

Church organists:

J. Förster, A. Dvořák and J. B. Foerster

The original baroque organ is now in St. Haštal's (St. Castullus') Church in Prague, having been moved by Karel Eisenhut. Thanks to Josef Förster and Antonín Dvořák, a new organ was built during the restoration of St. Vojtěch's Church from 1875–1877 and 1881. This returned the church to its original gothic style. This organ was constructed in 1877 by the firm Steinmayer from Ottingen, Bavaria. The organ became a sought-after instrument that added to the fame of the renowned choir and musicians of St. Vojtěch's. In the first half of the 20th century, as one of the most precious organs in Prague, it was saved from war requisition by Dobroslav Orel.



The organ in the evangelical Matroneum comes from the Prague Carolinum and was transported by Jiří Filípek of the company Igra. A story says that the composer Christoph Willibald Gluck, who was connected to Czech cultural life, played on it. A detailed list of all the music masters, organists and what were termed reservists at St. Vojtěch's can be found in the book *Prague Organs* by Vladimír Němec.



Memorial plaque by the entrance to the St. Vojtěch's Church

St. Vojtěch's Church

St. Vojtěch's Church is a double-aisle 14th century gothic building that, along with the vicarage and the two-storey belfry standing on the site of the former cemetery, form an interesting scattering of historic buildings. They maintain the memory of Vojtěšská čtvrť (Adalbert district), part of Nové Město pražské (Prague New Town).

The church and the vicarage underwent a baroque reconstruction led by the architect Jan Josef Wirth (1731–1787), who carried out the rebuilding of the Archbishop's Palace in Hradčany. The walls of the representative rooms, together with the staircase are decorated with restored mythological paintings in the classical style from the time of Joseph II. In the Refectory of St. Vojtěch's Church there is a late baroque hall with rich frescoes. The **Josef Bohuslav Foerster Memorial Hall** was established here in 1959.



Římskokatolická farnost u kostela sv. Vojtěcha
Pštrossova 214/17, 110 00 Praha 1
<http://farnostsvvojtech.websnadno.cz>



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St. Vojtěch's Church (St. Adalbert) and Josef Bohuslav Foerster Memorial Hall



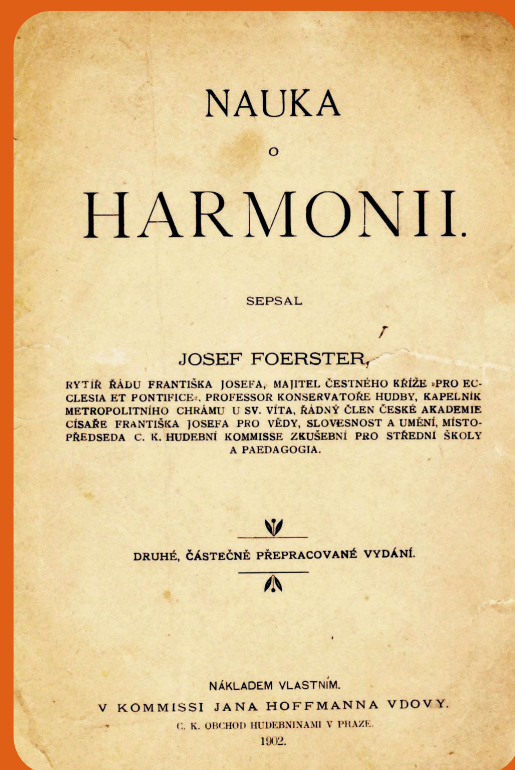


Josef Förster (1833–1907)

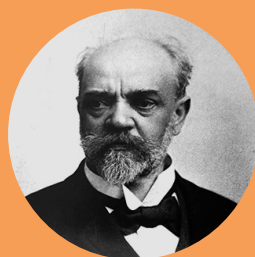
born 22. 2. 1833 in Osenice. After studying at the Prague Organ School (1850–1852) he became an organist in the church of the Cistercian order in Vyšší Brod. He returned to Prague in 1857 to hold

an appointment in St. Mikuláš's Church in Malá Strana (also called Lesser Town), then from 1858–1888 at St. Vojtěch's Church, and from 1887 till his death in St. Vít's Church. He was very interested in renaissance polyphony and was among the leading figures in the Cecilian church music reform. J. Förster composed church music, wrote a harmony manual which retained its usefulness for decades, and became a professor at the Prague Conservatory. He died in Prague on 3. 1. 1907 and is buried in Olšany cemetery.

