



WIENER  
PHILHARMONIKER  
— 1842 —

## **Bernadette Mayrhofer**

### **Armin Tyroler (Oboe II)**

**Born 14 September 1873 in Turocz St. Martón/Hungary, murdered in an Auschwitz gas chamber probably on 30 October 1944**

Tyroler became a member of the Court Opera Orchestra [Hofopernorchester] and of the Vienna Philharmonic (VPh) on 1 September 1906 and was pensioned off on 1 January 1937.

Married (1) Hermine Winkler in 1905 (died Vienna 29 August 1938); converted to the Protestant faith 4 January 1910; married (2) Rudolfine Popper 1940.

Training/Teachers: 1886/87 – 1892/93  
Student at the Vienna Conservatory of the Society of Friends of Music, where his oboe teacher was Richard Baumgärtel (member of the Wiener Hofoper and the VPh, involved in the development of the "Viennese" oboe); other teachers were Robert Fuchs (Music Theory) and Bruckner disciple Josef Schalk (piano); passed his oboe exam with distinction and was awarded his leaving certificate.



*Armin Tyroler*

Grazer Landestheater (first engagement after graduation); 1895 – 1905 orchestra of the Burgtheater; 1906 – 1937 Member of the Court Opera Orchestra as Imperial-Royal court musician (until 1918) and of the VPh; member of the Hofmusikkapelle (staff representative); 1918 – 1925 staff representative at the VPh; 1923 – 1936 member of the Committee of the VPh; 1913 – 1937 teacher at the Wiener Konservatorium, 1920 – 1926 Executive President of the Vereinigung Wiener Musiker, Vice President for a short time of Österreichischer Musikerverband, "defence counsel" in the disciplinary commission of the Ring der ausübenden Musiker Österreichs.

Awards and decorations: 1931 Jubilee ring; 1933 Professor and Medal of Honour for artistic and pedagogical merits; Ring of Honour of the City of Vienna; 1937 Ritterkreuz des österreichischen Verdienstordens [Knight's Cross of the Austrian Order of Merit].  
Deported 27 October 1942 (together with his wife Rudolfine) from Vienna to Terezín; transferred to Auschwitz, again with his wife, 28 October 1944.



For sources see footnote<sup>1</sup>

Armin Tyroler's life was shaped by an eventful professional career. Supported by his understanding parents, he began his musical training at the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna in 1886, aged 13. In 1893 Tyroler completed his training as an oboist, graduating with distinction. After a first engagement at the Grazer Landestheater and a ten year stint at the Burgtheater, Tyroler was recruited by Gustav Mahler for the Hofoper and the orchestra of the VPh on 1 September 1906. In the previous year he had married Hermine Winkler in the Floridsdorf synagogue. A daughter, Grete, was born in the same year.<sup>2</sup>

Armin Tyroler accepted a post as teacher at the New Vienna Conservatory. The long list of official functions that he took on in addition to his musical activities includes Deputy President of the Wiener Musikbund, President of the Association Wiener Musiker, member of the Committee of the VPh and staff representative of the Hofmusikkapelle. He received several awards and decorations and was the first orchestra musician ever to be awarded the City of Vienna's Ring of Honour. Tyroler's commitment to helping other musicians is well documented. He used his functions and his considerable organisational talent to bring about improvements both in the legal situation of his fellow musicians in terms of employment law and in their economic situation. As a representative of the VPh he helped organise large-scale concerts together with the Wiener Sinfonieorchester and the orchestra of the Volksoper and gave the proceeds to musicians in distressed circumstances. When Vienna's mayor, Karl Seitz, awarded him the city's Ring of Honour, Tyroler used his acceptance speech to talk about his self-imposed social and economic mission: *"It has always been my aim to lighten the struggle for existence faced by my less fortunate colleagues and to make their lives more bearable. There is no more to it than that. [...] For musicians to be artists they need to be free from financial worries. These are the ideals that I have pursued all my life; with the help of colleagues I have tried to realise them. Unfortunately such realisation has proved to be beyond my means."* Tyroler went on to ask the mayor and all agencies and authorities for help *"to alleviate these hardships. [...] If our authorities and organisations join forces in getting to grips*

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<sup>1</sup> Ernst Kobau (text) and Josef Bednarik (research), Armin Tyroler (1873 – 1944), in: Journal – Wiener Oboe, 39th issue, Oct. 2008, 4 – 7, Article in Historisches Archiv der Wiener Philharmoniker (HAdWPh), Armin Tyroler No. 101; Letter from Dr. Ingo Schultz to the VPh, 10 January 1993, HAdWPh, Armin Tyroler No. 101.

Information on Armin Tyroler compiled by HAdWPh/Dr. Silvia Kargl (archivist); IKG Register/Data bank Abt.f.Restitutionsangelegenheiten [Department for Restitution Affairs], supplied by Sabine Loitfellner, M.A., Department for Restitution Affairs, Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Vienna; information from the register of residents on Armin Tyroler, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv; information from Österreichisches Musiklexikon online on "Richard Baumgärtel" and from the annual reports of the Wiener Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde compiled by Dr. Lynne Heller, Archive of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna; Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW), Online Data Bank, [Hhttp://www.doew.at](http://www.doew.at)H (Spelling in the DÖW data bank: "Armin Tiroler" and "Rudolfine Tiroler").

