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“With these despised and rejected wares...I will load my modest pack”

## A conversation with Mikołaj Górecki

Christopher Cary



Photo: M. Malowski

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**M**usic undoubtedly flows through the veins of Mikołaj Górecki. Given his last name, one might think that the son of Henryk Górecki carries a great weight on his shoulders. This is simply not the case. While following in his father’s compositional footsteps, Mikołaj is clearly his own man. A synthesist rather than a specialist, he is writing music his own way...music that engages diverse contemporary influences while remaining profoundly respectful of the past. This unique composer has been living a life secluded from the currents of musical life in contemporary Poland, and yet he remains intimately connected to his heritage and comfortably aware of the legacy which he perpetuates. And he is continuing his family’s musical legacy in a remarkable fashion....

Many diverse compositional trends characterize contemporary Polish art music. Living in the United States, you are unique among Polish composers.

How does Mikołaj Górecki fit in? How do you characterize your musical philosophy?

I will use here words of Leonardo da Vinci which I find perfectly fitted to my thinking: “Because my predecessors have already taken as their own all useful and necessary themes I will do like one who, because of his poverty, is the last to arrive at the fair, and not being able otherwise to provide himself, chooses all the things which others have looked over and not taken but refused as being of little value. With these despised and rejected wares...I will load my modest pack”.

This is an intriguing artistic premise! What are some of the ‘wares’ to which your philosophy refers?

What are my wares? Well... first of all, I have great respect for composers from the past. I do not understand the arrogance of

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Anniversaries are good moments to ask ourselves: how much have we changed? How far have we come? What have we achieved? Have we used our musical heritage properly? Anniversaries also bring us a sense of pride about the accomplishments of musicians who are dear to us, and they allow us to look to our musical future with greater understanding and heightened anticipation. We have reserved several pages in QUARTA to commemorate the contributions of composers whose lives and works are woven into the very fabric of our Polish cultural heritage. They simply cannot be forgotten.

On the eve of the Chopin year, we decided to present an intriguing excerpt from Karol Szymanowski's writings about Chopin. Almost 90 years ago the 'father' of contemporary Polish music analyzed the cult of Chopin as a national hero. The cover interview introduces our readers to Mikołaj Górecki. Like Paweł Mykietyn (the subject of our last cover story), Mikołaj was born in the year 1971...but the two composers are very different in their aesthetic orientation. Mikołaj is the son of one of Poland's most renowned composers. How much does he resemble his father? Just look at the picture. How much alike does his music sound? We hope that the interview will intrigue you enough to check for yourself.

You will also find a review of the recent stagings of King Roger in the present issue. Szymanowski's opera in its provocative new dress is the subject of a captivating discussion.

And, in the kaleidoscopic pantheon of contemporary Polish music, Zbigniew Bujarski holds a unique place. Renowned as a composer and visual artist, his works are inspiring and breathtaking every time they are presented. Just have a look....

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#### ANNIVERSARIES 2010

Fryderyk CHOPIN 1810-1849  
Henryk WIENIAWSKI 1835-1880  
Roman MACIEJEWSKI 1910-1998  
Andrzej KRZANOWSKI 1951-1990  
Włodzimierz KOTOŃSKI b. 1925  
Józef ŚWIDER b. 1930  
Romuald TWARDOWSKI b. 1930

#### PWM Edition has signed new agency agreements with Schott Music GmbH, SEEMSA and Gehrman's Musikförlag.

These publishing houses are PWM's hire agents in following territories:

- Schott Music – Germany and Switzerland,
- SEEMSA – Spain and Portugal,
- Gehrman's – Sweden and Denmark non-exclusive.

At the same time PWM Edition became the agent of these publishers in Poland as well as Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. (including Bote & Bock), Josef Weinberger Ltd. and Glocken Verlag.

From the new theatrical season 2009/2010 PWM started also its activity as Grand Rights representative in Poland. From the beginning of the season the following publishers are represented by PWM: Boosey & Hawkes (including Bote & Bock), Universal Edition Wien, Oxford University Press and Gehrman's; from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2010 – Schott Music GmbH.

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some critics or composers who despise, for example, everything what was written before the Second Viennese School. When they hear a major chord they immediately see it as an old-fashioned and insignificant musical gesture. They are forgetting that it is not the device which a composer uses that is important, only how the device is used. Many people are not seeing the fact that the same sonority – c, e, g, – may have totally different meanings in different contexts. This sonority was used by Palestrina, Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, Messiaen and others and each time it had a completely new sound quality. Obviously, everyone would agree that Beethoven uses a C major triad in a different manner than Messiaen. My point is that there is not always a need of inventing something totally new to be original. Sometimes is enough to look at the things which we already have, but to see them in a new light.

What else do you have in your 'modest pack'? Do you have other thoughts about music that you use as guiding compositional principles?

I do not accept the division of music on tonal and atonal. There is only one music. The rest is just a different approach to the use of overtones. The history of music follows a pattern of overtones very closely. Today we live in a time when the human ear is already capable of distinguishing very subtle nuances from the upper portion of overtones, where we find pitches which produces halftone, quartertone clusters. But we should not forget where these quartertones, clusters, etc., come from. As a comment on the side, I want to mention here a little episode from Schoenberg's life. When the Italian premiere of his *Pierrot lunaire* was approaching, Schoenberg was trying very hard to invite Puccini to the premiere. The opinion of Puccini about *Pierrot* was important to Schoenberg! To me that fact from Schoenberg's life was a revelation. For many critics, theorists and composers today that is simply an insignificant episode and even a ridiculous one.

That is a very revealing historical anecdote!

I also believe that the individual personality of an artist/composer is much more important than certain stylistic movements. It is usually an individual name which makes a given movement significant. Without that, movements alone are just empty words (e.g. the *style brilliant* from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century would be almost completely forgotten without the early works of Chopin).

Many people feel that music should serve a higher purpose, a purpose other than the composer's inner-fulfillment – or conceptual music, or merely entertainment... that it should have a moral or sociological dimension. Do you agree?

Yes, I also feel that music should serve a higher purpose, that it should have a moral or sociological dimension. One of my pieces which may be related to that issue is the cantata *Second Space*. Music should try to ex-

press the invisible, touch the unknown. But it should not be forgotten that other types of music are also needed. Bach composed not only Masses and Passions but also gigues, minuets and gavottes.

What, then, is the greatest artistic challenge facing a composer in our contemporary world?

I believe that the lack of the artistic need for expressing beauty is a main problem of contemporary art. This need alone makes a piece of art beautiful even when devices applied by the artist in a given piece are not necessarily considered by the majority of society as beautiful (Chopin's modulations or Wagner's works were received by their contemporaries as bizarre and even ugly). The need of expressing ugliness in art as such, without a reference to its polar opposite, beauty, worked well 50 to 80 years ago but not today.

Some composers explore a certain technical or musical device for a period of time and through several pieces, while others seem to set new challenges for each piece. How do you characterize your approach?

I see myself, as a composer, in a constant musical journey. Each day, month or year brings new discoveries, new reflections and sometimes disappointments. Writing a piece of music means to make constant choices; by choosing this harmonic/melodic/formal solution I refuse dozens or hundreds of others. That is the hardest part of writing for me. In our time there is no 'mainstream' style in music, as it was in 18<sup>th</sup> or even 19<sup>th</sup> Century, so there is no help from society in that respect. Today almost everything is acceptable which is horrifying to me. From the most banal, vulgar musical styles to almost complete musical anarchy, there will be always a critic or musicologist who will praise this or another movement/style.

What can a composer do about this?

The only hope resides in an inner intuition. I believe that there is no single prescription for good music today. It is possible to write a good piece using diatonic language and it is also possible to write good quartertone music using the most advanced techniques. In that sense I am very open-minded. This attitude of mine is reflected, I think, in my music. It is a 'risky' artistic attitude which may lead to certain confusions among listeners, because some of my pieces are written in quite contrasted languages. However, I prefer this solution to being a closed-minded guy, 'believing' only in the avant-garde (which today basically does not exist anymore) or only new simplicity or only spectral stuff and so on. I am interested in synthesis, not specialization. We may take a lesson from the great composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as many of them changed their musical language several times during their careers.

You have been exploring many new compositional techniques in your recent works which reflect your emphasis upon synthesis....





Photo: M. Makowski

Yes, in the last two years I wrote pieces which in some way show my different approaches to composition. Some are more technically oriented works (e.g. *Concerto Grosso* for quartertone piano, three ensembles and orchestra) and in some others the technique (especially new trends) is purposely overshadowed by emotional qualities (*Second Space*; *Divertimento* for strings; *Farewell* for strings). The future, if given to me, will hopefully bring better pieces than those which I have written so far.

A new technique that I find interesting provides the foundation for *Anamorphoses* for orchestra from 2006. What was your approach in this unique work?

