



*Dear Participants,*

*Welcome to Warsaw. I am glad to see how many of you have come to take part in the competition. Your willingness to submit your artistic efforts to the rigours of an international competition is proof of the seriousness of your artistic aspirations.*

*This competition, the fourth, precedes the Lutoslawski Forum, a festival organized by the National Philharmonic every year in the anniversary of the composer's death, thus combining with a cycle of artistic events specially addressed to a public interested in the art of our times.*

*The programme of the competition was conceived with the intention of giving participants every opportunity to present their art in as many facets as possible. Apart from the works of the past, which are the core of the repertoire, particular emphasis was put on the works of our time; introducing them to the world should be a duty and a pleasure for the artists of your generation.*

*Three works of Witold Lutoslawski with which he enriched the repertoire of our instrument constitute a link between all three stages of the competition: Sacher Variation, Grave and the Concerto.*

*Those of us who have had the good fortune to take part in the performances of Witold Lutoslawski's works, often under his baton, remember the joy with which we greeted every new work, how proud we were to have a part in their creation. Each new work constituted a new, distinct stage in the clear, consequent and uncompromising artistic path, for which we deeply respected him.*

*Those of us, who had the good fortune to meet him in person will be forever under the spell of his personal charm, unassuming good manners and generosity in discreetly helping young, promising artists by funding scholarships for them.*

*Witold Lutoslawski remained a very modest man, even though with time he became a moral authority and a shining example of conduct as a citizen. In one of the interviews he gave he described the role of the artist in society thus: "... The artistic creation is a duty. If one comes to the world with the gift of a talent, one should not treat it as private property. It is given only on loan and should be returned to the society one lives in ...".*

*For the younger generation, who had no opportunity to meet Lutos (as he was known among colleagues) there is his work, no less fascinating for its own intrinsic value.*

*All the pleasure and satisfaction of discovering the beauty and clarity of the artistic ideas as well as the precision of their realisation and the search for the particular sound colours, characteristic of his works, is yours.*

*Dear participants, I wish you successful performances in the competition. Any individual interpretation of a musical work is a result of many reflections and artistic choices, made during the long hours of practice, either alone or with help of a teacher. These choices are sometimes difficult if one has to choose between some lovely ideas which, unfortunately, clash with the overall conception and which therefore have to be abandoned. The richness of the art of music is such that many different interpretations are possible, all of them respecting nevertheless the ground rules. We will be looking out for interpretations which will show not only the perfect mastery of the technique and the care taken to read and correctly interpret the composers' intentions, but will also carry a distinct imprint of the artistic personality of the participant. Only such performances will be able to stand up to the rigours of the real life competition.*

*Not all of you will win prizes in this competition; even the prizes won may not become automatic passports to careers, but the competition should also be an occasion for you to compare your achievements with those of your peers from different schools and different countries, to listen to many different interpretations, and last but by no means least to get acquainted with many likeminded fellow cellists, whom, maybe, you would not otherwise have had an opportunity to meet, and to form friendships which will last the rest of your lives.*

*On behalf of the organizers of the competition and its future prizewinners I would like to address special thanks to the chief conductors of the Polish philharmonic orchestras who have offered a number of prizes in the form of invitations for prizewinners to perform as soloists with their orchestras in the next concert season.*

*Kazimierz Michalik*

**Warsaw, February 2003**