



Dear Participants !

The year 2004, celebrated in Poland as the year of Witold Lutosławski has been exceptionally rich in concert performances of the master's works, conferences and publications treating his life and output. From the ten years perspective since his death we are now beginning to view him as a classic of twentieth century music more through his work than through the memory of the person himself. Though, we have always felt Lutoslawski had been a unique artist who was shaping a chapter in the history of Polish and European music.

Lutoslawski, being a true aristocrat of the spirit remained a modest person. In one interview he said: ... *"Talent is not a sole possession of the endowed person. It is surely a gift, a privilege but responsibility comes with it."* ... Every morning he sat at his working desk to *"be ready to listen to the voice of inspiration"*.

I think dealing with Lutoslawski's music is a source of satisfaction in at least two areas: sensual and intellectual. The composer's exceptional discipline of thought, the purity of artistic concept and master control of resources has produced works complete and perfect. This demands of every performer an adequate execution, sublime and pure in tone as the master's music is. It is a test of musical intuition and sensitivity.

Ever smaller is the number of musicians who personally met Lutoslawski and awaited every new work he composed during almost half a century. A generation of musicians whom Lutoslawski discreetly in his way supported during studies and later promoted as soloists at concerts he conducted has already reached middle-age. These consummate artists have started a tradition of performance approved by the author and link younger musicians with the person of Lutoslawski.

It is satisfying to see how this competition has added to the number of cellists studying carefully the works of our patron. The Cello Concerto, one of the finest in twentieth century cello literature, however difficult to study due to lack of piano reduction is attracting ever more enthusiastic performers. For this Fifth edition, thirteen participants have chosen it and perhaps in future editions it will be the only concerto to remain for the final.

We are impatient to listen to this competition's appearances. We shall be listening carefully and I'm sure they will deliver a scale of emotions. Precious will be those bearing an individual touch testifying to the performers personality.

The rules of competition impose the necessity of evaluation and naming the most interesting and mature performances. I may only wish that the winner's careers develop accordingly to the juror's verdicts, as has been with the recent competitions so far. However, I'm aware that prizes themselves do not guarantee the immediate start of a career and do not determine anything decisively. One thing is certain, participation in this competition gives everybody a chance to present their achievements, even those who do not succeed, but attract attention to their playing may find better ways to concert stages.

I wish you good luck!

*Kazimierz Michalik*

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