In that piece, more than any other, I tried a technique which was on my mind for a long time – the use of perspective, which in music I believe can be emphasized by dynamics which become structural elements of music, not just coloristic ones. The ‘perspectivistic’ technique requires the use of the self-modulating chords. The self-modulating chord is a chord which changes harmonic quality within itself by increasing or decreasing volume among its chord members. This technique can be found in the first movement at #5 and from #8 to #11 and in the third movement at #4, #6 and #8. In this piece (as well as in my Violin Sonata No. 2) I used melodic augmentation (second movement). As far as I know, the augmentation is usually linked with the rhythm, but a few years ago I found a way of applying augmentation also to the melody.

I am also intrigued by your piece *Zan tontemiquico* of 2006. It is unusual for a Polish composer to derive artistic inspiration from a Latin American poet. What is the poem about?

*Zan tontemiquico* in Nahuatl language means “we come only to dream”. It is an excerpt from a poem by Tochiuhitzina, a pre-Columbian Mexican poet:

We only rise from sleep / we come only to dream / it is not true, it is not true / that we come on earth to live. / As an herb in springtime, / so is our nature. / Our hearts give birth, make sprout, / the flowers of our flesh. / Some open their corollas, / then they become dry.

What is the reference in the title of *Druga przestrzeń* (*Second Space*), Cantata for baritone solo, mixed choir and orchestra from 2009?

The text for this piece is taken from *Les Mouches* [The Flies] by Jean-Paul Sartre (first movement) and from *Purgatory* and *Paradise* of the *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri (second movement). The title embraces those two very different sources: Dante and Sartre with some allusion to Czesław Miłosz, but his poem *Second Space* is not used here.

Your *Concerto Notturmo* (2000) has now received many performances. It is easy to associate the instrumentation with baroque concerti (violin solo with string orchestra), while the musical language is deeply emotional and filled with beautiful melodies. The concerto recalls the mood of a nocturne....

The title refers not only to the mood of the music, but also to its form. The nocturne is usually based on a slow-fast-slow pattern, similarly in the *Concerto Notturmo*.

I often hear the influence of your father’s music in your works. What experiences in your formative years set you on your compositional path?

My earliest musical experiences are linked with my family. My dad, mum and older sister were musicians, so it was not surprising that in my early childhood I was exposed to music. Since those early years I was hoping to one day become a guy who writes music. The word “composer” was too big for my dreams. It was reserved for the real big guys: Bach, Beethoven, etc. I simply always wanted to write music. It was neither a suggestion of my father nor my mum. My father wanted me to be a violinist so I could play with my sister, a pianist, in a duo. After a few years I switched to piano and this instrument was my major until finishing high school. Actually, for many years I was writing music in secret. One of my first drafts of music is from the year 1977. One day when I was already thirteen I played for my father one of my pieces for the first time and from that day my writing became more ‘official’. While still in high school I won a competition for young composers (Bielsko Biala, 1988) and during my last year there I had a perform-

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## REPertoire RECOMMENDATIONS

**Anamorphoses** for orchestra (2006), 17'  
4343-3431-batt(4sec)-cel 2ar pf-archi

Premiere: 20 Apr 2007, Katowice  
PNRSO, R. Silva (cond.)

...An extremely interesting piece which shows how much scope there is to shape images in sound with the orchestra and how this can be applied in a single, compact work.

[Jacek Krzakala Muzyka21]

**Three Episodes** for orchestra (1999), 17'  
4343-5331-batt(3sec) ar pf-archi

Premiere: 23 Feb 2002, Wrocław  
PNRSO, G. Chmura (cond.)

**Concerto Notturmo** for violin & string orchestra (2000), 14'  
vno solo-0000-0000-archi

Premiere: 15 Apr 2002  
K. Bąkowski (vn), TECH-NO Orkiestra,  
R. Kurdybacha (cond.)

From the moment when I had the great pleasure to perform Mikolaj Gorecki’s *Concerto Notturmo* for the first time, I discovered a new quality of connection between solo violin and string orchestra. Everyone immediately associates such a grouping with Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* and with Bach’s concerti. Here, however, an entirely new quality appears; a baroque ensemble with music composed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unusual in this concerto is the approach to emotions; they constitute the main point of interpretation and dialogue with the orchestra. It is simply very beautiful music that reaches everyone. It doesn’t pain with incomprehensible harmonies, it doesn’t have negative surprises, nor reject. It is unusually lyrical, full of deep emotion and melodies that appeal to the ear. Whenever I play this concerto, it brings a shiver to my spine, and so I always believe that it will do the same for the listeners.

[Patrycja Piekutowska, 4 Oct 2007]

**Concerto for Flute & Orchestra** (2004), 15'  
fl solo-1232-3120-batt cel ar pf mnd-archi

Premiere: 12 June 2005, Katowice  
J. Kotnowska, PNRSO, S.A. Wróblewski (cond.)

**Zan tontemiquico** for orchestra (2006), 20'  
4343-3431-batt(4sec) cel 2ar pf-archi

**Druga przestrzeń [Second Space]**  
Cantata for baritone solo, mixed choir & orchestra (2009), 14'  
Bar solo-coro-4443-4441-batt(4sec)-cel ar-archi  
[Fr., It.]

**Symphony No. 1** for orchestra (2002), 33'  
3333-3431-batt(5sec)-2ar cel pf-archi

**Dispersions** for string quartet (2006), 8'  
Premiere: 7 Nov 2007, Kraków  
Silesian String Quartet

**Capriccio** for piano & orchestra (1998), 11'  
pf solo-2222-2110-batt(2sec)-archi  
Premiere: 18 Oct 1998  
A. Górecka (piano), Silesian Philharmonic  
Orchestra, M. J. Błaszczuk (cond.)

**Tocatta** for two pianos  
Cat. no. 9765

**Variations** for flute and piano (2002), 9'  
Cat. no. 10360  
Premiere: 26 Sept 2004, Warsaw  
J. Kotnowska (flute), M. Rutkowski (piano)  
*Variations* for flute and piano are cast in a tripartite form, the middle section forming a contrast with its slow tempo. The work is characterized by numerous changes in tempo and metre as well as the frequent use of seventh chords. It is a very effective concert miniature.

# He, She and He: *King Roger* on European stages



Karol Szymanowski *King Roger*, dir. David Pountney, Gran Teatre del Liceu (S. Hendricks, A. Schwanewilms, F. Vas)

Ono, as the music of *King Roger* lifted the whole spectacle.

Five weeks after the Paris premiere the festival audience in Bregenz got to know *King Roger*, directed by David Pountney in a co-production with Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu. The German singer, Anne Schwanewilms, prepared the role of Roxana, but did not take part in the performances, officially because of illness, and unofficially because of the difficulty in mastering the part in Polish (no surprise). The festival directors reached out for the tried and tested Olga Pasiiecznik. This staging, however, I saw in Barcelona on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. One of the finest directors of opera, a great admirer of the works of Slavic composers, created a spectacle that satisfied almost everyone, but did not have the temperature of the drama in Paris. Pountney did not locate the action in a clearly specified period of time, confusing the present with the past. Clear in terms of aesthetics and stage scenery (dominated by white, sky blue and red), it showed us the special triangle of main characters. Who is the Shepherd? A foreigner? Roger's ideal bisexual lover? Maybe the leader of a religious sect who uses all means to recruit the next person? Pountney leaves the viewer with no definite answer. The director presents a triangle of he, she and him, leaving the audience the possibility of resolving a number of issues in their own way. Scott Hendricks coped well with the title role. The singer recreated the unbalanced character of the emotionally immature ruler. His Roger reminds us of a large child with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). The appearance of the Shepherd disturbs his ease and shakes his self-awareness. The Shepherd (played

The year 2009 has been an exceptionally rich year for new productions of the opera *King Roger* by Karol Szymanowski. Each of the performances which I had the opportunity to see this year was different and brought much reflection.

