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CONFERENCE REPORT: *SLAVIC COMPOSERS 1900-1950*
LUBLIN, 25–26 MAY 2015

The first half of the 20th century was a very diversified and interesting chapter in the history of music. As in no other period before, it was marked by the rise of the avant-garde, variety of styles (among them such contradictions as impressionism and expressionism), strong individualities, globalization and two terrible wars. All these elements, enriched with complicated history of particular nations, were reflected in the Slavic music of that time.

Since this subject matter has not been comprehensively characterized yet, it therefore needs a thorough investigation. This was the goal of the national musicological conference, which took place on 25–26 May, 2015 in Lublin. This both scientific and artistic event was organized by the Institute of Musicology and Musicology Students Research Association of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, and was financially supported by the City of Lublin and the KUL Students Council. The conference brought together 19 lecturers from different research centres, both Polish and foreign. Moreover, it was accompanied by two vocal recitals. The thematic scope of the conference was extensive. Presentations concerned biographies of the unknown composers, analytical, stylistic and formal approach to some important musical works, reflection on romantic tradition and condition of avant-garde, problems of emigration, social and political background and interdisciplinary approach, especially links between music and literature, history and pedagogy.

The conference, opened by the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, father prof. Marek Chmielewski, was divided into seven sessions. Karolina Bindel (Wrocław) initiated the first session, *Unknown Polish composers*, with her paper entitled “Individualism in the symphonic works of Zbigniew Turski based on the *II Olympic Symphony* (1948).” The lecturer gave a profound analysis of the above mentioned

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work, stressing its highly original musical language (which oscillate between neoclassicism and neoromanticism) and drawing some valuable conclusions on how political decisions influenced later works of Zbigniew Turski. In the next paper Joanna Cywińska-Rusinek (Lublin) described forgotten works of a little known composer, Henryk Opieński (“Forgotten works of Henryk Opieński”). Usually associated with Poznań Music Academy or Poznań Opera or his journalistic activity, however, Opieński was also a prolific composer, the author of many great forms like operas, cantatas, symphonic poems et al. Subsequently, Karol Furtak (Lublin) presented a paper entitled “Romantic elements in Polish musical culture in the beginning of 20th century. The reception of Henryk Melcer works in Polish musical literature in the light of chosen reviews.” The lecturer outlined the conflict between two generations of Polish composers: the old one, represented by Zygmunt Noskowski et al. and the young one—Young Poland. Works of Henryk Melcer have been presented as a link between the old and the new school.

The second session (*National elements in life and works of Ignacy Jan Paderewski and Young Poland composers*) commenced with the lecture of prof. Agnieszka Schulz-Brzyska (Lublin), entitled “Ignacy Jan Paderewski—musical advocate of Poland.” Along with some biographical details the author stressed the influence of both his patriotic and musical upbringing, as well as the impact of his popularity as a musician on his political activity. Subsequently, prof. Iwona Sawulska (Lublin) presented a paper called “Songs of Mieczysław Karłowicz as a manifestation of his Slavic soul.” The lecturer described the way Karłowicz constructed his songs and what were his special links with “poetic idea” (esp. poetry of Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer). A profound analysis of chosen songs led the author to various meaningful parallels between the music of Karłowicz and typical Slavic features (emotional contrasts, melancholy, etc.). The next paper entitled “Słopiewnie—Bydgoszcz origin of the Karol Szymanowski’s national period” was presented by prof. Barbara Gogol-Droźniakiewicz (Bydgoszcz/Gdańsk). The paper described the beginning of the national period in Szymanowski’s life and included an analysis of the crucial song cycle *Słopiewnie*, which led to the conclusion that this important musical work was created in Bydgoszcz. Afterwards, Paweł Suryś (Lublin) presented Ludomir Różycki piano works (in a paper of the same title). The author described heterogeneous style of Różycki’s music (combining neoclassicism, impressionism and folklore), stressed the importance of piano works in his output and briefly analyzed chosen works.

The third session, called *Varia*, consisted of three diverse presentations. Ewa Kuszewska (Lublin) spoke about pedagogical features of the Slavic music. In her lecture (“The music of Slavic composers of the first half of the 20th century in the process of aural training of up to four year old children”) she emphasized that Slavic music could be extremely valuable in the process of toddlers’ education due to its harmonic originality and melodic diversity. Marek Dudek, PhD (Lublin) introduced Włodzimierz Sławosz Dębski (“Włodzimierz Sławosz Dębski—the artist with a borderland soul”), the unknown but prolific artist, father of Krzesimir

Dębski, whose work was greatly influenced by the tragic wartime experience. Andrzej Gładysz, PhD (Lublin) (“Works of Slavic composers of the first half of the 20th century in the repertoire of the Henryk Wieniawski Lublin Philharmonic”) presented the repertory of Lublin Philharmonic, stressed the importance of the Festival of Slavic Music and analyzed the reception of the works of Slavic composers.

