759.

Sign. No. 24<sup>1</sup>/2/9 K 15.

20. [—]. *Le Maréchal ferrant*. The first Vienna performance was in 1763.

Sign. No. 27<sup>1</sup>/2/22 K 16.

21. [Sodi, Charles, ?–?]. *Les Amours de Bastien et Bastienne*. The libretto, by Charles Simon Favart, his wife, and Harny de Guerville, is a parody of *Le Devin du village* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712–78. The name Charles Sodi might be a pseudonym. The first performance of *Les Amours* in Laxenburg, near Vienna, was in 1755.

Sign. No. 24<sup>1</sup>/2/15 K 15.

22. [?]. *Le Magazin des modernes* (airs accompagnés). The first performance in Laxenburg, near Vienna, was in 1756.

Sign. No. 28<sup>1</sup>/2/2 K 16.

23. [?]. *Recueil des chansons les plus nouvelles avec la basse*.

Sign. No. 26<sup>1</sup>/2/18 K 15.

24. [?]. *Suffisant* (airs). The text is by Jean Joseph Vadé. The premiere took place in Paris in 1753.

Sign. No. 28<sup>1</sup>/2/4 K 16.

25. [?]. *Le Trompeur trompé* (airs nouveaux). The text is by Jean Joseph Vadé. The first Vienna performance was in 1756.

Sign. No. 26<sup>1</sup>/2/16 K 15.

26. [?]. *Tyrçis et Doristée* (airs accompagnés). The work is a parody of *Acis et Galatée* by Jean Baptiste Lully, 1683–1764, and is on a text by Charles

Simon Favart. The first performance in Laxenburg, near Vienna, was in 1756.

Sign. No. 26<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>/12 K 15.

27. *La Vengeance inutile*. This work, whose full title is *Raton et Rosette ou La Vengeance inutile*, is a parody of *Titon et l'aurore* by Jean Joseph de Mondonville, 1711–72. It is on a text by Charles Simon Favart. The first Vienna performance was in 1755. The music is partly by Charles Sodi, partly by Mondonville.

Sign. No. 26<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>/14 K 15.

#### *Opere serie*

1. Gluck, Christoph Willibald, 1714–87. *Alceste* (in Italian). The premiere took place in Vienna in 1767. This edition was printed in Vienna in 1769. Sign. No. 126 K 19.

2. [—]. *Orfeo ed Euridice*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1762. The work is missing from the collection.

3. —. *Paride ed Elena*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1770. This edition was printed in Vienna in the same year.

Sign. No. 124 K 19.

4. Hasse, Johann Adolf, 1699–1783. *Alcide al bivio*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1760.

Sign. No. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> K 10.

5. [—]. *Romolo ed Ersilia*. The premiere took place in Innsbruck in 1765. Sign. No. 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> K 10.

6. —. *Il trionfo di Clelia*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1762.

Sign. No. 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 10.

#### *Bernesche*

1. [Galuppi, Baldassare, 1706–85]. *Arcifanfano, re dei Matti*. The premiere took place in 1749.

Sign. No. 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 14.

2. Piccinni, Nicola, 1728–1800. *L'astrologa*. The premiere took place in Naples in 1756.

Sign. No. 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 14.

3. —. *L'incognita perseguitata*. The premiere took place in Venice in 1764. Sign. No. 19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 14.

4. Rust, Giacomo, 1741–86. *La contadina in corte*. The premiere took place in Venice in 1764.

Sign. No. 19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 14.

5. [?]. *Più briconi il piacer*.

Missing from the collection.