Paweł Orski

Undoubtedly, Opera Bastille's production in Paris aroused the most emotion. Going to the first night performance I expected a strong shock, because Krzysztof Warlikowski (thankfully) does not belong to the group of 'smooth' and 'elegant' directors. I was concerned that Szymanowski's work would not be suited to the huge Paris opera, as my point of reference was Mariusz Trelński's extremely intimate, almost hermetic staging in Wrocław. Warlikowski merged all three acts, which served both music and drama well. I saw his *Roger* twice. My opinions and thoughts after the first night were even more deeply affirmed after watching the spectacle on TV Arte. On the evening of June 18<sup>th</sup> I belonged to a small group of opposition to the Polish and French critics, who not only picked the director to pieces, but actually enjoyed discovering further absurdities in his staging. In my view, Warlikowski's *Roger* is a consistently built story about the dark side of human personality, about deeply hidden secrets, which could only accidentally and unwillingly be discovered by us, or by the rest of the world. This performance is also a picture of the dangers posed by power and

wealth when they distort reality. A strong and rich Roger is in fact a weak and unhappy man struggling with addiction, strong emotions and his 'other self'. Leaving Roxana, he does not notice that her love is clear and warm like the sun. Before the premiere I was concerned if the lyrical and warm baritone, Mariusz Kwiecień, could bear the dramatic passages of the score and whether the ethereal soprano Olga Pasiiecznik could break through the huge orchestra. Fortunately, my fears proved groundless. Mariusz Kwiecień's first performance was sung at the border of his vocal capabilities and some uncertainty

*King Roger* is a story about the dark side of human personality, about deeply hidden secrets

could be heard, but in the television production, recorded after a few performances, the voice sounds confident and phenomenal. As was Olga Pasiiecznik's Roxana – wonderfully sensuous, seductive, loving and sensitive. Warlikowski's interpretation of the Shepherd was strongly provocative; the cross between a long-haired hippie and transvestite with painted red nails was shocking for most of the audience. Eric Cutler greatly enjoyed himself in this role, not realizing that the more freely and naturally he performed this on stage, the larger the group of disgusted members of the audience became. Gérard Mortier, Director of the Opera Bastille, did Szymanowski the greatest service by involving the brilliant Japanese conductor Kazushi

by Will Hartmann) fraudulently enters into Roger's life and soul, gradually destroying everything that they had already been filled with. He does this perfidiously, and through this becomes a dangerous character, eventually sacrificing Roxana by cutting her throat. The weakest element of this presentation was Anne Schwanewilms as Roxana. I know this singer and her excellent Strauss creations, but *King Roger* turned out to be her defeat. I could not understand a single word she sang in the premiere performance, and to my great surprise, Szymanowski's music was completely hostile to her voice, which sounded ugly, drab and common. There was also a lack of the instrumental wizard, Kazushi Ono. Josep Pons conducted the or-





Photo: K. Wąrejko

K. Szymanowski *King Roger*, dir. M. Trelieński, Wrocław Opera, Kraków, Nov. 2009

chestra competently, but without the magic and finesse that makes Szymanowski's music work like a drug. I was very pleased with the wonderful ovation and warm welcome of *King Roger* by the Catalan audience; such moments excite my operatic patriotism.

## Who is the Shepherd? A foreigner? Roger's ideal bi-sexual lover? Maybe the leader of a religious sect who uses all means to recruit the next person?

For me, the culmination of this year's meetings with *Roger* was a guest appearance in Kraków by the Wrocław Opera. We inaugurated the fifth edition of the Festival of Polish Music with this work one week after the Barcelona performance. This staging of the opera, directed by Mariusz Trelieński, is for me a kind of model. Andrzej Dobber sang the title role in Kraków, repeating his enormous success from Wrocław. Roxana was effectively played by Agnieszka Bochenek-Osiecka, though an excess of vibrato deprived the part of delicate sensuality. Rafał Bartmiński as the Shepherd shouted with great effect, giving a display as a heroic tenor. I prefer, however, when this undoubtedly talented artist shows that he can also control his voice in the medium dynamic. Mariusz Trelieński's ideas and his second approach to *King Roger* was an excellent example of how moving the story to modern times allows us to discover again and again the stories, that time and attractiveness long left behind. The retention of the three acts of the opera, and Boris Kudlička's great scenery ensured that the director's intentions about the purity of the spectacle's form and its interpretation were clear. We are fortunate that the Polskie Wydawnictwo Audiowizualne (now NInA) recorded the Wrocław performance in 2007, because everyone can now discover their own secret in this *Roger*.

Transl. L. Davidson

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ance of my first orchestral piece played by the Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra. In those years my musical idols were Mahler (Symphony No. 9) and Webern (especially his opp. 6, 10 and 21).

There must be some pivotal moments in your compositional development that dramatically changed your musical perspective....

An important moment in my musical development was during the fall of 1989. In that time I discovered for myself new musical worlds: one was Messiaen's (I was completely amazed after a performance of several parts from *St. Francis* which I attended in St. Peter and Paul's Church in Katowice; Messiaen was present there) and the other...my father's music. The revelation happened one night. He had on a shelf tapes with radio recordings of his music. One time, when he was gone, I took the tape with a recording of *Muzyczka IV* [*Little Music IV* for clarinet, trombone, cello, and piano]. These eight minutes of music changed me completely. I started seeing all music – and especially avant-garde music from the 1950s and 60s – in a new light. This piece opened a new way for me. Of course, after that I discovered other works of his, especially Symphony No. 2 and *Lerchenmusik* – my favourite works. So when the 1990s came and all that excitement about his Symphony No. 3, I was not at all surprised. Sometimes people ask me: Is it hard to be the son of a famous composer? And my answer is always – no, it isn't. Personally, I have never had any problem with that. The problem occurs when I have to deal with people for whom my situation is supposed to be difficult....

What appeals to you about these particular works (*Muzyczka IV*, Symphony No. 2, and *Lerchenmusik*)? They do share many similarities...many differences.

For me *Muzyczka IV* is a miniature of Symphony No. 2. Not only are both pieces two-movement works, but the meaning, the message which is contained in each of them, is similar for me. The first movements are catastrophic, huge blocks, masses of sound with sudden rests, which are so impressive. The contrast between sound and silence is captured here in an unusual way. Silence becomes part of the music, as important as 'played notes'. We may refer here to John Cage's earlier efforts in finding the relationship between composed music and 'music' of our surroundings (noise-silence). There is of course a huge difference: In *Muzyczka IV* and Symphony No. 2 the silence becomes the voice of the 'divine', and in Cage's case it is a scientific approach to the problem with a touch of Far East philosophies. On the other hand, the second movements of *Muzyczka IV* and Symphony No. 2 are slow, soft, with single sudden climaxes. From a harmonic point of view both movements are based on the

same chord, a 'black keys' chord. We also hear a Melody here, which was so absent in music of the 1950s and 60s. These melodic phrases are in some way similar to Gregorian chant, and we may say that we are hearing the voice of the 'divine' which in earlier movements was only prepared. Prepared by silence. *Lerchenmusik* is written for the same instruments as *Muzyczka IV* with the exception of the trombone. But the treatment of those instruments is different, more individual. The treatment is typical of chamber music (all three instruments have their solos, etc.), whereas *Muzyczka IV* is symphonic music written for four instruments. What is not typical is the sense of time. This music, as with many other works of my father, exists beyond real time, the clock time. In *Lerchenmusik* there are also some touches of Messiaen which makes this work even closer to me.

How would you characterize your father's influence upon your development? What other composers have influenced your artistic approach?

From 1990 to 1995 my father was my composition professor at the Music Academy in Katowice. These years were mainly spent talking about life and music in general. We very seldom talked about compositional technique. I have been always very interested in reading scores, so I may say that from a technical point of view I mainly learned from the scores of Mozart, Chopin, Brahms, Mahler, Stravinsky, Webern, Messiaen and others. From Polish music I must mention the influence of Szymanowski (especially his Violin Concerto No. 1) and Lutoslawski (*Livre*, String Quartet, Cello Concerto and my favourite *Chantefleurs et Chantefables*).

After your studies in Katowice, you left Poland for the United States and Canada....

Yes, in late 1990 I left Poland for Indiana University (Bloomington), and later in the year 2000 I moved to Montreal where I lectured at McGill University as a postdoctoral fellow. Then, in 2002, I moved to south Texas. Sometimes I am asked if living in different countries has influenced my music. I must say – no. I am rather stubborn person (my sister would agree...) and I do not easily follow one's suggestions.

Has it been difficult for you to live away from Polish musical life?

I feel very strongly attached to my Polish cultural roots, not only in musical terms. I believe that each nation has its own particular features which in our time of globalization are more and more valuable. I have heard comments on several occasions that my music sounds 'Polish', but I must say that I do not know how exactly the Polish musical idiom can be verbalized....

(November 2009)

Full interview and more about the Composer at:

► [www.pwm.com.pl/goreckim](http://www.pwm.com.pl/goreckim)

# ... he opened the way to freedom

## Szymanowski about Chopin

Among us there is so much writing, speaking and thinking about Fryderyk Chopin! How many rhetorically colourful wreaths lie at his feet! However, the question of his work still seems not to be properly considered. We are drowning in its depths, and we are afraid to cross outside the magic circle of superhuman heroism that so characteristically surrounds those whom we are accustomed to – from our past – who rise as huge bronze statues beyond their epoch.

