

Warszawa
26 March–03 April 2009

BEETHOVEN **n°1**

M A G A Z I N E

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with music**

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Who, where, when...



From the Editor

It is hard to imagine that five years have passed already since the first Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival in Warsaw.

Do you remember the poster with Beethoven's pop-art portrait? I remember the determination with which Elżbieta Penderecka organised the festival under the pressure of time in a new place and new conditions. It very quickly became a Warsaw festival, and gained the attention and friendship of people of the capital. I know a few people who simply cannot wait for the next one. I have not missed a single one, and I am very glad because I have witnessed memorable concerts by Gidon Kremer, the Norddeutscher Rundfunk Orchester from Hamburg, and the marvellous cellist Natalia Gutman. I remember the stunning interpretation of Mahler's *Symphony No. 9* under Paavo Järvi, illumination with the music of Bruckner after his *Symphony No. 8* conducted by Marek Janowski, and finally, rapture with the personality of Trevor Pinnock.

The festival surprised me. Not only with its organisational panache. With the daring posters too. First, it was Wilhelm Sasnal, then came the time for the Twożywo Group, this year it is Bartek Materka, and the next – Marcin Maciejowski: artists from quite a different artistic constellation design posters for a festival of classical music. Yet we should not wonder at that. Beethoven – a free man, rebel, outsider, and genius – should be the patron of artists of all shades.

He could be unbearable for his patrons, and yet they adored him, sparing no money to keep him in Vienna. The Princes Lobkowitz, Lichnowsky, Kinsky, and others should be a role model for sponsors and politicians financing (or otherwise) culture in Poland.

The Viennese contemporaries of Beethoven – to quote the composer's biographer George R. Marek – treated only three things seriously: food, theatre, and music. Oh, the happy place! May Warsaw become a city whose authorities and residents value great art to the same extent.

We have two weeks of the Festival to look forward to. Let us make the most of them.

Anna S. Dębowska

Editor-in-Chief of the „Beethoven Magazine“

Sunday, 29th March



Mariusz Kwiecień

The first Warsaw recital by **Mariusz Kwiecień**, the Polish baritone adored by the audiences of New York's Metropolitan Opera, who found in Don Giovanni from Mozart's opera the role of his life. How will this singer – born for the stage – cope with lyrical works? In the programme: songs by Schumann, Beethoven, Karłowicz, and Ravel. Howard Watkins on the piano.

☞ The Royal Castle, 4 pm

When, at the age of six, she picked up a violin for the first time, she had known how to play the piano for a year. The great violinist **Anne-Sophie Mutter** is returning to Warsaw for the inauguration of the Festival in her most classical way: with Beethoven's *Violin concerto* in D major, Op. 61. A moving moment not only for those who have followed the development of her marvellous talent from the first record with Herbert von Karajan.



Krzysztof Penderecki

At the Festival, his place at the pulpit will be taken by **Krzysztof Penderecki**, who dedicated to Mutter his *Violin Concerto No. 2 Metamorphosen*. The soloist is accompanied by the **Sinfonia Varsovia Orchestra**.

☞ Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, 7:30 pm

Monday, 30th March

With its powerful chords and lyrical tenderness, Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* suits perfectly the performing capacity of **Konstantin Scherbakov**.



Konstantin Scherbakov

Scherbakov, a Russian living in Switzerland, former student of the legendary Professor of Moscow Conservatory, Lev Naumov, and a prize-winner in piano competitions of great renown. The Beethoven Academy Orchestra under Michał Dworzyński will play Mendelssohn and Richard Strauss.

☞ Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, 31st March

String Quartet in F major, Op. 59 was written just six years after *String Quartet* No. 1 from Op. 18 written in the same key, yet they seem to be a whole epoch apart.

The first night with Ludwig van Beethoven's quartet is performed by **Leipziger Streichquartett**.

☞ The Royal Castle, 5 pm

Violin by **G. B. Guadagnini**

Between the age of 9 and 14, Mendelssohn composed a dozen string symphonies. One of them, "La Suisse", as well as Beethoven's and Berg's works for a string orchestra, will be presented by **Wrocław Chamber Orchestra "Leopoldinum"**, conducted by its musical director **Ernst Kovacic**, an Austrian violinist of renown. Kovacic plays a Giovanni Battista Guadagnini from 1754.