### Opere buffe

1. Anfossi, Pasquale, 1727–97. *La Metilda ritrovata*. The work is also known as *L'Incognita perseguitata*. The first Vienna performance was in 1773. Sign. No. 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 14.
2. Fischietti, Domenico, ca. 1720–ca. 1810. *Il dottore*. The full title is *Il signor dottore*. The first performance in Laxenburg, near Vienna, was in 1764. Sign. No. 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 10.
3. ——. *Il mercato di Malmantile*. The first Vienna performance was in 1763. Sign. No. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 10.
4. Galuppi, Baldassare, 1706–85. *Le nozze*. The first Vienna performance was in 1764. Sign. No. 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 11.
5. Gassmann, Florian Leopold, 1729–74. *L'amore artigiano*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1767. Sign. No. 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 12.
6. ——. *La contessina*. The first Vienna performance was in 1770. Sign. No. 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 13.
7. ——. *La notte critica*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1768. Sign. No. 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 13.
8. ——. *Il viaggiator ridicolo*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1766. Sign. No. 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 11.
9. Gazzaniga, Giuseppe, 1743–1818. *La locanda*. The first Vienna performance was in 1772. Sign. No. 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 14.
10. Guglielmi, Pietro (Alessandro), 1728–1804. *Più bricconi, più fortuna*. No performance date or place could be determined for this work. Sign. No. 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 13.
11. Piccinni, Nicola, 1728–1800. *La buona figliuola* (libretto). The first Vienna performance was in 1764. This libretto was printed in Vienna in the same year. Sign. No. 10 K 12.
12. ——. *Il cavaliere per amore*. The first Vienna performance was in 1766. Sign. No. 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 11.
13. [—]. *Le contadine bizzarre*. The first Vienna performance was in 1767. Sign. No. 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 12.
14. ——. *Figliuola maritata*. The full title is *La buona figliuola maritata*. See No. 11. Sign. No. 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 10.
15. ——. *La pescatrice*. The full title is *La pescatrice ovvero L'erede riconosciuta*. The first Vienna performance was in 1769. Sign. No. 14 K 13.

16. [—]. *La schiava*. The work is better known as *Gli stravaganti*. The first Vienna performance was in 1768.

Sign. No. 6 K 11.

17. Sacchini, Antonio Maria (Gaspero Gioacchino), 1730–86. *La contadina in corte*. The first Vienna performance was in 1767.

Sign. No. 9 K 11.

18. ——. *Il finto pazzo per amore*. The first Vienna performance, in German, was in 1779. The premiere took place in Rome in 1772.

Sign. No. 13 K 12.

19. [Salieri, Antonio, 1750–1825]. *Il barone di Rocca Antica*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1772. The work is missing from the collection.

20. ——. *La fiera di Venezia*. The premiere took place in Vienna in 1772.

Sign. No. 12 K 12.

21. Scarlatti, Giuseppe, ca. 1718–77. *L'isola disabitata*. The first Vienna performance was in 1757.

Sign. No. 11 K 12.

22. ——. *Gli stravaganti*. The work was later known as *La moglie padrona*. Its premiere took place in Vienna in 1765.

Sign. No. 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> K 11.

23. Scolari, Giuseppe, 1720–69. *La cascina*. The first Vienna performance was in 1768.

Sign. No. 2 K 10.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Adam von Schwarzenberg's father had a fatal accident during a hunt at Brandys near Laxenburg.

<sup>2</sup> Dušan Ludvík, "Die Eggenbergschen Hofkomödianten," *Acta Neophilologica* 3 (1970): 65–92.

<sup>3</sup> Jiří Hilmera, "Zwei böhmische Schlosstheater," *Maske und Konthurn* 4 (1958): 125–34.

<sup>4</sup> Český Krumlov Archives, Sign. No. I 7Bb 10.

<sup>5</sup> Fürst Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, ed. Rudolf Graf Khevenhüller-Metsch and Hanns Schlitter, 7 vols. (Vienna: Adolf Holzhausen, 1907–25). This is the diary of Khevenhüller-Metsch, who was the Supreme Imperial Steward from 1742 to 1776.

<sup>6</sup> The author wishes to thank Stephen Willis of *Current Musicology* for his help in preparing the catalogue.