Pietry that would be worthy of admiration, if it did not become the cause of a highly undesirable phenomenon – namely, compulsive wandering along emphatically moving paths does not lead directly to the mystery of a great artist, but brings entanglement in the sometimes inextricable labyrinths of thought. The inability to capture any phenomenon from the field of national creativity in a light, objective shape makes it difficult to produce in our society, that which we would call national cultural consciousness. The anaemic state of that ‘consciousness’ is most vividly striking in our music. A synthetic view of its evolution, based on the logic of particular facts does not exist. The history of Polish music, especially the nineteenth century, has not yet been written. It is presented as a chronological series of biographies of particular activists, as a more or less accurate characterisation of their individual creativity – but without generalising ideas, no definitive demonstration of organic connections and relationships, without any kind of a plan, contained in an unambiguous, robust shape. There is silence

takes the place in the national cultural consciousness due to him, perfectly defined and devoid of any sentimentality. [...]

In an ‘objective’ kind of relationship to his work, so to say, lies the mystery of unrelenting excellence of form. Such work, conjured from a block of solid ‘material’ – expressing nothing but itself – is a product infinitely ‘flexible’ and ‘positive’, a creation ‘organised’ according to its specific, internal logic, and thus, according to the same, ‘limited’ in its ideally harmonised dimensions, a creation, living somehow as an independent being, beyond the stormy and eternally changing internal path of the artist’s experiences. [...]

These essential features of Chopin’s relationship to the riddle of his own work take on a typical expression against the background of his era and the musical ideology of the time. In the enormous extension of the scope of contemporary life, an unprecedented enrichment of its content, the creative person – so the artist – stood, so to say, in its centre, as an actor on the stage, taking an active part in it, directly affecting its dramatic action, regulating the course of events. [...] Chopin’s works are utterly devoid of that element of acting; it would seem that his mental personality, the *spiritus movens* behind his creative will, move to the shade, beyond the sparkling brilliance of his own amazing work. There is some strange magic in them creating worlds of beauty, existing within their own life. This work reveals itself to us as free from any direct relationship with the mental experience (from which it arose), a play of forms, clean and perfect, forms, above all expressing themselves in their unshakable harmony of individual elements. We believe that the creative energy freed of all accidental connections, indomitable creative will

and no external elements can raise its ‘spiritual value’ ... [...]

... ‘Romanticism’ does not, however, capture the most essential aspect of his [Chopin’s] work, [...] through formidable creative power and also amazing objectivity in relation to issues of art, he was able to create positive values in his music, whose absolute ‘innovation’ overtook many of his era, and at the same time – values fixed and immutable, that the events and music experiments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so rich, have been passed over, and nothing can shadow its glory. On the contrary, even: the series of ‘revolutionary’ changes in the realm of art, characterised the last years, have intensified the brightness, fully demonstrating Chopin’s inner vivacity. [...]

Today, the reaction in the art world against the immediate ‘yesterday’ is undoubtedly a cultural fact. It is rather a reality too alive and ‘standing’ around us, we are rather too strongly forced to play a role in it to be able to objectively, critically judge it. That this is not a ‘revolutionary’ beginning of a new era in art, there is – we think – no doubt about it. The link to that ‘yesterday’ is rather organic – even in the negative form of protest. It seems to be rather a ‘continuation’, and so an inflow or outflow – according to the unshakable right – like a huge breath of the ocean. At the same time, it is also – as claimed by many melancholics – the last border, a tragic *Ultima*

In the whole uncritical, almost religious cult of Chopin – a national hero, he was never fully understood as a great Polish artist

– as if in silent agreement – about expressing a sad phenomenon, that this evolution took place almost *a rebours*: beginning with the unfathomable peaks of the genius of Chopin and descending slowly – step by step – into the grey, sad plains ...

We boldly assert that the reason for this is largely – almost paradoxically – that in the whole uncritical, almost religious cult of Chopin – a national hero, he was never fully understood as a great Polish artist, resulting in his invaluable work remaining barren, left as a value in itself, left on the margins of further Polish musical creativity. The work of the great artist will not cease to be an eternal source of living, creative power only if he

of absolute form is Chopin’s ‘depth’. Using the terms ‘depth’ and ‘absolute’ we reserve against all aesthetic and metaphysical combinations in the context of music as a ‘means of expression’, all so fashionable until recently. On the contrary – we believe that the peculiar ‘depth’ of the great creator of music is possible only provided the most positive attitude to the riddle known as ‘Métier’. [...] That positivism, introducing the concept of ‘craft’ to the realm of the highest matters of art is but a healthy instinct, an unambiguous statement of fact that the fair value of works of art can only be on the basis of absolute mastery of material. In the creative process, most important is ‘how’ – and then ‘what’,



Chopin by the piano. Teofil Kwiatkowski watercolour



Thule of a certain period of culture, which has been reached by a tidal wave that will never retreat! That extreme pessimism, however, does not fundamentally alter our position. In the abstract formalism of contemporary art, for example in extreme intellectualism, efforts to finally resolve problematic forms, smouldering somewhere in the depths of carefully concealed creative emotion, moreover, the belief in the transcending, the absolute value of art [...]. Faith – perhaps – is unconfirmed by quite convincing arguments of particular works of art. And that does not entitle us to such black pessimism. In the chaos of the contemporary art world, among so many ideas and notions, apparent contradictions, disputes and enthusiasm, one can feel, with unshakable certainty, the immense vitality of

## The 'Polishness' of Chopin's work is not subject to the slightest doubt; it does not, however, depend on the fact he wrote Polonaises and Mazurkas

the riddles of art, as well as the outline of the basic needs and basic directions of further routes. These roads are easier to reveal in the field of music, the rhythm of development is subject to its own laws. From this point of view, Chopin's role in the history of music is decisive, as is his enormous significance for forming today's 'new' music. The psychological foundation for this 'new' music is undoubtedly the fact of the gradual liberation from the enchanted circle of 'German-ness'. We are not speaking of primitively ignoring its undoubted and enormous aesthetic values. It is only necessary to refute the legend of its 'universality'.

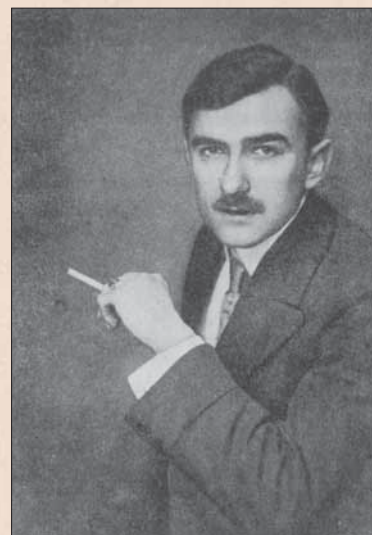


It should be finally and absolutely said that great music can arise on a different foundation, more than ever today, than the tightening circle of German 'expressionism'. First and foremost, this liberation must be based on reaching for the highest artistic value of music – the racial characteristics of other national groups. It is therefore not only about 'formal' virtues – but also about the 'spirit' of music, with its profound message. This process has already been achieved in France and Russia. How the work of Chopin played an enormous role in this! There is no doubt in fact that almost a century ago, he understood the full depth and 'organicism' of the riddle of basing creativity not on the pre-existing aesthetic canon, but creating his own 'canon', building an edifice of music from

the foundation, which naturally became the most important relation to the elements of music, based on their racial identities.

He was one of the greatest 'revolutionaries' in music, breaking down formal and 'spiritual' traditionalism; he opened the way to freedom. However, unerring instinct, high culture, immediately showed him the way to self-invincible 'discipline'. Flexible imagination outlined the fundamental direction and marked the borders. In these voluntary bonds he developed his 'métier' – the wonderful 'craft' of his formal perfection.

The 'Polishness' of Chopin's work is not subject to the slightest doubt; it does not, however, depend on the fact he wrote Polonaises and Mazurkas (a falsely understood relationship to folk music as the basis for individual creativity), to which sometimes external – as already indicated – ideological and literary content, foreign to them, is attributed. The absolute 'musicality' of his work has grown beyond his era in a double sense: as an artist he searched for forms standing outside of the literary-dramatic nature of the music, characterized by aspirations of Romanticism – as a Pole, he did not reflect the contemporary essence of the tragic collapse of the nation's history, but instinctively sought to include the somehow eternal, deepest expression of his race, realising that only through the liberation of art from the dramatic content of history provide the most durable and genuine Polish values prevail. Such an attitude to the issue of 'national music' – ingeniously resolved in his own art – became the cause of universal comprehension of Chopin's works outside of Poland's borders (as opposed to Moniuszko!) and placed his art at the peak of all humanity's art. Additionally, it has become the starting point for today's attempts. Therein lies the strange riddle of his eternal currency. Today, perhaps, we no longer feel the novelty of his time with enough freshness, and the most positively conceived musical material of his art. But each and every element:



Karol Szymanowski

chords, modulation or melodic or rhythmic shape grew from the soil, almost untouched by the plough, and was the result of a most deeply understood creative experiment. He possessed such a characteristic, objective and balanced wisdom, the courage that characterizes those who in their creative acts fearlessly leave the land of material a thousand times already researched, reliable, threatening no surprise, the land where traditional 'aestheticism' is growing like an addiction, and ideas quickly become 'fashionable'; it is only today – from the distance of nearly a century – and considering what came after him, and thus on the one hand the whole of romanticism, post-romanticism and today's music in Germany, on the other hand – and as the antithesis – its luxuriant growth in France and Russia, taking so incredibly much of his art – only now can one fully understand his enormous importance in the evolution of the musical universe. We desire that the 'transformation of values', the path to which Chopin pointed the way a hundred years ago, would finally become an achieved fact in Poland.