☞ Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, 7:30 pm

Wednesday, 1st April

Beethoven's early years, and the third of six string quartets from Op. 18, and the antipodes of the genre – the late, royal pieces composed by Beethoven towards the end of his life: *Great Fugue* and *String Quartet* in C sharp minor Op. 131. The mystery of human genius will be scaled again by the **Leipziger Streichquartett**.

☞ The Royal Castle, 5 pm

The famous **English Chamber Orchestra** is to perform a monographic concert devoted to Joseph Haydn, Beethoven's teacher and the authority of classicism in music. The soloists are **Arto Noras** and **Ralf Gothóni**.

☞ Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, 7:30 pm



Thursday, 2nd April

Il ritorno di Tobia, the first oratorio written by Haydn, is a work of no lesser stature than his later *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, and is well worth recalling on the 200th anniversary of the composer's death. The biblical oratorio resounds in the interpretation of **Wiener Akademie** under **Martin Haselböck** with the participation of recognised soloists and a *sine nomine* choir. Earlier the **Geringas Baryton Trio** and **Keiko Tamura** play Haydn's chamber music.

☞ The Royal Castle, 5 pm

☞ Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, 7:30 pm



Feliks Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Friday, 3rd April

The concert conducted by **Ola Rudner** will present one of the threads in the multi-faced artistic creation of Felix Mendelssohn, and his broad humanist interests. The Polish premiere of *Humboldt Cantata*, dedicated to the eminent philosopher of whom Mendelssohn was a student, and *Die erste Walpurgisnacht* cantata, inspired by a poem by Goethe, with whom the composer eagerly corresponded in his childhood. Featuring: **Agnieszka Rehlis** (alto), **Thomas Michael Allen** (tenor), **Thomas E. Bauer** (baritone), **Wojciech Gierlach** (bass), **Choir of the Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic** and the **National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Katowice**.

☞ Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, 7:30 pm

BEETHOVEN MAGAZINE

Wydawca: / Publisher

Stowarzyszenie im. Ludwiga van Beethovena / Ludwig van Beethoven Association
Elżbieta Penderecka:

Prezes Zarządu, Dyrektor Generalny / President of the Board, General Director
31-147 Kraków, ul. Długa 19/4

www.beethoven.org.pl

Dyrektor wydawniczy/ pomysłodawca / Publishing / Idea: Andrzej Giza

Redaktor Naczelna / Editor-in-Chief: Anna S. Dębowska

Dyrektor Artystyczny / Artistic Director: Witold Siemaszkiewicz

Redakcja tekstów / Editing: Anna S. Dębowska

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Ilustracje / Illustrations: Marcin Maciejowski, Bartek Materka

Zdjęcia / Photographs:

Getty Images, Corbis, Flash Press Media, East News, Bruno Fidrych

Tłumaczenia / Translation: HOBbit Piotr Krasnowolski i Paweł Radwan

Korekta angielska / English proofreading: Benjamin Koschalka

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A whole life with music

Interview with **Elżbieta Penderecka** President of the Board of the Ludwig van Beethoven Association and Director General of the Festival.

Paving the way for young talented people is a new role for the Ludwig van Beethoven Association. Besides organising festivals, we manage artists



Anna S. Dębowska: Music has accompanied you...

Elżbieta Penderecka: – ... since I was a child. My grandfather and great-grandfather played the viola. My father was the concertmaster of cellos at Kraków Philharmonic and Professor of the Academy of Music in Kraków. He trained close to 100 graduates.

Did he take you to concerts?

Yes, on Fridays and Saturdays, I used to go to the Philharmonic Hall and had my place in the box on the first floor. On Sundays, Dad played at the Opera, where Jerzy Katlewicz was the first conductor in the 1950s. I used to sit behind the double basses and watch the stage from the orchestra pit. Music was a part of my life. I took piano lessons. For a few years, my father taught the cello and chamber music at home, so music accompanied me constantly once I left school. At the time, we lived on ul. Długa in Kraków: in the same building which today houses the bureau of the Association.

