



# The Petr Bezruč Memorial

Opava



# The Petr Bezruč Chalet

Ostravice



# Guide



Slezské  
zemské  
muzeum



The Petr Bezruč Memorial

# The Petr Bezruč Memorial

The Petr Bezruč Memorial is one of the six exhibition buildings and premises of the Silesian Museum. It came into being during the lifetime of the poet Petr Bezruč and stands on the site of his birthplace. The Petr Bezruč Memorial is both a centre for literary studies and an exhibition site whose activities have, for over fifty years, been primarily focused on the study and retrieval of the papers of major literary figures from Silesia and north Moravia. The Memorial's depository contains over 200,000 documents from the estates of around 85 literary figures, which puts the Silesian Museum in second place in the Czech Republic behind the Museum of Czech Literature in Prague.

The ground floor of the Petr Bezruč Memorial contains an exhibition on the life of this great Silesian poet. The first floor contains a hall that is used for cultural events organised by the museum, such as temporary exhibitions, lectures and readings.

On the initiative of the Memorial, a literary festival commemorating the poet came into being in 1958, the year of his death. The festival is known as 'Bezruč's Opava' and takes place in September. The event went through a number of changes over the years until it reached its current form of a multi-genre festival, with the original week-long festival being replaced by a whole month of varied cultural events and programmes. Bezruč's Opava is amongst the oldest cultural festivals in the Czech Republic.

As stated above, the museum building is located on the spot where the birthplace of the poet Petr Bezruč used to stand. The original building was seriously damaged at the end of the Second World War and had to be demolished. In 1946 the Petr Bezruč Society was created in Opava with the aim of gathering artefacts connected to Bezruč and allowing researchers to publish works on the poet. The main goal of the Petr Bezruč Society then became to build a Bezruč museum.

In 1952, the tasks of the above society were assumed by the Silesian Study Institute in Opava, which included a special Petr Bezruč department. Efforts to build a Bezruč museum culminated in the official opening of the Petr Bezruč Memorial exhibition on newly constructed premises on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1956. In accordance with Bezruč's last wishes, the Memorial became heir to the poet's estate, including the copyright to his works. This estate also included the Petr Bezruč Chalet in the village of Ostravice, which contains an exhibition that attempts to convey the atmosphere of the poet's lifetime. Following the reorganisation of the Silesian Study Institute in 1958, the Memorial came under the administration of the Silesian Museum in Opava.

In the mid-1960s preparations were begun for a new exhibition, which was opened in September 1967 with the title 'The Life and Works of Petr Bezruč'. Practically unchanged, this exhibition remains within the Memorial to this day. The exhibition outlines the most important moments in the life and works of Bezruč.



## Petr Bezruč as a person – an unconventional appearance on the literary scene

Petr Bezruč (1867–1958, real name Vladimír Vašek) is amongst the most significant representatives of Czech poetry from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He made his name with his only collection of poetry, the *Silesian Songs*. As with Bezruč's celebrated creative method, there is nothing to compare these unique verses with anything in Czech literature. The author has been classified by literary historians amongst the generation of so-called 'anarchist rebels' and his works were influenced by symbolism and Czech Modernism.

The opening section of the exhibition documents Petr Bezruč's official entry into the world of literature.

In 1899 Vladimír Vašek submitted his poems to the *Čas* ('Time') periodical, through which they came to the attention of the publisher, Jan Herben. Herben saw massive potential in the poems and decided to publish them, despite not knowing who was behind the pseudonym Petr Bezruč. Thus Bezruč's first three poems came to be published in a supplement to the *Čas* periodical. The poems *The Hideous Sight* and *Palacký Centenary* were immediately confiscated on their first publication in the fourth issue of *Čas* in February 1899. The first poem to be seen by readers was thus *Destruction*, later renamed to *Only Once*.



Birthplace of Vladimír Vašek



Ostrožná street and birthplace of Vladimír Vašek after the Second World War



View of the exhibition

## Only once

I cannot remember when and where  
I once heard this story told.  
Somewhere far in the north  
there is a gloomy valley shut in by hills,  
sorrowful and dark,  
where the sun has never shone.  
A sad people lives there  
in rough smoke-blackened tents amidst the eternal  
snow:  
round the fire sit the men –  
words cost them more than gold –  
behind them the sad-eyed women,  
and the children huddled in furs.

Who can tell how it happened,  
maybe the Earth went out of orbit,  
but one day the sun began to shine:  
afraid of the brightness all the people  
fled on the instant to their black tents,  
pushed boulders against each entrance  
and fell face to the ground,  
begging the demon of the unknown,  
to spare their lives...  
Outside meanwhile  
the bright sun melted the everlasting snow  
and the untouched soil  
Bloomed with violets at his kiss.  
The sun god, seeing  
the silence like death and the frightened prayers,  
passed on from that valley  
and never looked back again.