This is not about indiscriminate drawing out of his music that which has already to some extent become aesthetic traditionalism, but about the deepest understanding of its position in relation to Polish music, in particular, about its final rejection of encumbering and alien restraints that hinder its development, about the courage to 'suffer', and about the desire to build on its own foundation. Fryderyk Chopin is an everlasting example, of what Polish music can be, as well as one of the highest symbols of European Poland – losing nothing of racial differences, and standing at the highest level of European culture.

Transl. L. Davidson

Excerpt from an article written by Karol Szymanowski in 1923 for the monthly 'Skamander'.

This work, together with three other texts by Szymanowski, devoted to Fryderyk Chopin, were published by PWM in 1949, the centenary of the composer's death. In 2010 PWM will make a reprint of this book.



Zbigniew Bujarski:

# Two different ways of life



*A moment came when painting started to disturb me in my compositional work. If I was composing and, God forbid, the easel was standing, because for example yesterday I painted and the picture was drying, I took a cigarette, glanced at the picture and knew that something was not right. Composing after, I thought the whole time about what to change in the picture. And in turn, when I was working on painting a picture I thought the whole time about composition. Painting and music are rather two different ways of life and they cannot be reconciled.*

Why does Zbigniew Bujarski paint? „Perhaps,” he answers, „if I had writing talent, and I haven't, I would try to write. [...] painting would be a certain substitute for writing. [...] I am expressing something through image, which if I was able – I would be able to say in words”.

Teresa Malecka

Bujarski's painting is characterised by diversity of themes, technique and expressions. Apart from portraits and landscapes, various types of symbolic events predominate filled with reminiscences and experiences, and, at the same time, fears of the difficult (in the composer's opinion) future. The space of the creator's imagination is filled with some sort indefinable, difficult to explain illusions. And everything is painted with sharp, distinct lines in intense colours, sometimes unified, sometimes with a symbolic role, for example, *The Soviet Table* in red. Searching for sources of inspiration one may point to the painting of Hieronymus Bosch. It seems as though Bujarski's painting revealed another, different, unexpected side of the creative personality, the opposite of that which we know from his music.

Music and painting are intertwined, however, in the works and life of Zbigniew Bujarski from nearly the beginning, and their relationship is complicated and operates on different levels: some of his works were inspired by painting; in the symphonic works, you can find quasi-painting structural charac-



*Midsummer Night Dream with Self-Portrait, 1986, oil, 40x70 cm (top); Castle (from Castles cycle, 1983-84), watercolour, 20x18 cm (bottom)*

teristics of forming musical material; in some paintings we find different types of musical reminiscences, and the series of watercolours is a *quasi-copy* of the music notation.

Concerning two programmatic symphonic works, *Similis Greco* and *Lumen*, the composer writes that they were inspired by El Greco's paintings: “[...] my long fascination with the irrational light effects of the ecstatic, visionary and mystical painting of Dominikos Theotokopulos caused me to try to write a piece which would carry some feature (conventional, of course) of the phe-

nomenon of surrealism”. In the composer's symphonic music one is struck by an exceptional sensitivity to timbre and instrumentation. “Colour in music,” he says, “I understand not only as manipulation of instruments in terms of their changeability. Texture and harmony are extremely important for me, equal with instrumentation of the piece. Instrumentation does not exist by itself. I never write a piece without instrumentation, I always write the full score [...] colour – as it has always seemed to me – is an immeasurably important element, one I love”.

The union of painting with music in Bujarski's works are also present at the structural level and relate to the *quasi-painting* qualities of music. It is about particular strange phenomena associated with the category of time and space. Irregular time signatures, long, standing sounds, fragmented, irregular values create the impression of the suspension of time; meaning, on the other hand, is gained from the spacious sound of the orchestra, the strongest presence of this yet is in the composer's last symphonic work, with the significant title *To the Space*.

Furthermore, in Bujarski's painting, musical reminiscences ‘call out’. Portraits of composers: Mahler, Penderecki, are linked to





*Organ*, 1982, oil, 80x60 cm

Bujarski's highest regard for these artists, and in the case of Penderecki a close, long-term friendship. Musical reminiscences are often symbolic. In the picture *Organ* from 1982 the title and foreground present damaged organ pipes removed from the housing. However, the background creates a symbolic dimension. We see a damaged white-red flag, a crowd of tiny characters, militia cars, and amongst it all – a burning candle. The composer comments: "There is organ and organ [powers] – that's what we said in those days".

Among Bujarski's painting achievements we find a series of watercolours called *Castles* – castles on rocks. The composer is strongly opposed to attempts to describe them as landscapes. He says: "No, definitely not. [...] a very long time ago, it was '80-something, Marek Stachowski asked me to give him a fragment of a manuscript as a souvenir. 'I already have something from various colleagues,' he said, 'from Krzysztof [Penderecki], from Lutos [Witold Lutosławski]; I would like to have a souvenir from you'. Of course, I wanted a score that was interesting in a graphic sense. I took the manuscript of the *Violin Concerto*, and just there, I found a fragment in which, starting from the viola, there was a line leading upwards. It seemed to me that it looked nice graphically. I thought, why do I have to give him a normal piece of paper? Therefore, I used a special technique: I smeared the notes very hard with paint, I pressed it on to paper and it was like a negative, a slightly blurred image. For me it formed a castle. There is a mountain and on it a castle. And in this way one came about. I thought to myself, it is interesting, and it could

be fun to do this. Every one is different, because I am always constructing something".

The two worlds of Bujarski's artistic expression are different. It seems, however, as if the principle of opposites in his art rather concerns detail, and at the same time a strong bond is built on a certain level of generality. Perhaps it is as Wassily Kandinsky believed: "Every art has its own language, that means the appropriate resources. [...] the means used by each art seen from the outside are completely different: sounds, colours, words. In the final instance, and as seen from inside, these measures are entirely similar: the ultimate objective removes the external differences and reveals the common inwards. The ultimate goal (perception) is achieved in the state of vibration of the human soul"<sup>1</sup>.

*Transl. L. Davidson*

<sup>1</sup> W. Kandinsky, *Der Blaue Reiter*, Munich 1965, p. 72

More about the composer at:

► [www.pwm.com.pl/bujarski](http://www.pwm.com.pl/bujarski)



Teresa Malecka  
Zbigniew Bujarski. Twórczość  
i osobowość [Z.B. His Works and  
Personality]

Academy of Music in Kraków, 2006,  
hardback, 208 pp., A5, [Pol.],  
ISBN 83-87182-64-8

**Peirene** for orchestra (2003), 22'  
3232-6331-batt (3esec)-archi  
Cat. no. 10370  
Premiere: 7 Nov 2003, Kraków  
Kraków Philharmonic Orchestra, T. Bugaj (cond.)  
[...] In the myth there are three characters: Pegasus, Bellerophon and his beloved Peirene. In my reading of the myth of Pegasus is the symbol of absolute art, Bellerophon – a symbol of the artist, and finally Peirene – a symbol of love. [...] Bellerophon struggles with Pegasus, the desire to achieve excellence, identify the ancient intentions of artists to search here and there for that which is in the power of the gods. [...] Pegasus strikes the spring for a constantly flowing stream – the symbol of the never ending creation of culture. And Peirene – who earned her place in the title of the piece, as I take her as a symbol of love, therefore beautiful, is perhaps larger than that which Pegasus carries on his back, or perhaps between his wings.

[Z. Bujarski]

**Elegos** for violoncello & strings (2005), 8'  
Premiere: 20 May 2005, Kraków  
AUKSO Chamber Orchestra, D. Imielowska (cello), M. Moś (cond.)

Bujarski's latest piece is marked by a deeply personal tone of speech [...]. Dedicated to Marek Stachowski, *Elegos*, is a kind of lament for solo cello. In the predominantly serious and sad mood of the piece, there are, however, glimmers of hope [...].

[E. Siemda, *Dziennik Polski*  
no. 120, 24 May 2005]

**Pawana dla oddalonej [Pavane for a Remote One]** for string orchestra (1994), 10'  
Premiere: 4 June 1995, Kraków  
Sinfonietta Cracovia, P. Przytockki (cond.)

This small piece, uniform in terms of performance resources and compositional technique, while highly 'characterised' emotionally, carries a significant expressive load, albeit restrained, sad; it shows some hope, and is among the greatest masterpieces of post-war Polish music.