The first day of the conference ended with a vocal recital. Monika Kolasa-Hładiková (mezzosoprano) and Aleksandra Nawe (piano) presented an unknown cycle of songs of Leoš Janáček (“Moravská lidová poesie v písních”), as well as songs of Bohuslav Martinů (“Nové slovenské písně and Písničky na dvě stránky”).

Conference sessions during the second day of the conference were very diversified. The first one concerned Czech and Slovak music. Prof. Monika Kolasa-Hładiková (Kielce) talked on the phenomenon of folklore in a lecture entitled “Czech, Slovak, Moravian and Polish folklore in the vocal works of Leoš Janáček and Bohuslav Martinů.” In the works of both composers folklore and Slavic culture were unabated sources of inspiration. Prof. Hładiková presented their most important vocal works, stressing the links between music and national traditions. Afterwards, Tatiana Švajková, PhD (Prešov) presented a paper on Slovak music—“Choral works of Iris Szeghy within the context of choral traditions in Slovakia”—which covered early period of modern choral traditions in Slovakia, developed primarily by Ján Levoslav Bella, Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský et al. The lecturer also introduced an avant-garde Slovak composer Iris Szeghy in the light of the above mentioned tradition.

Presentations of the next session primarily focused on Polish music. Anna Szarapka, PhD (Bydgoszcz) introduced the life and works of Władysław Walentynowicz (“Władysław Walentynowicz—creator, educator and organizer of musical life”). Apart from biographical issues, the lecturer analyzed musical language of the composer, describing it as neoclassical with elements of folklore and romanticism. Kinga Krzymowska-Szacoń, PhD (Lublin) presented motives of Polish composers who chose emigration, explained historical and sociological background of their decisions and showed main centres of their emigration. Moreover, the lecturer added basic information about reminiscences of Polish tradition in their music and about their political activity (“The phenomenon of emigration among Polish composers of the first half of the 20th century”). This session ended with the first guest lecture, “The symphonic poem during Young Poland period,” presented by prof. Marcin Gmys (Poznań). At the beginning the author defined the notion of “composers of Young Poland” as broader than common “Young Poland in music” (the last one usually connected with the partnership established in 1905 by Karol Szymanowski and four others Polish composers). According to prof. Gmys this newly defined, more extensive period consisted of four phases, from 1896 to 1926. Moreover, symphonic poem (and—generally—program music) was the most important component of this time. The lecturer showed the superiority of this genre, with over 70 program works up to 1918 and supported his arguments with empirical

findings. Prof. Gmys described some unknown symphonic poems, with a special emphasis on the works of Eugeniusz Dąbrowa-Morawski (*Nevermore*, *Ulalume* and *Don Quichotte*) which are as significant as symphonic poems of Mieczysław Karłowicz.

The next session (*Russian music*) commenced with the second guest lecture —“Nikolay Myaskovsky’s Sixth Symphony: Music as post-traumatic discourse,” which was given by Patrick Zuk, PhD (Durham). The author reached for researches in cultural studies and literary criticism to show the important role of traumas in shaping modernist sensibilities. He analyzed Nikolay Myaskovsky’s Sixth Symphony as a portrayal of post-traumatic musical representation, evoking the 1917 Revolution and its aftermath. Dr Zuk stressed, using hermeneutical method, that the composers devised a sort of musical imagery constituting symbolic analogues to some powerful ego defences, typically encountered in post-traumatic states. Then, the lecturer drew wider conclusions on musical representations of trauma both in relation to Soviet music and certain facets of musical modernism. The presentation on Russian music was continued by Lidia Ader, PhD (Petersburg), who described uncommon trend of microtonal music (“Microtonal music romantic approach”). The author explored the early works of Russian microtonal music, emphasizing its romantic origins and introduced works of Ivan Wyschnegradsky, Alois Haba, Georgy Rimsky-Korsakov et al.

Two papers in the last session were dedicated to the Polish religious music of the first half of the 20th century. Łukasz Kutrowski (Lublin) in his paper “How did Feliks Nowowiejski express his faith? Religious elements in the works of chosen composers” gave an essential and rich report on *Quo Vadis* op. 13, *Pasterka na Wawelu* i *Fantazja Polska* op. 9 etc., with elements of hermeneutical analysis of the chosen works. Karol Rzepecki (Lublin) on the other hand expanded the theme of religious music by giving a contribution to the history of the Cecilian Movement (“Musical activity of Władysław Brankiewicz”). The lecturer introduced the work of Władysław Brankiewicz, an unknown composer and organist from Lublin, a prize winner of the International Composers’ Competition in Chicago.

The conference was surmounted with the second vocal recital. Iwona Sawulska (soprano) and Agnieszka Szulc-Brzyska (piano) performed impressive *Gypsy Songs* op. 55 of Antonín Dvořák.

The *Slavic Composers 1900–1950* conference was an enlightening and inspiring event, which brought together both advanced students and experienced scholars working in different fields of musicology. Moreover, it will be encapsulated in a conference book including two CDs of registered concerts. The monograph will complement the musicological literature concerning the history of Slavic music of the first half of the 20th century.