When fear was overcome  
and the people left their tents  
and gazed at the moistened earth,  
smelt the fragrance of the unknown violet,  
and when they perceived it was a good god  
by them offended, who had shown his face,  
and understood in their hearts  
that the day would never come again,  
then sorrow deeper than life  
bowed the heads of the sombre men  
and the necks of the saddened women,  
and they lived on in double grief  
because they knew that once  
the light of life had shone upon their clouded land,  
and through fault of theirs passed by –  
never to come again!

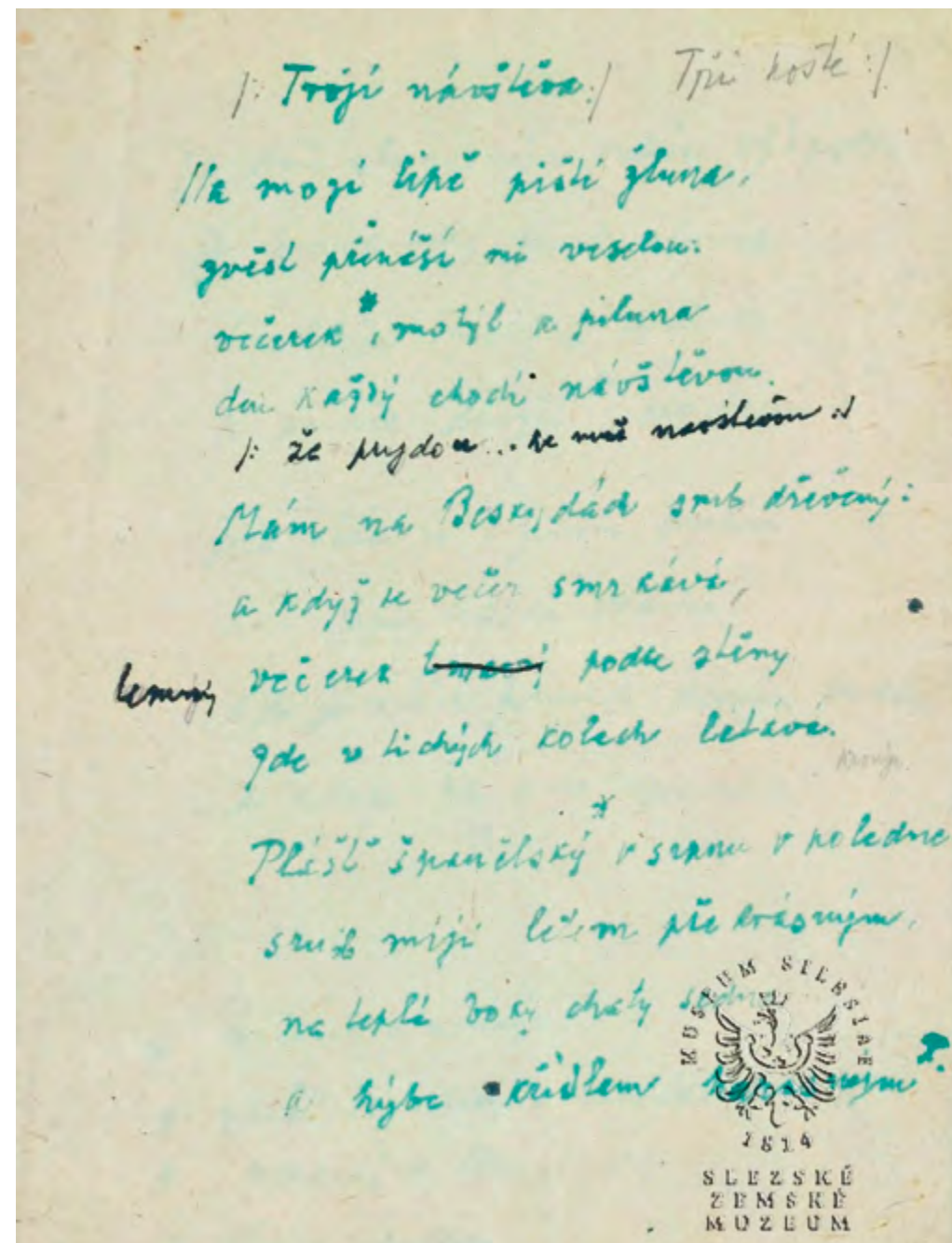
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Only once love came my way.  
She had black hair falling to her waist,  
and in her soft voice she said to me:  
"You are a good man  
and will make any woman happy,"  
and the brief shy look,  
which said more than her words,  
spoken in the gentle tones  
of my Těšín homeland;  
went with her speech!  
And I, who long ago  
had drained the cup to the bitter dregs  
and ripped out the white pages of my life's book,  
said in the rough way  
the blackened miners speak  
there beneath Ostrava's plain:  
The man you take as a husband  
will always be happy –  
but a rose does not grow upon a wilted stem.

