

CELLO TRADITION IN WARSAW

The decision to organize a cello competition on the 175th anniversary of The Warsaw Conservatory foundation, i.e. the Music and Recitation Institute - has become symbolic. The system of music education was initiated at the Warsaw University, where the string section was created. The first cellist was engaged in 1823. Beginning with Józef Wagner (1768-1855), the cello teaching tradition has been unceasingly handed down from generation to generation till the youngest today - Tomasz Strahl. The cello mastery and teaching achievements have been bequeathed to the current four cello classes at the Frederic Chopin Academy led by Kazimierz Michalik, Wojciech Walasek, Andrzej Wróbel and Andrzej Zieliński.

The identity of cello classes in Warsaw has been shaped in accordance with other art disciplines achievements. Different teaching, workshop, aesthetic trends have penetrated the environment. They were due to the geographic situation and metropolitan functions of a town.

One of the first professors Józef Szabliński (1808-1872) devoted his life to the cello and teaching. He was pupil of Józef Wagner. At that time another cellist, Adam Herman (1800-1875) was teaching at the Warsaw Music Institute. Apart from him there were cellists of Czech origin such as Władysław Aloiz (1860-1917), Adam Cink, Józef Goebelt (1829-1892).

The traditions of the first cellists were continued at Warsaw Conservatory by Eli Kochański (1880-1939) and Henryk Waghalter (1869-1958), who were educated at the Leipzig school by Julius Klengel. In the thirties the cello class was also run by Kazimierz Wilkomirski (1900-1995), who was a pupil of Alfred von Glehn in Moscow.

In the post-war years various trends have accumulated in Warsaw Academy of Music. The cello classes were formed by teachers of diverse descent. Zofia Adamska (1903-1988) bequeathed her teaching experiences from Belgian and Russian schools to Andrzej Zieliński, who has grounded them during his studies in Moscow. Arnold Rezler has contributed to the cello tradition with the German output which he acquired from the class of Zygmunt Butkiewicz in Poznań, and conveyed it to the professors: Andrzej Wróbel and Wojciech Walasek (later studied in St. Petersburg). While Kazimierz Michalik a student of Józef Dromomirecki (graduate from Lwów Conservatory an outstanding principal cellist of the Great Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra) having studied with Karel Pravoslav Sádlo and Miloš Sádlo, was introduced to the traditions of the Czech school. In this way his manifold experience makes his artistic descent a special one. Into the above heritage his student Tomasz Strahl is inscribed. During a seasonable stay at the Academy Andrzej Orkisz, a pupil in the Cracow Academy of Józef Mikulski (studied with Alexanian at Ecole Normale in Paris), introduced to the Warsaw cello tradition elements of French school. They also added influence of Russian cello art, having attended master classes of Daniel Shafran and interpretation courses conducted by André Navarra, Tobias Kühne, Miloš Sádlo and Sasa Vedomov which allow students to get acquainted with the most valuable achievements of artistic performance.

The penetration of above trends allowed to form the Polish cello art school, one that reaches beyond the borders.

The development of cello art and the beginning of competition with the violin, took place in Romanticism, however mentions of Polish masters of interpretation date from the Stanislavian period. The first cellist to mention is Mikołaj Zygmuntowski (1770-1801) from Cracow, a phenomenon, untimely mature, who at the age of five was performing for the Warsaw aristocracy. Soon "a poet of cello" Adam Herman-Hermanowski (1836-1893) appeared whose concerts as a thirteen year old boy were an artistic event. It is due to him that poets, writers and residents of Warsaw became interested in the cello. "Once it was seldom, but nowadays, young people learn to play the cello, taking away the monopoly from the violin". Even Prince Antoni Radziwiłł performed as a soloist and in chamber ensembles at charity concerts. Another aristocrat, Mateusz Wielhorski (1794-1866), won his European fame as a cello virtuoso. He performed with an outstanding pianist like Clara Schumann and Antoni Rubinstein. Aleksander Wierzbilowicz (1850-1911) won acclaim as a soloist and performer of chamber music. He was admired for his "density of a tone". Short before the Second World War even a screenplay based on his colorful biography was written.