[T. Malecka]

**Ogrody [The Gardens]** for soprano & orchestra (1987), 20'  
S solo-4343-4431-batt (6esec) or pf-archi (8.6.5.5.4)  
Lyrics: K. Iłkiewiczówna, J. Iwaskiewicz, M. Kruciel [Pol.]  
Premiere: 5 May 1989, Kraków  
E. Towarnicka, Orkiestra Filharmonii Krakowskiej, K. Penderecki (cond.)

Each song, composed a distance in time from the others was for me my own kind of escape from contemporary realities – at any rate the unpleasant ones (years of martial law) – into an imaginary world of beauty, in contemplation of nature; an attempt to forget – albeit for a short time – depressing reality; an asylum, where I found peace.

[Z. Bujarski]

**Five Songs**  
for soprano, vibraphone & strings (1996), 25'  
Lyrics: John G. Brown [Eng.]  
Premiere: 20 May 1997, Kraków  
E. Towarnicka, Sinfonietta Cracovia,  
P. Przytockki (cond.)

**Lumen** for orchestra (1997), 15'  
3242-4431-batt (2esec)-archi  
Premiere: 31 May 1998, Kraków  
Orchestra of the Academy of Music in Kraków,  
W. Czepiel (cond.)

**Do przestrzeni [To the Space]** (2009), 15'  
32(+c.i.)32(+c.fg)-4441-batt-archi (14.12.10.10.8)  
Premiere: 17 March 2009, Kraków  
Orchestra of the Academy of Music in Kraków,  
P. Przytockki (cond.)

# Zygmunt Noskowski 1846-1909

**Morskie Oko [Sea Eye]** Overture (1875), 13'

2222-4230-batt-archi

Cat. no. 2758

The title refers to a famous lake in the Tatra mountains of south-eastern Poland. The music reflects Noskowski's – and his epoch's – fascination with the Podhale region. Like Żeleński, who paid a musical tribute to the beautiful mountain landscape in his *W Tatrach [In the Tatras]*, Noskowski wanted to seek out Polish elements in the nature of the Tatras and array them in musical language. The composer is said to have spent the night all alone at Morskie Oko in the summer of 1864, fleeing the crushed January Uprising in which he took part, never forgetting the experience.

**Step [The Steppe]**

Symphonic Poem Op. 66 (1895), 19'

3222-4231-batt ar-archi

Cat. no. 1245

It numbers among the most distinguished and well-known of Noskowski's works. The piece is in a sonata allegro form with contrasting themes characterizing the sides of the Polish-Cossack conflict, and with a battle scene in the development. The main value of this composition is a melodic language of great breath, utilizing elements of Polish and Ukrainian folklore. Uncommonly often, relationships between *The Steppe* and Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy* are emphasized, especially with the novel *With Fire and Sword*. This work, like the *Trilogy*, was written for the comforting of hearts during the Partition period in Polish history.

Noskowski preceded the score with the following invocation: *O marvelous steppe, I greet you with song. Among your measureless spaces were heard both the rush of wings and the sound of cavalry hooves, the resonance of the shepherds pipe and the nostalgic Cossack song, accompanied by theorbas and drums, the outbreak of war cries and the clash of sabers. The enormous battles and wrestlings are over, warriors have been lain in their graves. You alone, o great steppe, have remained eternally beautiful and peaceful!*

**Symphony No. 1** in A major (1874), 32'

2222-4230-batt-archi

**Symphony No. 2** in C minor 'Elegiac' (1879), 32'

3222-4231-batt-archi

**Symphony No. 3** in F major 'From Spring to Spring' (1903), 34'

3333-4431-batt ar-archi

**Mr Żołzikiewicz**

Overture to the Stage Music (1888), 6'

2121-2210-batt-archi

**Elegiac Polonaise** for orchestra (ca 1885), 3'

I: 0022-2000-archi; II: 1121-2210-batt pf arm-archi

**String Quartet No. 2** in E major (between 1879 and 1883)

Cat. no. 10231

score + parts

**Piano Quartet** Op. 8 (before 1879), 35'

Cat. no. 10172

score + parts

It dates from the early period of Noskowski's creative work. It is characterised by long-breathed, freely evolving melodies composed from succinct motifs. The thematic material appears in all instruments, treated equally. The ending, Polish in nature, i.e. the stylised *krakowiak*, enlivens the work in a characteristic manner, imbuing it with national traits. During Noskowski's stay in Weimar in 1879 the quartet was performed with Liszt at the piano: the latter was highly interested in the piano works of the young Polish composer.



Maciej Negrey

July 26 this year marked the passing of 100 years since Zygmunt Noskowski's death, somewhat in the shadow of the centenary celebrations of the death of Mieczysław Karłowicz, and the hundredth anniversary of Grażyna Bacewicz's birth.

The character and creativity of this composer have been almost completely forgotten for quite a long time. The same has happened to the work of – apart from Chopin and to a certain extent Moniuszko – the other Polish composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Noskowski worked at a time when Europe was divided into Wagner apologists and admirers of Brahms, when Tchaikovsky and the Mighty Handful worked in Russia, when Dvořák reminded the world of the existence of Czech music, and Grieg's works testified to the presence of Norwegian art. This is not about comparison, but about facts. Polish composers worked in such lamentable circumstances that it was impossible to speak about the full development of their talent. They lived in a country where the journey from Warsaw to Kraków required crossing a border and showing a Russian, Austrian or Prussian passport. They lived on the neglected peripheries of three partitioning powers where the institutions of public life were created with great difficulty, or not at all, where schools, orchestras, publishers, and theatres were lacking. Some tried

to make these on their own, through necessity leaving artistic work on the sidelines.

Zygmunt Noskowski was born on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1846 in Warsaw. He grew up in Andrzej Towiański's spirit of science and for the rest of his life he worked on perfecting himself internally as a patriot and a community-minded citizen. But he also grew up in ignorance of Chopin's music, which in the Noskowski home was not mentioned, because Chopin spoke ill of Towiański, feeling an aversion to the symptoms of the cult, to which many Poles adhered, including some Adam Mickiewicz, of 'God's Man'. Ignacy Feliks Dobrzyński, the legendary winner of the Viennese composers' competition in 1835, gave Noskowski his initial push along the musical path and he was confirmed on this route by Stanisław Moniuszko, who later became his professor of counterpoint at the Warsaw Institute of Music (1864-67). Before starting these studies, Noskowski took part in the failed January Uprising. Only those closest to him knew what he went through in these times.

In the years 1872-75 Noskowski undertook composition studies with Friedrich Kiel at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin. These culminated with the *Symphony* in A major, which was well received in Berlin but rather more coldly in Warsaw, to where Noskowski returned in 1875 to find nothing do to. In the same year he found himself in Constance, by Lake Constance, where he was appointed to the position of director of music for the city and conductor of the Bodan Choral Society. During his five years of residence in the city he composed intensively, working on, amongst others, the *Symphony* No. 2, and two string quartets; he made contact with Franz Liszt, who not only recommended the *Krakowiak for Four Hands* to the publisher, C. Kant in Leipzig, but also gave the world premier of the *Piano Quartet*, Op. 8 by the Polish composer. At the end of 1880 Noskowski appeared in Warsaw at the premier of his *Symphony* No. 2 and whilst there he gave way to the inducements that had been repeating for some time to take over as director of the Warsaw Music Society (WTM).

From the perspective of the Warsaw music scene, the only place in the Polish lands disposed with certain resources and educational facilities, it was a blessed decision. However, for Noskowski, as a creator in a phase of dynamic development, it turned out to be disastrous. Noskowski threw himself into the fury of his work with great energy. Providing dozens of free singing lessons he created the WTM choir from scratch, later a children's choir, he repeatedly put together a symphony orchestra, which he largely paid for from his own appenage. He formed chamber ensembles, in which he participated as a violinist and pianist, he founded a music school alongside WTM and took a professorship at the Institute of Music. He also taught composition privately and performed songs of his students at concerts he organised, at which he also presented earlier and



contemporary Polish music. He educated two generations of Polish composers – all of the *Młoda Polska* (Young Poland) artists in music were his disciples. Finally, in 1894, he realised his idea of establishing a memorial to Chopin in Żelazowa Wola. If it were possible to capture his work in a single motto it

If it were possible to capture his work in a single motto it would sound thus: **'teach music and matters so that they will be performed, regardless of cost.'**

would sound thus: 'teach music and matters so that they will be performed, regardless of cost.'