For 43 years you have accompanied Krzysztof Penderecki, a musician like your father before.

There was a time when I didn't miss a single rehearsal, or a single concert by my husband. I am thankful to my father for the solid musical foundation he gave me. Thanks to him, I got to know Krzysztof Penderecki and was ready to receive his music: father took me to concerts, and at the time contemporary music was performed at every concert. So when I heard for the first time Krzysztof's *Polymorphia*, it did not shock me at all.

Krzysztof Penderecki dedicated his famous *St Luke Passion* of 1966 to you.

He wrote it in the first year of our marriage, on the commission of Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR). It took a few weeks to finish. I remember that we were staying with my husband in Krynica, and I was filling in the clusters in the score [laughs]. And then we learned Old Church Slavonic and went to Bulgaria, where he was to collect materials for the *Utrenya* (Morning Prayer).

During your travelling together you had an opportunity to meet the greatest soloists, conductors, and composers of the world.

That was a marvellous time in my life.

Thanks to my husband, I met Artur Rubinstejn, with whom we spent many a wonderful evening. We became close friends with "Slava" Rostropovich in the 1970s. I got to know Sir John Barbirolli, and the legendary Eugene Ormandy, the head of the Philadelphia Orchestra, a marvellous conductor open to contemporary music. It was he who soon after the world premiere in Münster conducted Krzysztof Penderecki's *Utrenya* in Philadelphia. Yet we also frequently met Salvadore Dali, with whom my husband was to make a joint work.



Eugene Ormandy, Krzysztof Penderecki i Elżbieta Penderecka, Filadelfia, 1968

Unfortunately, it never happened. Dali was incessantly recreating himself. I remember a telegram from him. Each word was in a different language.

Your friendship with Irina Shostakovich, the widow of Dmitri Shostakovich, continues to this day; she was in Warsaw last year, during the Krzysztof Penderecki Festival.

We got to know Shostakovich in the last years of his life. He came to concerts that my husband conducted at Moscow's Tchaikovsky Conservatory. We met him for the first time backstage, and among the many things he asked about was *Passion*.... So I sent him the record released by Harmonia Mundi, and soon afterwards we received a letter from him: "Dorogoi Krzysztof, you've given me a great present. It must be one of the greatest works of the 20th century.", he was an extreme introvert and I believe that because of his experience of living in the Soviet system he had an obsessive

fear of contacts with people. Yet once you got to know him more closely, he was a nice person.

How do you recall your acquaintance with Herbert von Karajan?

We met in Berlin, where my husband and I lived in the 60s and 70s. My husband went to many of Karajan's rehearsals, and I accompanied him there. Karajan did not perform too much contemporary music, but he conducted a few works by Krzysztof Penderecki, including the *Polymorphia*. He was a fairly withdrawn man, one of the most eminent conductors,

The artists are the mezzosoprano Agnieszka Rehlis, the soprano Izabela Matuła, the cellists Rafał Kwiatkowski and Bartosz Koziak, the violinist Agata Szymczewska – a prize-winner of the Wieniawski Competition, who has now, just after a series of concerts with Krystian Zimerman and Kaja Danczowska, had an opportunity (together with Rafał Kwiatkowski) to participate in recording Grażyna Bacewicz's chamber music on the Deutsche Grammophon label... The greatly talented baritone Artur Ruciński, in whose international promotion we would like to assist, joined us quite recently. We hope that he is going to be a successful Polish singer of world renown.

Don't you fear the economic crisis and its negative impact on the activity of the Association?

The Easter Festival will still last for two weeks, and it presents great Polish and international artists. We have completed the programme for next year: the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frédéric Chopin.

I believe that the current crisis is partially used as a pretext to curtail culture expenditure. I have recently returned from Spain, where, during the last ten or so years, more than 30 concert halls have been built. In one province alone, Castilla y León, local authorities recently built a hall with over 2000 seats.