I loved her. And she married another!  
My hearth burnt out, my heart darkened,  
and sorrow unending is mine  
whenever I remember  
how sweet love came my way  
and I shut fast my cottage door  
and never again will it come back!

Translation: Jan Milner (Silesian Songs. Artia, Brno, 1966)

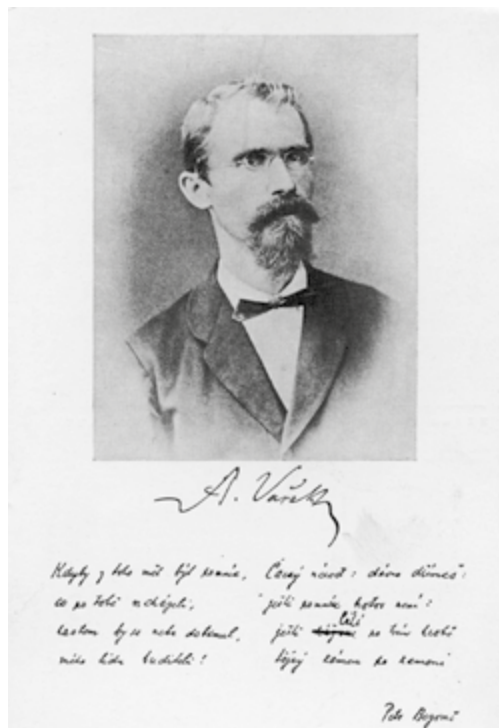
The poems met with a considerable reception on the part of readers and a massive search was initiated to find out who was hiding behind the pseudonym of Petr Bezruč. Through his works, the poet aroused massive interest, as his concept of artistic creation as a revivalist tradition with a concern for the fortunes of the nation set him up, and he was perceived, as its spokesman; the people's bard. Once his identity was revealed, Bezruč forbade the publication of any further poems, although he did consent to their publication in 1903 as a collection, entitled *Slezské číslo*.



Manuscript of a poem by Petr Bezruč



## Family background and education of Petr Bezruč



Antonín Vašek – Petr Bezruč's father



Marie Vašková – Petr Bezruč's mother

Vladimír Vašek was born on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1867 in the city of Opava, to a family steeped in the traditions of the Czech National Revival. His father, Antonín Vašek, belonged to the generation of national revivalists and, as a professor at the local grammar school, promoted patriotic activities in Opava. He came to the attention of the public through his studies doubting the authenticity of the Manuscripts of Dvůr Králové and Zelená Hora, for which he was, however, labelled a traitor to the nation. Nervous tension and overwork hastened the onset of serious illness, and Antonín Vašek died in the year 1880, when his son Vladimír was only 12 years old. The poet's mother, Marie Vašková (née Brožková) did not enjoy a happy marriage; while her husband devoted himself to teaching and scientific work, she had to look after the household and care for six children on her own. Due to Vladimír Vašek's strongly pro-Czech activities (in the almost entirely German city of Opava), the family was forced to move to Brno. Despite this, Vladimír

Vašek spent every summer in the village of Háj near Opava, and absorbed from his family a strong patriotic awareness and the courage to show stubbornness and resistance. At the same time, though, his childhood was marked by disagreements between his parents and frequent separations from his father.

In 1881 Vladimír Vašek started attending grammar school in Brno. His worst grades were in German, mathematics and song. It was during his years at the school that he wrote his first verses of poetry. These have not, however, survived (with the exception of a few verses contained in correspondence). Vašek was influenced by his reading of Vrchlický, Neruda and Poe, and read Pushkin and Lermontov in the original.

Following his successful completion of grammar school, he started studying classical philology in Prague. Amongst his teachers at university were future Czechoslovak president T. G. Masaryk, historian and writer Jaroslav Goll and historian and musicologist Otakar Hostin-

ský. It was at this time that Bezruč went through a 'lost period', when he increasingly fell into melancholy and shut himself off from the world, not taking part in any cultural, political or patriotic activities. He later admitted to not even visiting the National Theatre or St. Vitus's Cathedral. During this period, he would spend most of his time in pubs and cafés, devoting himself more to gambling and drinking than to his studies.