And the costs were enormous in every sense of the word. Already by the year 1884 Noskowski had completed his *String Quartet* No. 3 – and fell silent as a creator of great forms, to which he was so well predisposed and which began to arouse the serious interest of foreign publishers. Their place was taken by theatrical music, almost homely character pieces, through which the composer repaired his domestic budget, torn apart by expenses incurred organising concerts. He created dozens of piano miniatures, published at home and abroad, some very beautiful, but demonstrating his resignation from the most ambitious plans. He abandoned a few projects, which he had brought with him from Constance – including the unfinished *Stabat Mater*. Only later did he find himself in

various forms of choral music; a small masterpiece is his *Śpiewnik dla dzieci* ('Children's Songbook') – a collection of 50 songs to words by Maria Konopnicka arranged according to seasons of the year. One of his leading works is the 12-part *Switezianka* cantata to words by Adam Mickiewicz, for solo voices, choir and

orchestra. Noskowski also wrote several operas (*Livia Quintilia*, *Wyrok*, *Zemsta*), but the conditions for their performance in Warsaw could neither meet the authors' intentions, nor the expectations of the audience.

Only with the premier of the symphonic poem, *Steppe* (Warsaw, 1896), did the listeners again have the chance to hear the scale of Noskowski's talent and skills. Today, this is his best-known composition. The fact is that the national symbol, to which this work refers, is rather an abstraction for contemporary Poles...

The crowning achievement of Noskowski's tireless social activity was the formation of the Warsaw Philharmonic in 1901. On their request, he wrote his *Symphony* No. 3 'From Spring to Spring' (1903) – a masterpiece, albeit delayed – as indeed was the work of several late 'stray' Romantic composers in the twentieth century. Perhaps there are still

people alive in Poland, who remember when the *Symphony* No. 3 had a solid place in the repertoire of Polish orchestras.

Zygmunt Noskowski was the most prominent Polish composer of the second half of the nineteenth century. The most valuable parts of his work are from the great instrumental forms – chamber and symphonic, and some of his vocal-instrumental works. A few years ago PWM brought out his *Piano Quartet* Op. 8 and *String Quartet*. His symphonies however remain in manuscript. There is also a lack of recordings for the majority of his works; only a few items from the archives of Polish Radio are fit to listen to. Indeed, to perform someone's piece well, one must have the key which opens all the secrets of the composer's personal style for the performer. Without this key, the work seems dull, or is too similar to others. Such keys remain in the performers' tradition, and in the case of Noskowski – are lost. Now, we must laboriously recreate them.

And this should be done. It is a necessity.

*Transl. L. Davidson*

More about the composer at:

[www.pwm.com.pl/noskowski](http://www.pwm.com.pl/noskowski)



Zygmunt Noskowski: Orchestral Works, vol. 1  
Morskie Oko, Symphony No. 1,  
'Pan Ziolkiewicz' Overture  
PNRSO, G. Chimura, S.A. Wróblewski,  
Z. Rychert (conductors)  
STERLING 1083-2, 2009



## Jadwiga Sarnecka's music brought back to life

Seven ballads, two sonatas, a fantasia, thirteen impressions, two cycles of variations, an intermezzo, two studies, and etude and printed cycle of miniatures. Together with three songs for voice and piano, not found in the folder, these are the artistic achievements of a person who shot through the history of music like a bolt of lightning.

Few people noticed her during her short life. Jadwiga Sarnecka was born in 1877 in Sławuta in Volhynia or in 1883 in Szarogród in Podolia, and died on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1913 in Kraków. Tuberculosis, which she fought throughout her life, cut her off in her prime. She was buried at Rakowicki cemetery; however, her grave has been lost.

We have very little information about her life. She received a thorough musical education as a student of such masters as Aleksander Michałowski and Teodor Leszetycki. She earned her name as an excellent pianist but first and foremost, she was and wanted to be a composer. She studied with Władysław Żeleński, Felicjan Szopski and probably Henryk Melcer; however, those were irregular private lessons. The works she wrote could not be appreciated in her lifetime. They were different and therefore met with a barrage of harsh criticism, described as weird, depressive, half-dilettantish, and chaotic in content and form. But Sarnecka continued writing. She printed her music at her own expense and finally fortune smiled on her and her talent was no-

ticed. Feliks 'Manggha' Jasiński himself paid for the publishing of her compositions and the Polish musical trend-setters of the time, Chybiński, Reiss and Jachimecki, started writing about her music in a favourable, almost euphoric way. A prize at last! The second prize for *Ballad No. 4* in a composition competition organised on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chopin's birth in Lviv. The first prize went to Karol Szymanowski. It was a real achievement. Moreover, during the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of Polish Musicians, she was the only woman to be asked to deliver a speech. [...]

Regrettably, her illness progressed mercilessly. Biting criticism did not abate and she was said to have fallen into depression. We do not know the exact reason why she stopped publishing, especially since she did not give up composing. What is more, at the time, she wrote her most avant-garde works and radicalized her harmonic and stylistic idiom.

She made some attempts at atonal music but above all followed her own path. As her health deteriorated, the pen began to tremble in her hand, and finally she passed away, never finishing her *Ballad No. 7*, *Sonata* and *Variation*. The war that followed changed the world irreversibly and she fell into oblivion.

This album features a selection of works most representative of Jadwiga Sarnecka's individual style. [...]

*Marek Szlezer*

*Transl. X. Pietraszek-Platek*

### Jadwiga Sarnecka:

#### Piano Works

*Piano Sonata in E flat minor* Op. 9; *Etude in F minor* ("Quasi un dolore"); *Quatre impressions* Op. 12 (1911); *Impression, Tranquillo*; *Impression, Vivo. Con sentimento e passione*; *Ballad No. 4*, *Tranquillo molto cantando*.  
Marek Szlezer (piano)  
DUX 0698, 2009  
[world premiere recording]



\* scores available at

[www.pwm.com.pl/downloads](http://www.pwm.com.pl/downloads)



# Missa elettronica

Bogusław Schaeffer is a fascinating character, the author of more than 580 musical works, 46 plays, 16 books and over 800 articles. The composer's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was exceptionally solemn.

Krzysztof Kostrzewa

In the Academy of Music in Kraków *Possibilities of Music* symposium was held (29-30 November), and under the auspices of the Audio Art Festival and the Festival of Polish Music many musical and theatrical works by the man celebrating his jubilee were presented. On 15<sup>th</sup> November, the Kraków Philharmonic Boys Choir under the baton of Lidia Matynian with Marek Chołoniewski (sound engineering) performed the *Electronic Mass* in the Franciscan Church.

*Missa elettronica* for boys' choir and tape, from 1975, has maintained its freshness to today. It was first performed in 1976 in Warsaw. The two track stereo tape, was created in Polish Radio's Experimental Studio in Warsaw in cooperation with Eugeniusz Rudnik. There is also a version for mixed choir and tape. The scores of both versions were published by Collsch Edition in Salzburg in 2006. The *Mass* has also been performed in an electronic version without choir, as well as in a version for choir and tape used during the liturgy.

The piece lasts about 40 minutes and consists of 11 parts: 6 electronic, and 5 choral. Its form is very original, as there are alternating electronic and choral parts: *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei I*, creating a kind of contemporary antiphonal singing.

The tape uses three types of sources: electronic sound generators, music concrete – piano sounds (including prepared strings), trumpets, timpani, bells, bassoon, a special 8-stringed violin and boys' choir numbering from 2 to 20 voices. After processing, these various sources together form an expressive organic whole. The electronic part forms an introduction to the atmosphere of subsequent choral parts and complements their expression. The musical events taking place on the tape are very artistic, theatrical; they say something, though primarily without text.

In the *Kyrie* the slowly developing bright sounds of synthetic organs and bells correspond to the monotone vocalisation of a recorded boy's voice, and in the background a cluster of descants can be heard. Individual layers fluctuate constantly, gradually leaving the foreground and disappearing. The material of this part is very complex, but it has a clear expressive eloquence: it builds a festive mood, the atmosphere of mystery, creating sacred space in which the choral *Kyrie* enters.

In the second phase of the *Gloria* pulses appear, forming dense ostinato structures; there are also noise tracks, as well as the boys' choir singing the gradually disappearing *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. Electronic sounds like



Bogusław Schaeffer, 5<sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music in Kraków 2009

crickets or cicadas dominate here. Through a variety of material the composer seems to say: "everything that lives praises God".

In the second phase of the *Sanctus* single empty-sounding pulses (processed timpani and pizzicato violin) condense, form-

the dense, saturated chords built on thirds in the *Agnus Dei* are reminiscent of late Romanticism. However, already in the middle section of the *Kyrie* (*Christe eleison*) we have a taste of later styles: parallel sixths (major and minor), indicating fauxbourdon style, and

The historical style of the *Mass* is not a pastiche or stylisation, but an alloy of many techniques and harmonic styles, enriched by Schaeffer's personal harmonic system.

ing a rhythmic accompaniment to the shrill sounds of a transformed high human voice. It is the most dramatic and expressive part of the *Mass*, forming the first climax of the piece symbolizing the forces of evil.