What is the image of Warsaw – vying for the title of City of European Culture for the Year 2016 – against this background, with only two major concert halls: the National Philharmonic and the hall of the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera? I believe that an international competition for the construction of a multipurpose concert hall in our capital city should start. Great ensembles from all over the world should throng to Warsaw. It is a pity we did not manage to find a sponsor for Poland's first concert by London Symphony Orchestra with Valery Gergiev, which we planned for 13th May this year, as a part of the ensemble's European tour. I would like to live to see the moment when our decision-makers understand that the wide notion of culture ensures the vast promotion of every country beyond its borders.


Interviewed by **Anna S. Dębowska**

Talent and beauty

Anne-Sophie Mutter



Thanks to the Ludwig van Beethoven Association, the great German violinist returns to Poland with concerts after four years' absence. On Sunday she will inaugurate the 13th Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival at the Warsaw Philharmonic – Concert Hall. She will play a Lord Dunn Raven 1710 Stradivarius.

 Koncert skrzypcowy D-dur (1806) to utwór pełen dostojności, tajemniczości, słodczy i humoru zarazem. Do dziś pozostaje wyzwaniem dla każdego artysty.

Piotr Matwiejczuk: In Proust's questionnaire, which you put up on your website, I found a fragment of William Blake's poem: *To see a World in a Grain of Sand / And A Heaven in a Wild Flower / Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand / And Eternity in an Hour.*

Is this your definition of music?

Anne-Sophie Mutter: it is primarily my definition of life and what I would like to do with life: to use every moment to the maximum. My approach to music is the same.

What makes your interpretations exceptional is the perfect combination of intellect and emotion...

I cannot approach music without passion. Naturally, the balance between the intellect and burning passion must be maintained – that is a never-ending struggle.

You rarely come to Poland, but we like to think of Anne-Sophie Mutter as an ambassador of our music in the world: someone who Witold Lutosławski and Krzysztof Penderecki dedicated their compositions to. What place do these works currently hold in your repertoire?

When I began performing *Łańcuch II* (*Chain II*), by Witold Lutosławski, the world of beauty opened before me. And I shall always be thankful to him for that: to the composer and to the man. I believe it to be one of the most important compositions of the last century. For me, Lutosławski will forever remain an immortal master, although I must admit that his works have recently begun to appear in my repertoire more rarely. I will have the opportunity to work again with maestro Penderecki, as the conductor during the Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival. Although this time we are not going to perform his music, I shall

be returning to *Metamorphosen*. The two artists will always hold a special place in my heart.

Once you said that you found a new capacity for the violin that you had not known earlier in Lutosławski's music. A new dimension in the instrument you have played all your life: that's amazing...

Indeed, there are a few, extraordinary details in *Łańcuch II*, such as the passages played *non vibrato* that I would call "still" music. It seems that the violin plays on its own, without the performer participating. I found studying the *Łańcuch II* score a revelation. I believe it is about the sophistication and subtlety that have always attracted me so much in music. That is why I find Mozart so very close. I never sought virtuoso effects, but nuances, whispers, and intimacy.

What did you find in the music of Krzysztof Penderecki? You said his concerto was a great challenge.

Yes, especially in the emotional dimension. As a composer, he likes extremities, and requires from his performers that they reach the limits of their potential. His music has that "broad sweep" and a great tension. Moreover, I find delicacy and beauty in it, yet Penderecki is primarily the master of drama to me. Naturally, the two composers are utterly different.

The contemporary world has yielded to crazy specialisation. It is similar with music: artists specialise in a narrow repertoire. You, however, seem to continue the tradition of the great violinists of the bygone days, who knew no such limitations. Is this an expression of renunciation of today's music industry?

I am not really worried about what the musical industry deals with or what my colleagues do. It is not my intention to compete with them: more than anything else, I would

like to be a good and useful human being. I will always try to select difficult works, and I always want to have the broadest repertoire possible. This is why I have returned to Mendelssohn's concerto. Like most violinists, I began to perform this work early, I played it a lot and so it turned out that I overdid it. The time came when I found it tepid. This was the reason why I cast it off

illusion of improvising, a sense of freedom. There is decidedly less of that in the music of Mendelssohn and Mozart. Do you now find more freedom in the works of the classics than when they were played by a teenage Anne-Sophie?

