

Database of Instrument Makers

(<http://www.mcmi.cz/databaze>)

The database offers collected information regarding the makers of musical instruments, either of Czech origin or those of foreign origin who were active in the Czech lands for some time or settled here permanently. The database strives to be as complete as possible, and so basic information about the makers is further supplemented by any and all detailed findings that might facilitate research into the given person. The index is based primarily on the paper database housed in the Department of Musical Instruments of the Czech Museum of Music, which was built up by the curators of the department over the course of several decades. The index continues to be expanded with new people and institutions, the existence of which has been discovered by contemporary research and literature. To allow for the quick access of information, each entry includes a scan of the relevant record from the paper database. Individual records are processed according to the rules detailed below, but as this is a long-term endeavour, as-yet unprocessed records are marked “ve zpracování” (“being processed”).

Project methodology

Seeing that the database is supposed to serve mainly as a supporting tool for organological research and not merely as a conventional work of lexicography, the methodology of the project is guided by several particularities:

- **The database is being published in three phases:** 1) The first task is to digitise the existing paper database, which was systematically maintained as a whole until the 1980s (in later years, research and updates were focused on specific figures and not on the database as a whole). 2) Subsequently, the data in this database must be processed into the form of encyclopaedia entries (with regard to both form and the verification of referenced sources). 3) The final step is to gradually update each entry according to the findings of present-day research and literature and also to add further entries based on new research.

The publication of the present (that is, not up-to-date) version of the database is justified as an opportunity providing relatively swift access to data of significant extent, which is contained in the existing database. Even in this form, it constitutes a major source for organological research. Bringing it in line with the newest findings is a time-consuming effort and will thus be conducted subsequently over a longer period.

For this reason, the heading of each entry contains the date of its last revision in square brackets. This also allows for the continuous addition of newly acquired information in the future.¹

- **Entries use a two-level structure:** On the first level, the entry provides basic and essential organological information regarding the instrument maker (visually differentiated in bold), while the second level contains all other detailed information of varying degrees of importance that may help uncover new sources of information on the instrument maker.

Together with the unrestricted approach to content, this two-level concept offers users a complex and up-to-date overview of research on the given person.

- **The database of instrument makers is connected to the database of instruments,** as it is being built up, which will gradually allow users to study information about the instrument maker himself alongside specific extant musical instruments from his workshop.

The detailed structure of each entry consists of several sections. The individual sections and their methodological treatment are characterised in the following paragraphs:

- **NAME:** The name is written in the format of “surname, given name(s)”, square brackets are used to include any variants of the given names or surname. The database orders entries according to the primary version of the surname, but full-text searches may also look for the variant forms. If variant names exist, the primary name of the instrument maker is the one he himself used. If this is unknown, the choice of primary surname is governed by the frequency of appearances in sources and literature or according to other conventional customs. Makers with the same given name and surname are differentiated in the database with the use of Roman numerals in brackets – for example, Ambrosch, Karl (I) – with the Roman numerals accorded chronologically.
- **BIOGRAPHICAL DATA:** Biographical data is listed in the format of a range of years, that is, “year of birth – year of death”, or “year company was established – year company was dissolved”; detailed information regarding this data (the date and place of birth/death) can be found directly in the text of the biography itself, if it is known. If the year of birth or death is unknown, it is replaced with a question mark (for example, 1890–?). If neither year is known and no closer specification is possible, the section is defined in terms of centuries (for example, “first half of 18th century”, “turn of 19th and 20th century”). In some cases, if the years of birth and death are unknown but other dates near to those events are known (for

¹ For this reason, we recommend referencing the date of the last revision when citing individual entries.

example, date of apprenticeship qualification, date of handover of workshop, etc.), the biographical data is defined by a range of years using the following abbreviations: a = before the year, c = around the year, p = after the year (for example, a1820–1887; c1900–1950; a1843–p1900).

- **PLACE OF OPERATION:** The names of municipalities are always listed in their original language and according to present-day geography; any customary Czech equivalents of the names of foreign municipalities are included after the original name and separated by a forward slash (for example, Wien / Vídeň; Nürnberg / Norimberk). Historical equivalents of the names of Czech municipalities are listed after the present-day version and marked by square brackets (for example, Kraslice [Graslitz]). If the instrument maker operated in two or more places, the locations are ordered chronologically, providing their chronology is known.
- **BIOGRAPHY:** The biography has a two-level structure: The first part presents essential information about the instrument maker, that is, the dates of birth and death, notes on the places of birth, operation, etc., information regarding apprenticeship training, experience earned, major works, etc. This part is visually highlighted in bold.

The second part contains all other information of varying degrees of importance that has been gleaned from a detailed research of the literature and sources, such as notes on marital status, places of abode, activities outside the craft, etc. The inclusion of the complex results of research is justified by the possibility of uncovering new sources of information about the instrument maker.

- **SIGNATURE:** This section generally consists of two parts: a transcription of the signature and its description. The **transcription** presents the exact and literal wording of the signature used by the instrument maker. If a different script than Latin is used, a Latin transliteration is included (this mainly pertains to Cyrillic script). Illegible passages in the signature are replaced in the transcription with the following grouping of symbols: “[...?...]”, ambiguous readings of a word in the signature are appended with a question mark in square brackets directly after the illegible word (for example, ... Prague[?] anno...).

The **description** complements this information with a characterisation of the signature’s execution, any embellishments, and other specific details featured by the signature.

If the instrument maker used multiple signatures, they are listed in all of their known forms in chronological order and marked with the period for which the given signature is characteristic (if this can be ascertained).

- **EXTANT INSTRUMENTS:** The list of instruments that have been preserved is divided into instrument groups and categories; each category is further ordered according to pitch type

and then date of origin (if identifiable). Items documented in the database of instruments are highlighted and hyperlinked to the relevant entry in the database.

- **SOURCES:** The sources reference archival materials in the form of writing, imagery, or sound. Written documents are only included as sources if they are manuscripts or rare prints. Readily accessible printed sources are listed in the bibliography.
- **BIBLIOGRAPHY:** The bibliography is ordered solely chronologically and not according to any systematic categories (with regard to lexicographical or other forms).