The second culmination is formed by a quotation that appears at the end of the piece: a recording from the end of Schaeffer's *Agnus Dei* from the *Symphonic Mass* (1986). The *Electronic Mass* ends with a powerful E major chord with an orchestral tutti, accompanied by the word 'pacem' (*Dona nobis pacem*). The dramaturgy is clear: the word has defeated the forces of evil.

The choral parts of the *Mass* have simplified rhythms in the texture of nota contra notam thus retaining the natural vocal prosody. This contributes to the comprehensibility of the text and uniformity of the cycle. The number of voices varies from two to nine, the composer avoids four voices.

According to the author's plan, the choral parts present the development of harmony over a period of nine centuries: from the early Middle Ages through the Renaissance, Baroque, etc., up until modern harmony. This is most apparent in the extreme parts: organum technique appears in the *Kyrie*, and

chords built on fourths (harmony of the first half of the Twentieth Century). The tendencies of the harmonic development in other parts of the *Mass* are not so clear.

The historical style of the *Mass* is not a pastiche or stylisation, but an alloy of many techniques and harmonic styles, enriched by Schaeffer's personal harmonic system. This is an alloy of the finest hallmark and although sometimes the origins of the techniques can be heard, it does not sound eclectic by any means.

The piece is characterized by its original polystylism through the juxtaposition of ancient techniques (medieval organum) and the latest techniques (tape); here Schaeffer entered decidedly into the post-modernist stream.

As Stanisław Dąbek writes, "*Missa elettronica* breaks (...) the hegemony of the concert mass in the context of Polish creativity in the second half of the century, forming a proposal for a style of modern liturgical music". With his *Electronic Mass* Bogusław Schaeffer clearly described himself as an avant-garde composer, declaring himself to be on the side of humanistic values.



# Dark Haired Girl in a Black Sports Car

Warsaw Autumn 2009. A new piece by Aleksander Nowak has been premiered by the famous London Sinfonietta under the baton of David Atherton.

Commissioned by the Warsaw Autumn Festival, Nowak's piece has an intriguing title and a powerful effect on the listener's imagination. In the author's commentary the composer reveals his inspiration, and from the first sounds through the musical score, the orchestra paints a picture of stopped time:

*One day, I stopped at red light next to a dark haired girl in a black sports car. She was looking ahead and slightly swaying her head to the music from radio. I think she was also crooning something, but I could hardly hear because of the city noise. After a minute, never looking in my direction, she drove away.*

... Nowak's piece has brought a quite different climate: strong, decisive brass chords (the horn of the car in the title?), fast, rhythmic pulsation growing right up to the climax, after which the composer introduced a clearly swinging passage (music coming from the

car radio?), and finally - nostalgically sounding out a 'dreamy' ending (the girl left...). The whole brought a breath of youthful freshness, confirming at the same time the young artist's competence of craft and great sense of colour (the initial combination of violin and triangle, the 'juicy' brass entry, the deep sounds of the low registers). The composer is not afraid to flirt with popular music, and he refers to the Polish school of sonorism and the lyricism typical for composers of the 'new romanticism', all of which blends into a coherent whole, fresh and convincing. Nowak made his debut at the 'Warsaw Autumn' last year with the piece *Last Days of Wanda B.*, and was also in the group of finalists for this year's Opus Prize (in fact not awarded). This new proposal – *Dark Haired Girl in a Black Sports Car* – has confirmed his membership into the group of the most interesting and most promising of the younger generation of Polish composers.

[Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska, excerpt, *Ruch Muzyczny*]

**Dark Haired Girl in a Black Sports Car** (2009) 10'  
1111-1110 batt ar pf archi(2.1.1.1)  
Premiere: 19 Sept 2009, Warsaw Autumn  
London Sinfonietta, D. Atherton (cond.)

# U.S. Premieres of Mykietyń and Szymański



Photo: Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska

Paweł Mykietyń's *String Quartet No. 2* and *Five Pieces* for string quartet by Paweł Szymański have been performed for the first time in the USA during the 2009/2010 season inaugural concert in the New York Symphony Space.

The co-organizer of the event was the Polish Cultural Institute in New York. The concert took place on 1 October at the Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater on Broadway. The San Francisco-based Del Sol Quartet made their New York debut, playing U.S. premieres by the Polish composers and New York premieres by Cuban-American composer Tania León and Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz. A conversation with Mykietyń and Tania León, moderated by Laura Kaminsky, Symphony Space's Associate Director, preceded the concert.

# Wojciech Ziemowit Zych joined PWM Edition



Photo: J. Dowgiałło

## Wojciech Ziemowit ZYCH (b. 1976)

"In no piece does he flirt with, or try to appeal to the listener. He prefers to surprise and seduce, rather than wink and caress. But when the listener digs through a deep layer of concentrated musical material, they discover unknown worlds, rise to the heights of intellectual cognition, and are absorbed by matter so dense that it almost drills into the mind". [Daniel Cichy]

He was born in 1976 in Warsaw. From 1996-2001 he studied composition with professor Marek Stachowski at the Academy of Music in Kraków. His post-graduate studies took place with Peter-Jan Wagemans at the Rotterdam Conservatory in 2001-2002. He works as a lecturer in the Department of Composition at the Faculty of Creativity and Interpretation of Music Education at the Academy of Music in Kraków. In 2006 he gained his doctorate in fine arts.

His works were presented in such festivals as the 'Warsaw Autumn', Kraków Composers' Music Days, 'Musica Polonica Nova' in Wrocław, 'Ultra-Schall' in Berlin, 'Musikhøst' in Odense in Denmark.

He has been an ordinary member of the Polish Composers' Union since 2007. In 2006-2008 he was a member of the Repertoire Commission for the 'Warsaw Autumn' International Festival of Contemporary Music.

Works published by PWM:

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**List niedokończony..., list odnaleziony... [Letter unfinished..., letter found...]**  
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**Works for Orchestra**  
*Symphony No. 1, Stirrings of the Will, Concerto for Bass Clarinet & Orchestra* DUX 0722, 2009

*The illustrated book "Chopin", prepared on the occasion of Chopin's 160<sup>th</sup> death and 200<sup>th</sup> birth anniversaries, is intended for a wide range of readers, both in Poland and abroad, in particular to the aficionados of Frederic Chopin's phenomenal talent and those who wish to learn more about his biography and the times when he lived. The book's aim is to promote Chopin-related issues and the knowledge about the composer. The authors have undertaken to answer the questions of how his talent developed and how the historical situation influenced the artist's personality and work. The text will be complemented with a rich illustrative material, including archival materials as well as contemporary photographs, depicting the sights associated with Chopin's life.*



Mieczysław Tomaszewski (text),  
Władysław Pluta (design)

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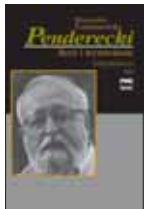
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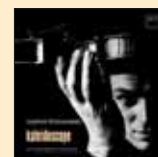
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A. Bauer (cello), J. Olejniczak (piano), AUKSO Orchestra, M. Moś (cond.)  
SACD/CD  
BeArTon CDB 044, 2009



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J. K. Broja, Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, A. Wit (cond.)  
NAXOS 8.570722, 2009



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Marek Stachowski: Works for Cello and String Orchestra  
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D. Imielowska (cello), Beethoven Academy Orchestra, P. Sulkowski (cond.)  
\* world premiere recording  
DUX 0638, DUX/PWM 2009

The works recorded on this CD are related by the use of the cello as both solo and concerting instrument, with consequential specific expressive atmosphere. The works' essence is harmonization and dialogue, as well as frequent contrast and conflict between the cello parts and those of the string orchestra. The cello is primarily a singing instrument; its cantilena capabilities were used to their utmost by the composer of the Recitativo e preghiera. And not only that: in quick movement textures, accord eruptions, or scale derivatives, the instrument also revealed huge dynamic, sound and drama potentials capable of standing against the whole orchestra. Exuberant instrumental virtuosity, so characteristic for the Concerto per violoncello ed orchestra d'archi of 1988, has never been the goal in itself in this composition. It is hard to resist mentioning that the instrument, so dear to the composer's heart, simply became his voice: the expression of the poetry and drama of existence. [L. Polony]



{ comingsoon }

# REQUIEM

ROMAN MACIEJEWSKI

*hominum ignorantiae victimis*

MISSA PRO DEFUNCTIS  
(Requiem)

Aghast the enormity of human suffering and the sea of blood spilled during the years of World War II, towards its end I decided to compose a monumental work which could help impress on human memory the tragic absurdity of wars.

The "Requiem" is dedicated to the victims of human ignorance and, in the first place, to the memory of those who have fallen in every war ever fought of who have suffered in tyrants' prisons.

The "Requiem" is dedicated to the victims of human ignorance and, in the first place, to the memory of those who have fallen in every war ever fought of who have suffered in tyrants' prisons.

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