Josef Förster and his wife had seven children altogether; five of them reached adulthood. The family lived very close to the church of St. Vojtěch and the paintings of The Stations of the Cross by his son Viktor hang on the church walls there. Josef Bohuslav Foerster was married in this church on 1.9.1888 to Berta Lautererová, already by then a successful soprano at the National Theatre.



*The Harmony
Manual
by J. Förster*



Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

born 8. 9. 1841 in Nelahozeves. He studied at the Prague Organ School from 1857–1859; from 1862–1873 he played viola in the Prozatímní divadlo (The Provisional

Theatre) under the baton of B. Smetana. From 1874–77 he was an organist in St. Vojtěch's Church. He kept returning to this church later in his life, when he was already a famous and recognized composer, because he loved improvising on this particular organ with which he felt so closely associated. After successes abroad, particularly in England and the USA, where he was a professor of composition and artistic director at the National Music Conservatory in New York (1892–1895) he resumed his teaching from 1891 in Prague. From 1901 till his death on 1. 5. 1904, he was also the director of the Prague Conservatory. A. Dvořák is buried in Vyšehrad.



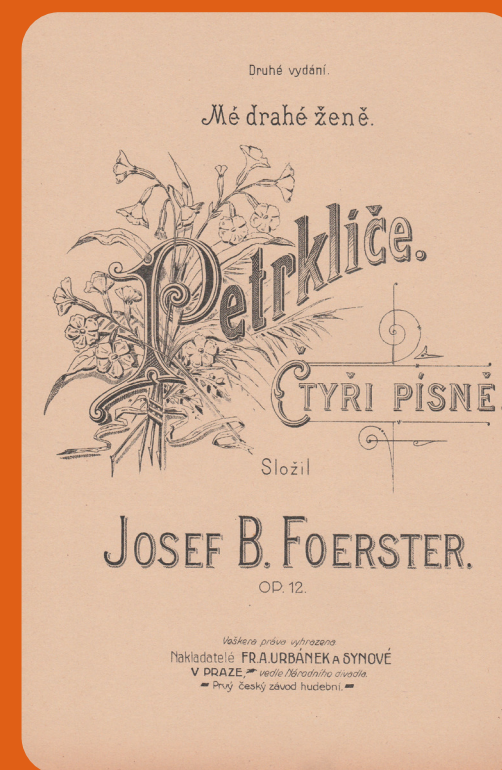
Prague
mosaic from
the atelier
of Viktor
Foerster



Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951)

born 30. 12. 1859 in Prague, Malá Strana, the family soon moved to the picturesque no. 19 Pštrossova street. Placed there now is the composer's bust by the sculptor Karel Otáhal. J. B. Foerster grew up in

a well-established musical family dedicated to church music and as a boy was a chorister in the church. In 1882, he completed his studies at the Prague Organ School and immediately obtain the position of organist at St. Vojtěch's Church following in the footsteps of A. Dvořák. He held this position until 1889. Foerster and Dvořák became close friends and kept in touch even during lengthy travels abroad. Many memories of this time are recorded in his autobiographical book *The Pilgrim* (Poutník). After a quarter of a century living in Hamburg and Vienna, he returned to his homeland with his wife and son Alfred. J.B. Foerster died on 29. 5. 1951 in Vestec near Stará Boleslav. He was denied his wish to have his funeral at St. Vojtěch's Church. He is buried in Olšany cemetery.



The title page of
the song cycle
The Primroses
from 1888,
a wedding
present from
J. B. Foerster
to Berta
Lautererová.