It was here that he first encountered Jan Herben and writer Vilém Mrštík, with whom he would discuss literature. However, following his experience of life in the metropolis of Prague he lost his illusions and taste for life. As a so-called good-for-nothing, a frequent motif in the novels of the time, he felt isolated in life and a stranger to himself. In a letter to his friend Jaroslav Kunz, he confided his nervous, melancholy behaviour: "...you yourself know that it is all in vain, that I am indifferent to the world and all that goes with it, that there is nothing connecting me to this indeterminate idea we call life, which carries within itself joys and pains. So long as I

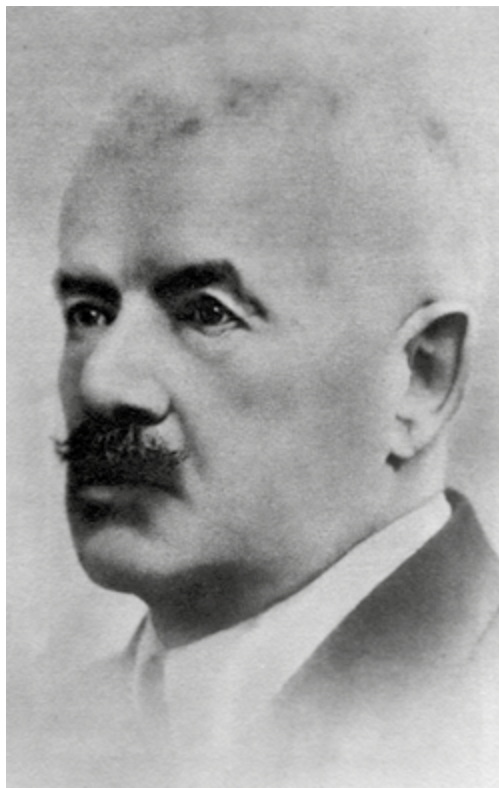
am alive, I seek to make this 'life' pleasant, and so therefore I smoke, drink and play cards." (29<sup>th</sup> June 1886)

After five semesters of study, he returned to Brno in 1888. His family was in a critical situation, as his mother had been forced to go into debt in order to support Bezruč's siblings. Petr Bezruč first worked as a clerk for the Moravian Provincial Executive Committee (*zemský výbor/ Landesausschuss*), and then a year later became a trainee at the post office at Brno train station. He was roused from his apathy by his first, occasional excursions to the countryside around Brno. It was at this time that wrote his first prose sketches, the *Café Lustig Studies*, which were published in 1889 under the pseudonym Ratibor Suk. The published texts are marked by their feeling for detail and ironic, but nevertheless calm and narrative, style, showing the author's talent for observation and fondness for telling a story. In 1891 Bezruč passed his clerk's exams, guaranteeing him a structured salary, after which he was transferred to the post office in the town of Místek.



Certificate

## Bezruč – his work, friends and loves



Petr Bezruč

The stay in Místek proved to be a fateful one for Petr Bezruč and his works. It was here that he became acquainted with his best friend, Ondřej Boleslav Petr, who helped him acquaint himself with the landscape and people of the nearby Beskydy region. Both men wrote poetry and undertook excursions to the mountains, where Petr acquainted Bezruč with the history of and problems faced by communities in the region. Petr was a passionate patriot, who aroused Vladimír Vašek's interest in the social issues confronting Silesia. It was at this moment that the apathetic student and postal clerk started to change into a staunch advocate of the rights of the people of Silesia. Boleslav Petr was a Czech teacher who felt uncomfortable with his superiors and was eventually compelled to leave his job. Apart from his loss of employment, he was also abandoned by his

lover, Hana Hamplová, leading Ondřej Boleslav Petr to commit suicide. Petr Bezruč then told the life-story of his best friend in the poem *Schoolmaster Halfar*.

Boleslav Petr and Petr Bezruč were frequent visitors to the 'U Sagonů' inn, where one Maryčka Sagonová worked. Sagonová made a deep impression on Bezruč; however, at the time they became acquainted, she was already married, with five children - this platonic relationship did hold much hope for the future.

The situation was different with Vašek's great love, Doda Bezručtová. The true friendship Vašek shared with the girl became a passionate love affair. Doda was from a rich family and impressed Bezruč with her education and artistic and musical skill. Petr Bezruč asked Doda's mother for the hand of his daughter in marriage, but was refused, as the mother did not believe him to be sufficiently financially secure for a husband-to-be. Doda took her mother's side and left Bezruč. The separation was a very painful event for the poet, and never married. Doda later married a rich civil servant named Jakub Deml, who was much older than Doda and with whom



Maryčka Sagonová



Doda Bezručtová

she did not enjoy a happy marriage. After the death of her husband, Doda tried to renew contact with Bezruč, but the poet did not want to return to a love that had already been lost.

It is highly probable that Vladimír Vašek created his literary pseudonym by combining the names of those who had had the most influence on his life. Thus Ondřej Boleslav Petr and Doda Bezručtová, combined in the form of Petr Bezruč, influenced not only Vašek's life, but his literary works.