An eminent cellist Karol Skarżyński (1873-1957) had successfully performed mostly classic and romantic repertoire for many years. His playing was marked with precision, subtlety, perfect technique and a deep tone. Another famous artist Dezyderiusz Danczowski (1891-1950), astonished the audience by incorporating into his concert programmes works of Paganini. Zygmunt Butkiewicz (1872-1935) represented a unique mastery of the instrument, extraordinary technique and a beautiful, warm and exceedingly clear tone winning fame in Europe.

Between-the-Wars Kazimierz Wilkomirski popularized Frederic Chopin's cello sonata in his numerous solo performances. Zofia Adamska the first prize and gold medal winner in the competition of H. van Cutsem performed her virtuoso repertoire.

After the Second World War Witold Herman, winner of Warsaw and Prague competitions performed numerous concerts. Bogumiła Reszke won international acclaim obtaining the first prize in Geneva (1971), and the fourth in Budapest (1968). Her "almost manly hand" and womanly warmth combined together, formed exceptional artistry. Roman Jabłoński, soloist and winner of the G.B. Dealey's competition in Dallas (1972), characterizes with expansive and dynamic style. His sound "soft as silk" earned him fame of the most outstanding Polish cellist. Roman Suchecki has a wide repertoire in which contemporary music is dominant. Since 1949 he performed with Krystyna Suchecka in a sonata ensemble. Stanisław Firlej, the Utrecht competition winner, promotes Polish music. Among prize winners, the name of Kazimierz Michalik has been known since 1961, when he won the second prize in the Young Musicians Competition in Bratislava. Success of the master has been often followed by his numerous students: Andrzej Bauer, who won the third prize at the international competition "Prague Spring" in 1989, and the first prize at the ARD Competition in Munich in 1992; Tomasz Strahl another student of his won the first prize at the international competition of Nicanor Zabaleta in San Sebastian (1991) and others.

Chamber music performances have spread widely in Poland, as most of well known cello masters participated in trios and quartets. Dezyderiusz Danczowski performed with the "Polish Quartet" in Poznań . Aleksander Wierzbillowicz performed with Stanisław Barcewicz in the "Polish Quartet", Zofia Adamska with the "Cracow Quartet", Roman Jabłoński with "Masters' Quartet". Piotr Janosik has performed with "Silesian Quartet" and Marian Wasiółka with "Wilanów Quartet". The famous family esembles were "Adamowski Trio" and "Wilkomirski Trio". Karol Skarżyński was in the trio with Barcewicz and Śliwiński. After the Second World War the "Silesian Trio", with the participation of Kazimierz Michalik made plenty of archival recordings. Paweł Frejdlich, Tomasz Strahl, Wojciech Walasek and Andrzej Wróbel have also performed in chamber music ensembles.

The cello as a solo instrument with its wide expressive and technical possibilities, arouse the interest of composers. Pieces of the virtuoso style were often written by cellists themselves; G. Cassado, Mainardi to name the most famous. Kazimierz Wilkomirski was both a composer and performer of his works - a practise met frequently among Polish cellists.

Personal contacts between cellists and composers stimulated the latter to write music for the cello: Frederic Chopin wrote his masterful *Cello Sonata G-Minor op. 65* for the outstanding cellist A. Franchomme. Grażyna Bacewicz dedicated her *I cello concerto* to Miloš Sádlo. Many great works were dedicated to Polish cellists. Feliks Mendelssohn composed his *D-Major Sonata* for Mateusz Wielhorski, Apolinary Szeluto dedicated his *F-Major Sonata op. 6* to Dezyderiusz Danczowski. Witold Szalonek wrote his Sonata for K. Michalik.

More recently composers like Witold Lutosławski and Krzysztof Penderecki have added their compositions to the cello repertoire.

Polish cellists have undoubtedly contributed to improvement of cello music throughout variety of styles and trends. Their participation in forming the highest artistic values is unquestionable.

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