When I performed those works with maestro Karajan, those were primarily his interpretations. Naturally,



Claudio Abbado and Anne-Sophie Mutter on rehearsal, 1977.

for over a decade, only to return to it with an entirely new approach: I changed the phrasing, fingering, and tempos. Moreover, I read much about Mendelssohn. I am fascinated with his life but also with Mendelssohn himself: he was a great humanist, and that is a goal that I am also aiming at as a musician. Thus a return to Mendelssohn's concerto and discovering him anew is a momentous event in my artistic life: I fell in love with him again.

In one of your interviews you emphasised that Lutosławski's music gives the performer an

parallel to the acquired experience and knowledge I was paying more attention to detail, and, as a result, I found more space for my own expression. There is no single recipe for performing the work. The only thing that's effective in art is to incessantly expose yourself and continue to strive for perfection.

How has your Beethoven changed in the last 30 years?

Nietzsche said that music begins where words end. I am a very poor commentator of my own interpretations.

Interviewed by **Piotr Matwiejczuk** (Polish Radio)

Witold Lutosławski on Anne-Sophie Mutter

At the rehearsal, I heard *Łańcuch* played by the girl in a manner that I could not even dream of. What was the greatness of her performance all about? I could define a few of its perceptible features. They include, for example, such a psychological scale of sound that moves from indifference (...) up to the highest tension. This makes a colossal impression. I once asked Anne Sophie Mutter how it happened that among the greatest violinists – all technically flawless – of whom there are a few, I can always hear a single false sound, and I have never heard such a sound in her playing. She considered it for a while and answered: this is the radar. She called it the radar. It is like with the bat that approaches a wall with a colossal speed and yet will never touch it. There is some mysterious force or order hidden within it, one that while performing the music manages the work of the human brain, muscles of the hand, and hearing. I don't know how it is done... (1993)

In the second issue of **BEETHOVEN MAGAZINE**: Anne-Sophie Mutter in the eyes of **Marcin Maciejowski**, an eminent Kraków painter

In the backstage and behind the wings: the great violinist in the lens of **Bruno Fidrych**



Newest Mutter on CD **Deutsche Grammophone**

Bach, Gubajdulina

Mutter performs there world premiere recording of Sofia Gubaidulina's mystical concert *In tempus praesens* written especially for her, together with the London Symphony Orchestra under Valery Gergiev. There is more, however: the first recording of Bach's violin concertos in the artist's career.

Mendelssohn

On her latest record – commemorating the 200th anniversary of birth of Felix Mendelssohn – Mutter returns to the Violin concerto in E minor, which she first recorded at the age of 14 under Herbert von Karajan. Other pieces include the Violin sonata in F major and the Piano trio, Op. 49 with André Previn and Lynn Harrel.



Mariusz Kwiecień in Recital

Our man in New York

He is 34, which for an artist gifted with a baritone voice is young age. And he has already had a brisk career. Mariusz Kwiecień entered the world of opera with great bravado, yet also with an unusual prudence.

He graduated from the Academy of Music in Warsaw in the class of Włodzimierz Zalewski. The Professor told me: "you must learn to earn your bread, let's not mess around," Mariusz Kwiecień recalls. "I stopped thinking about concerts and song recitals: I started to aim for opera."

I am not the "tails-man"

In 1995, while still a student, Kwiecień had his debut in the Teatr Wielki in Poznań, playing the title role in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. A year later, among other honours he received at the Belvedere Competition in Vienna, there was the Prize of the Director of the Viennese Staatsoper. "Ioan Hollender had an offer for me: five small roles," Mariusz Kwiecień disclosed. "To which I answered that I am not the man to sing the 'tails'", even though at the time I was 23 with hardly any income. I knew that if I started to sing episodes, I would be replaced by someone else in a few seasons.

Then came serious offers. Among other roles, he sang Ottokar in *Der Freischütz* at La Scala and Count Robinson in Cimarosa's *The Secret Marriage* at the Wiener Kammeroper. Kwiecień was heard by an impresario from Metropolitan Opera, and invited for auditions in New York.