Vladimír Vašek's residence in Místek in the years 1891–1893 served not only as the inspiration for the core of his *Silesian Songs*, but also formed the basis for his lifelong love of the Beskydy region – both for the landscape and for the people living there. After the publication of the *Silesian Songs*, Petr Bezruč forever became the bard of the Beskydy region, whose people form an integral part of the work.



Fanyňka Tomková, one of the loves of Bezruč



## Places close to Bezruč

Following the separation from Doda, the poet retreated into himself. He never married and so never had a family to support him. He did, however, have many friends, who let him stay at their homes, sometimes for months at a time.

One of these friends was Antonín Pírek from the village of Kostelec na Hané, where Bezruč stayed in the so-called Red Cottage. Another of Petr Bezruč's frequent destinations became the village of Branka near Opava, where he resided with one Čeněk Kanclíř. Amongst the poet's very favourite places, though, was his chalet in the village of Ostravice.

Petr Bezruč died in Olomouc on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1958. He was buried, according to his wishes, in the cemetery in his native Opava.



The Red Cottage in Kostelec na Hané



Petr Bezruč's study in Kostelec na Hané

## The Silesian Songs

A lot of attention has been, and continues to be, devoted by researchers to the origins of Bezruč's only collection of poetry. There were several stages in the creative process that gave birth to the *Silesian Songs*. The origins can be dated to the beginning of the 1890s, before the critical autumn of 1898, when the poet fell ill with haemoptysis. It is likely that a substantial part of the collection (the core of the *Silesian Songs*) was created over a very short space of time in the opening months of 1899. Bezruč's sudden creative tension was triggered by his serious lung and nerval disease, his personal experience of unfulfilled love and a feeling of obligation to speak out about the ethnic and social repression in his native region. In his letter to Jan Herben, Bezruč indicates the incredible creative process accompanying the creation of these key poems:

*"Dr. Herben, do not think that, were I to write a poem in a mere five minutes, that it would be easy! I do not know, it is as if the khamsin had blown through my soul (sit venia!), the thoughts swarm like torrents from the hills, I cannot catch words and thoughts, then I am burnt out for half an hour afterwards. I think that if I were to write five poems like The Hideous Sight and Maryčka Magdónova, one after the other, then they could take me to [the psychiatric hospital in] Černovice. You once said of me in that issue that was confiscated, that these are great and passionate works. The first is praise, the second is truth; but it burns in me like the passion of a drunkard or a gambler."*

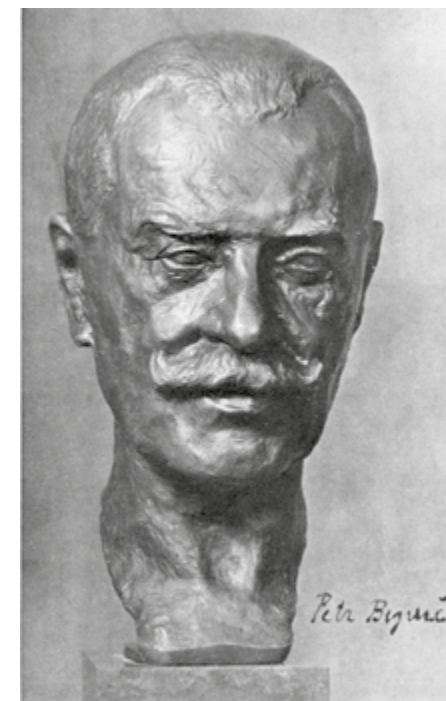
During the years 1899 and 1900, Bezruč sent Jan Herben the majority of the poems that formed the basis of his life's work. In 1903 the author gave his consent to the publication of a special edition of the *Slezské číslo* periodical (initially 22 poems, then 31 a year later). In 1909 the collection was expanded – to 54 poems – and published for the first time in book form under the name *Silesian Songs*.

During his entire creative life, Bezruč published no other works than the *Silesian Songs*. However, he constantly worked on the collection, reworking the poems, altering them rhythmically and adding new poems. Admittedly, these alterations weren't always to the benefit of the poems. The alterations made by Bezruč in the course of the 1930s, in particular, were, from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, worse than those previous and were made for linguistic reasons and to mechanically reflect changes in the Czech language. Due to the large qualitative differences between the various editions, the definitive form of the *Silesian Songs* became the subject of dispute. A specialist conference

on the textological problems of the *Silesian Songs*, held in Opava in 1963, decided that the canonical text would be based on the text of the 1928 edition.

