

The present work treats the phenomenon of court orchestras (Kapellen) in Czech lands during High Baroque, in the period delimited by the reign of Charles VI. Its aim was not, however, to cover the theme in its totality, but to document and analyse the hitherto little-noticed Prague orchestra of Count Wenzel Morzin (1675–1737), providing material for future synthesis and offering a pendant to the existing works of this kind, which have focused mainly on Kapellen of Moravian provenience.

In the history of music, Count Wenzel Morzin is known mostly owing to his contact with the Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi. It was Count Morzin to whom Vivaldi has dedicated his collection *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione* op. 8 containing the famous violin concertos, *Le quattro stagioni*. Besides, Vivaldi made a laudatory comment about Morzin's Kapelle in one of his letters. In various, mostly isolated contexts we find mentions of other musicians as well as the music of composers related to Count Morzin and his orchestra. The aim of this work was to interconnect these mutually unrelated sources and document the personal / instrumental constitution and development of the orchestra by means of archive research based primarily on sources of accounting and registration nature.

The work looks at the Morzin Kapelle at three levels. The first view is from above – attention is paid to musical preferences of the owner of the orchestra, its personal constitution and organisation, and its position within the aristocratic court. The second view is from beneath – via three biographies of musicians who were members of the orchestra, which in a way represent three “model careers” of musicians in aristocratic service. The last view is through surviving music works composed by members of the orchestra, the analytic probes focusing on mutual relationships between the recipients of the works and the composer, and between the instrumental constitution of the orchestra and the nature of the music. The work also follows the reception of compositional patterns within the ensemble.