<sup>2</sup> Kobau/Bednarik, Armin Tyroler (1873 – 1944), (as in fn. 1) 4 – 7.



*with this task, then, Herr Bürgermeister, we will see Vienna, the city we love so passionately, becoming again what it was in bygone days: a city of songs, a city of lightheartedness and gaiety, Vienna, the capital of music!*"<sup>3</sup> His hopes were to remain unfulfilled.

Austria's 'Anschluss' on 12 March 1938 triggered a flood of anti-Jewish laws and provisions – reaching a total number of around 250 by the end of the war in the territory that used to be Austria<sup>4</sup> – all marginalizing and isolating Jewish citizens and stoking discrimination against them.

On 29 August 1938 Armin Tyroler's first wife, Hermine, died and in 1940 Tyroler married Rudolfine Popper, with whom he lived in difficult, inhumane conditions in Vienna until the two were deported together. The register of residents in the City Archives documents several changes of address. To begin with, Tyroler was registered as resident in Aichholzgasse 9 in Vienna's 12th district. From 20 September 1940 he was registered in Liechtensteinstraße 38 in the 9th district – by this time presumably with his second wife, Rudolfine, before the two moved to Georg-Sigl-Gasse 9 in the same district on 9 June 1941. Their last address in Vienna was one of the many "Jewish collection flats" in Novaragasse 32 in the 2nd district. According to the City of Vienna's register, the Tyrolers moved in on 8 January 1941. One of Tyroler's Philharmonic colleagues, Julius Stwertka, "arrived" with his wife Rosa in an adjacent flat in the same house one day later. The Tyrolers and the Stwertkas were deported to Terezín ghetto on 27 August 1942.<sup>5</sup>

For the majority of people who set foot in it, Terezín ghetto, situated northwest of Prague, was no more than a staging post before deportation, usually in mass transports, to one of the extermination camps where they would be murdered. In addition to the constant fear of being swept away into one of these extermination camps – Treblinka, Auschwitz or Maly Trostinec – life at Terezín was marked by almost unbearable living and working conditions. *"Hunger, the lack of hygienic facilities and inadequate clothing were the cause of many deaths."*<sup>6</sup> Out of a total number of 140,000 who were deported to Terezín, 33,000 fell victim to conditions in the ghetto and 88,000 were transferred to extermination camps and murdered.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Erika Weinzierl, *Zu wenig Gerechte. Österreicher und die Judenverfolgung 1938 – 1945*, Graz-Vienna-Cologne 1986, 36.

<sup>5</sup> Historical register of residents, Armin Tyroler and Josefine Tyroler, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv; information on Armin Tyroler compiled by HAdWPh/Fr. Dr. Silvia Kargl (archivist), [Hhttp://www.doew.at](http://www.doew.at)H (Spelling in the DÖW data bank: "Armin Tiroler" and "Rudolfine Tiroler").

<sup>6</sup> Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Online Data Bank, [Hhttp://www.doew.at](http://www.doew.at)H (Spelling in the DÖW data bank: "Armin Tiroler" and "Rudolfine Tiroler").

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



In the ghetto, Armin Tyroler was able to bring into play his considerable organisational skills: he managed to squeeze into the "FZG" ("Freizeitgestaltung" or spare time activities), *"an independent department founded in 1943 within the Jewish self-administration"*.<sup>8</sup> This department was in charge of *"organising cultural life, especially planning and coordinating events, allocating rehearsal venues and organising instruments, sheet music, etc."*<sup>9</sup> However, the dreadful living conditions, constant hunger and the lack of sanitation soon brought on liver disease and anemia. The head of the FZG, Otto Zucker,<sup>10</sup> pleaded with the head of the "catering service" for help for his colleague. *"Professor Armin Tyroler [...], a famous member of the Wiener Phylharmoniker [sic!], is seriously ill in L 306. He wants to stay with his wife and must in fact be considered to be one of the high-profile inmates of the ghetto. His health is very poor. The root cause is a life threatening deficiency of vitamins and I would ask you, if at all possible, for at least one extra ration of foodstuffs."* Zucker's plea was successful and only four days later, Armin Tyroler wrote to express his gratitude for *"1 kilo flour, 0.25 margarine, 0.50 sugar, 0.50 pearl barley, 5 kilos potatoes and 1 kilo Sauerkraut, which had unfortunately already gone off, and 0.50 kilo jam"*.<sup>11</sup> His health improved and he was soon able to participate in the FZG concerts once more. His last documented appearance in a camp concert was in the summer of 1944.<sup>12</sup> On 28 October 1944 Armin Tyroler and his wife Rudolfine were transferred to Auschwitz. Two days later he was murdered in a gas chamber. The date of Rudolfine Tyroler's death is unknown.<sup>13</sup>

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English Translation: Otmar Binder

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<sup>8</sup> Kobau/Bednarik, Armin Tyroler (1873 – 1944), (as in fn. 1) 4 – 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Online Data Bank, [Hhttp://www.doew.at](http://www.doew.at)H (Spelling in the DÖW data bank: "Armin Tiroler" and "Rudolfine Tiroler").

<sup>11</sup> Kobau/Bednarik, Armin Tyroler (1873 – 1944), (as in fn. 1) 4 – 7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Online Data Bank, [Hhttp://www.doew.at](http://www.doew.at)H (Spelling in the DÖW data bank: "Armin Tiroler" and "Rudolfine Tiroler").