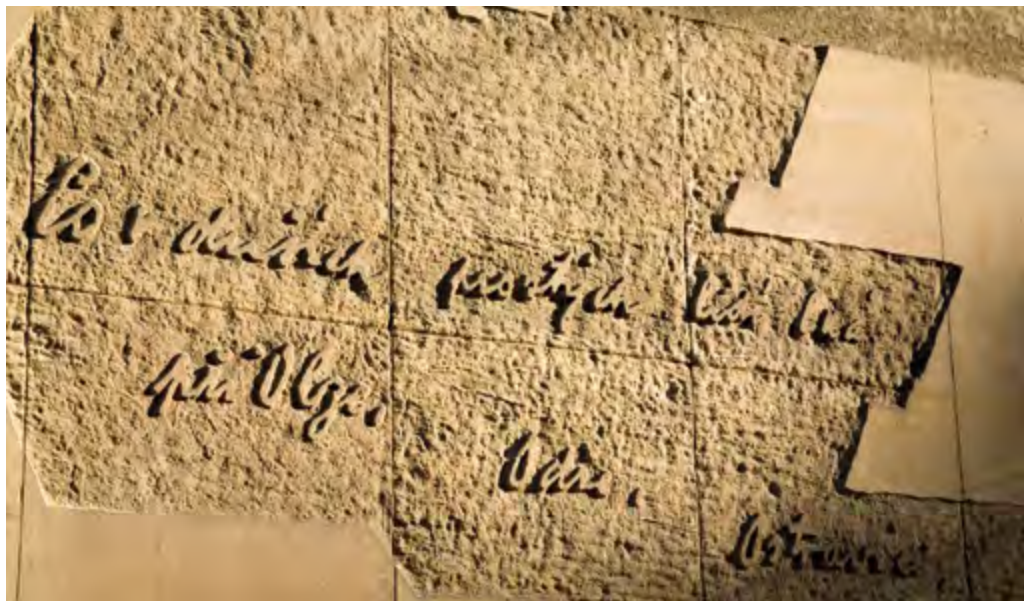
The poem *The Butterfly* (1930) and lyric verse *Swan* (1961) were published separately. A large number of occasional prose and descriptive études stand on the fringes of Bezruč's opus. The authorship of the *Poems opus V* collection, signed by Pavel Hrzánský (one of the pseudonyms of the young Vašek) remains disputed. Amongst the poet's other pseudonyms were Ratibor Suk, Leo Charvát and Smil z Rolničky.

The poet's self-stylisation as the bard of a dying people was intended as part of the myth of the resistance and revolt of the Silesian people. Not only does Bezruč express himself in allegorical terms, but the specific setting of almost every poem can also be determined. What makes Bezruč's poems exceptional, aside from their documentary quality and regional testimony, are their symbolic visions, mythical references, balladic qualities and aggressiveness, the dramatic qualities of their dialogues and their local dialect colouring.



Petr Bezruč

## The Silesian Songs in the world at large



Detail of facade of Petr Bezruč Memorial

Petr Bezruč is one of the most frequently translated Czech authors, and his verses have been translated into more than 40 languages. Translations of the poems into Esperanto facilitated their further translation into Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

The final part of the exhibition includes a secret recording made by employees of an Ostrava radio station of the voice of Petr Bezruč in conversation with his 'secretary' (as the poet called her), Zdenka Kadlecová (married name Tomášková), the author of a book of reminiscences entitled *The Judgement of Solitude*. As Petr Bezruč was not accommodating towards journalists or filmmakers, he gave interviews only in very exceptional cases. It was for this reason that Zdenka Kadlecová resorted to a minor deception: following a relaxed lunch, she had a chat with the elderly poet over an afternoon coffee next to an open window, where microphones had been concealed in a plant-pot in order to record the innocent conversation. The aim of recording this conversation was not to find out any vital information on his life and works, but merely to gain a record of his voice.

The visual look of the exhibition is the work of the architect Ivo Klimeš (born 1932), who created an interesting view through the building into the interior. The

interior space was opened up through the demolition of the back wall and the filling of the space with a large glass window, which has since been slightly adjusted, with a view through to the atria, which contains greenery, a fountain and a relief wall. The stone elements in the atrium, as well as the plaques on the wall containing quotations from verses by Bezruč, were created by the sculptor Vladislav Gajda (1925–2010).

The figure of Petr Bezruč is of massive significance to both the Ostrava region and national literature. Despite the fact that his works are rooted in the time at which they were created and the work of a specific generation, his treatment of the repression of the Silesian people is unique. The appearance of Bezruč at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was, is and will continue to be an influence on, chiefly, regional literature, as the authors of the current and future generations of Silesian writers will evidently have to measure themselves against the legacy of the great poet.

The works of Petr Bezruč have also been the subject of an exceptional amount of attention on the part of artists and musicians, with the texts of many poems serving as inspiration for artistic, musical or dramatic adaptations.



