They Chose the Savior of the Astronomical Clock

Together with his father, clockmaker Ludvík Hainz worked on a highly prestigious assignment in 1865 – they took on the general overhaul of the famous Prague Astronomical Clock (Staroměstský orloj). It is therefore no surprise that a quarter of a century later, the exhibition committee ordered the clock for the main tower of the Industrial Palace from his very workshop located in Dlouhá Street. In 1891, this respected Old Town businessman and tower clock specialist was also one of the exhibitors; inside the palace below, crowds of visitors gathered every fifteen minutes around his clock movement featuring a special chime.

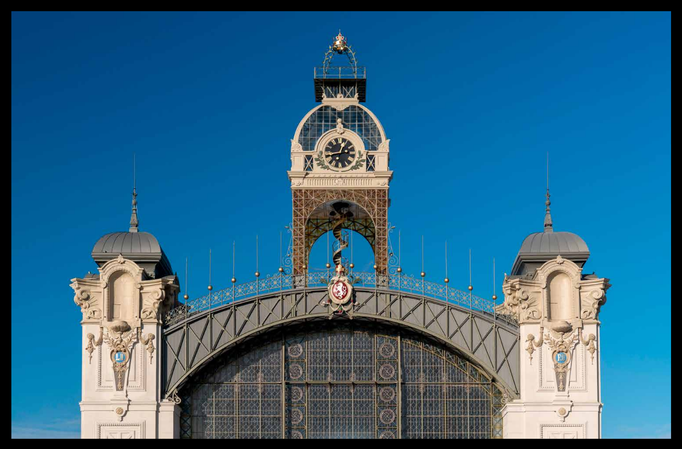
It is almost unbelievable that the clock mechanism from the tower of the Industrial Palace was restored by the very same watchmaking company. The L. HAINZ company has its workshops in Lysá nad Labem, which is where the clock from the exhibition grounds was temporarily moved. First, however, climbers had to lower this colossal mechanism down from the tower. The clock faces measure 270 centimeters in diameter, making them among the largest in Prague, and the entire clock weighs around 450 kilograms.

The master clockmakers in Lysá then restored every single part of the mechanism. For instance, two bell-metal cymbals that chime the time on the tower were treated to a five-day cleansing bath in citric acid. However, some components could no longer be saved and had to be remade from scratch, including the gold-plated hour and minute hands.

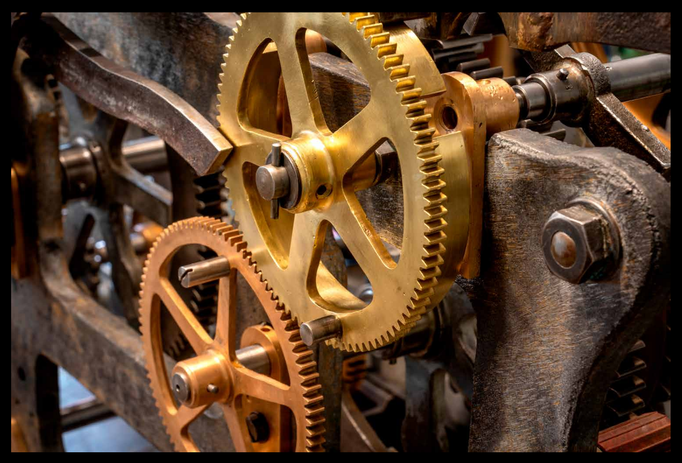
The restored slock mechanism returns to the tower

Did you know...?

- In 1891, visitors could climb all the way up the clock tower via a spiral staircase. However, enjoying the view required paying a separate admission fee.
- After dark, an electric searchlight designed by engineer František Křižík shone from the top of the tower, illuminating the surrounding area.
- Writer Svatopluk Čech even described just how demanding the climb to the observation platform was in one of his books: he sent his loudmouthed antihero, Mr. Brouček, up the tower, only for him to give up halfway.
- The original 1891 clock mechanism is preserved in the collections of the National Technical Museum. The one recently restored dates back to the 1950s.



The Central Hall clock tower after restoration.



Detail of the clock mechanism.

The clock was restored by L. HAINZ.

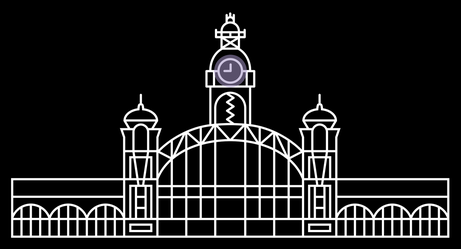


Photo Jiří Šebek

Industrial Palace Na Výstaviští Architecture Na Výstaviští Reconstruction Na Výstaviští I ♥ Na Výstaviští