Petr Bezruč Award

**Contact:** Ostrožná 35, 746 01 Opava  
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**Opening hours:**  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.





*The Petr Bezruč Chalet*

# The Petr Bezruč Chalet

Like the Petr Bezruč Memorial, the Petr Bezruč Chalet in Ostravice is administered by the Silesian Museum. The chalet is a furnished building, with emphasis being placed on preserving the authentic atmosphere of the chalet from the period when it was inhabited by Petr Bezruč. For example, once the chalet came under the administration of the Silesian Museum following the death of the poet, Zdenka Tomášková, the aforementioned former assistant of the poet, helped museum employees to tidy up the premises and put individual items of furniture in their original locations.

The chalet was acquired in 1958 as part of Petr Bezruč's estate, and represents a unique memorial to the world-renowned poet. The uniqueness of this spot obligates his heirs maintain both the interior and exterior of the original, built by the poet himself, and the original form of the immediate vicinity, despite the many irreversible changes that experienced by the surrounding landscape.

## Maryčka Magdonova

One night going home from Ostrava  
old Magdon stopped at his wayside inn.  
Ended in the ditch with a broken skull.  
And Maryčka Magdonova wept.

A truck of coal overturned on the tracks.  
Underneath lay Magdon's widow.  
In Staré Hamry five orphans were sobbing,  
the oldest Maryčka Magdonova.

Who will care for them, who give them bread?  
Will you be father to them and mother?  
Who owns the mines, do you think they have hearts  
like you, Maryčka Magdonova?

Boundless the forests of Marquis Gero.  
If father and mother are killed in his mines,  
may the orphan gather an armful of wood,  
what say you, Maryčka Magdonova?

Maryčka, it's freezing and there's nothing to eat.  
In the hills, in the hills there is wood and to spare...  
Mayor Hochfelder watched you gathering it,  
should he say nothing, Maryčka Magdonova?

What man have you taken to be your bridegroom?  
Bayonet over shoulder, helmet and plume,  
stern his looks, and you follow him to Frýdek,  
will you go with him, Maryčka Magdonova?

You a bride? Bowed is your head,  
over your eyes the kerchief wet  
with your tears bitter and burning,  
what is it, Maryčka Magdonova?

The rich men of Frýdek, the ladies of Frýdek  
will laugh at you with malice and scorn,  
Mayor Hochfelder will watch from his window.  
How goes it, Maryčka Magdonova?

In the freezing cottage the little birds linger,  
who will care for them, who bring them food?  
The rich man never. What was in your heart  
as you went your way, Maryčka Magdonova?

Steep, Maryčka, steep the rocks rise,  
where the Ostravice wild and foaming  
hurls its torrents down to Frýdek.  
Do you hear, do you see, lass of the hills?

One leap to the left and all is over.  
Your black hair caught on the rocks below,  
red with blood are your white hands,  
God be with you, Maryčka Magdonova!

In Staré Hamry by the cemetery wall  
without cross, without flowers, huddle the graves  
of those who died by their own hand.  
There lies Maryčka Magdonova

Translation: Jan Milner (Silesian Songs. Artia, Brno, 1966)

## History of the Petr Bezruč Chalet

After the First World War, Bezruč's love of the Beskydy region led him to purchase a cottage in Gruň. However, this plan was overruled by his friend, the poet Otakar Bystřina, who persuaded him to jointly purchase the reeve's house in the village of Staré Hamry (now known as Ostravice). Bezruč agreed to this; he liked the area mainly because the cottage was not far from the river Ostravice. Bezruč loved the water and never turned down the opportunity to bathe in the ice-cold river.

The two poets built the former reeve's house into a summer residence. Otakar Bystřina lived on the ground floor, while Petr Bezruč occupied the attic. Their joint occupancy of the chalet was not, however, easy, as the household was run by Bystřina's wife. As a joke, the poets started calling their residence 'Devil's Island', and Bezruč soon started avoiding it. Following Bystřina's death, joint ownership of the property was divided. Petr Bezruč was given the barn, part of the garden, a forest clearing and the forest. With the help of some friends, he rebuilt the barn, according to his own design, to an inhabitable chalet, which stands in this form to the present day.

The exhibition at the Petr Bezruč Chalet presents the authentic environment of the poet's summer residence and touches on his life story and the Beskydy region, which he immortalised in his *Silesian Songs*.

The chalet is divided into several rooms – the 'big room' (*hrubá jizba*, a large, general-purpose room used for dining, sleeping, and to receive guests), bedroom, kitchen, hallway and wood store.

### 'Big room'

The most interesting room for visitors is the so-called 'big room', which is preserved and furnished exactly as it was when Bezruč used the chalet.

The poet did not encourage grandiose official visits to his summer residence. He would often keep watch on the garden from the window or the 'big room', and, if he didn't like the look of an approaching visitor, he had enough time to lose himself in the forest outside the chalet. Bezruč's famous reclusiveness is documented in the corresponding notices on the chalet doors.







## Bedroom

Petr Bezruč did not use the bedroom himself, but slept in the 'big room'. The bedroom was used to accommodate his friends, and was later used by his voluntary secretary, Zdenka Kadlecová.



## Kitchen

The humble kitchen hosted the visits of Bezruč's closest friends. Here, he would most often smoke a cigarette or Virginia tobacco or enjoy a cup of coffee or glass of wine. It is said that his choice of a short or long smoke, or small or large coffee indicated how much time the poet was willing to spend with his visitor.



## Garden

The Petr Bezruč Chalet is surrounded by a garden containing some original trees and fruit trees from Bezruč's time.

Bezruč's sojourns at the chalet also included the so-called 'expeditions' to the nearby mountain of Lysá hora, which he undertook with a circle of his closest friends – his pack – even at an advanced age; Bezruč was 86 years old when he climbed Lysá hora for the last time. Once the poet's declining health prevented him from climbing the mountain, he set himself a circuit, about a kilometre in length, which he was able to walk round up to twenty times per day, marking every kilometre travelled by placing a small stone in the area in front of the chalet.

Following Bezruč's death in 1958, the Czech Hiking Association decided to set up an event in honour of its honorary member, the poet Petr Bezruč, and bearing his name. The Bezruč expedition to Lysá hora took place in September 1959. Subsequent expeditions have taken place in September every year, September being the month of Bezruč's birth. It has become the biggest hiking event in the Czech Republic.

Vladimír Vašek is not only a famous hiker, but also a lover of nature. Natural motifs in his verses become representations of human fortune.

The atmosphere of the Petr Bezruč is created not only by the strongly nostalgic landscape of the Beskydy region and the interior of the chalet itself, but also the memories of those inhabitants of Ostravice who still remember Bezruč. We can say, without any exaggeration, that the Petr Bezruč Chalet is a place where you can really feel the soul of the poet himself.

## Silesian Forests

/One of Petr Bezruč's last occasional poems/

You are like me, my Silesian forests!  
Sorrow clings to your trunks and crests,  
Sad your look is, sombre your gaze,  
Just as my thoughts, just as my lays.  
Your needles fall through the night to the ground,  
Tears of a nation crushed and bound.

The axe fells you at Vienna's decree,  
And you die slowly, you die calmly!  
In silence you vanish, ocean of pine,  
Unending, unending, your grief and mine!

Translation: Jan Milner (Silesian Songs. Artia, Brno, 1966)



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### opening hours:

May–October  
Tuesday–Sunday 9–11, 14–16 hodin  
November–April – advance bookings only

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Visit other exhibition buildings and premises of the Silesian Museum



**The Nový Dvůr Arboretum**  
Stěbořice



**The Old Exhibition Building**  
Opava



**The Second World War Memorial**, Hrabyně



**The Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex**

The Silesian Museum can be seen as a gate to Silesia, with a scope extending from both animate and inanimate aspects of nature via prehistory and history to art history, primarily on the territory of Czech Silesia, as well as north and north-west Moravia. The Silesian Museum is a contributory organisation of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. With a history stretching back to 1814, it is the oldest public museum on the territory of the current Czech Republic. The museum's 2,400,000 exhibits mean that it is, at the same time, the third biggest in the country.

The museum currently administers six buildings and premises: apart from the Old Exhibition Building in the centre of Opava, these are the Nový Dvůr Arboretum in Stěbořice, the Second World War Memorial in Hrabyně, the Petr Bezruč Memorial in Ostrožná street in Opava, the Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex and the Petr Bezruč Chalet in Ostravice. The museum is home to specialists from

the fields of mineralogy, geology, palaeontology, botany, dendrology, entomology, zoology, museology, archaeology, ethnography, numismatics, history and art history, including the history of photography, music, literature and theatre, as well as military history, and restoration experts, museologists and librarians.

Every year the Silesian Museum organises around 30 exhibitions, with special attention being devoted to the history of and nature in Silesia and the Second World War. The museum is a research organisation involved in basic and applied research. The results of research are published in, amongst others, the peer-reviewed *Časopis Slezského zemského muzea* (Silesian Museum Journal), which is published in two editions – edition A for the natural sciences, and edition B for the historical sciences – and the *Slezský sborník* (Silesian Gazette), likewise peer-reviewed.



# Guide

## **Guide to the Petr Bezruč Memorial and Chalet (part of the Silesian Museum)**

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