On stage at the Met

Kwiecień became a student of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program operated by the theatre. He worked with people of great renown: Samuel Ramey, Joan Sutherland, Renata Scotto, and Felicity Lott. His official stage début took place on 2nd January 1999, when he sang Kuligin in Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová*. He received his first major part in 2001, singing Ali in Rossini's *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. Success came a year later, with the role of Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*. "During the two years of learning at the Met, I acquired a distance to myself", he admits. "In Poland, an artist who doesn't do Verdi is no one, and that's the way I thought. In New York I discovered Mozart: his depth, his music – simple and multilayered at the same time. And what's simple is at times most difficult to share."

Consummate Don Giovanni

Mozart's characters became his artistic trademark. As Don Giovanni, Kwiecień appeared in the Viennese Staatsoper, in San Francisco, Houston, Santa Fe, Seattle, Tokyo, Bilbao, Warsaw, and recently in the Kraków Opera. He performed the part of the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* in San Diego and at the Glyndebourne Festival.

For a few years, he also sang Donizetti, Bellini, and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, which he also performed in 2006 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. He is carefully embarking on Verdi's repertoire, including *La Traviata* on the stage of London's Covent Garden in 2008.

New challenges are emerging: in June this year, Kwiecień will sing for the first time the title part in Szymanowski's *King Roger*, directed by Krzysztof Warlikowski in Opéra Bastille in Paris.

"I have an intuition that prompts me in what I can do and how," the baritone explains. "There are roles

that must wait, which does not mean that I have never received such proposals as *Rigoletto*, *Iago* in *Othello*, and *Wozzeck*. The directors assured me that they were written for my voice, and I reassured them that I'd gladly sing them. In 20 years.

Besides his native Kraków, Mariusz Kwiecień has found a second home in New York. And the Metropolitan still remains for him the place of the most important tests. This season, they have included Lord Ashton in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and in the next one he will play Escamillo in Bizet's *Carmen*.

Beethoven, Schumann, Ravel, Karłowicz

At the Beethoven Festival, Mariusz Kwiecień will perform for the first time in Poland in a recital of songs. "I have selected works that I like and that a Polish audience may enjoy," he says. He sang the Schumann's *Dichterliebe* cycle at the Metropolitan only at the end of his studies, and performed Ravel's songs *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* at the Carnegie Hall, with James Levine on the piano. Karłowicz's songs have long been in his repertoire, and he is eager to release them finally on record

Jacek Marczyński

Sunday, 29th March, 4:00 p.m.,
Grand Hall of The Royal Castle,
with Howard Watkins on the
piano.

Mariusz Kwiecień became famous as Don Giovanni in Mozart's opera, which he sang in nine opera theatres all over the world. The Mozart's heartbreaker is his signature role: with it he toured America, and he performed it too in Europe and Japan, including – seven years ago – in Warsaw.





Teresa Berganza introduced me to the world of great opera. My life without her might have followed a different path.

In the mid-1970s, I was on holiday in London. For a price of £25 – quite horrendous for a visitor from the People’s Republic of Poland – I bought the first opera for my collection: Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* with Teresa Berganza, Luigi Alva (Almaviva), and Hermann Prey (Figaro). A better choice would have been hard to make. During the following 30 years, I’ve listened to plenty of recordings of Rossini’s masterpiece, and I never found an equally balanced group of singers, and above all a Rozyna like



Maestra Teresa Berganza Iniction with Rozyna

Mistrzowski kurs interpretacji „Opera i pieśń„ 1–4 kwietnia.
Koncert uczestników kursu 5 kwietnia, Zamek Królewski, godz. 12.

Teresa Berganza: impressing with the lightness of her coloraturas, and the hue of the dark, yet subtle mezzosoprano. The recording, under the baton of Claudio Abbado, was based on the staging from La Scala, which was recorded for television. Watched today, the film has an old-fashioned grace, yet it would be difficult to find another performance where the actions of the director and the performance derive so perfectly from music.

I could not expect then that I would soon listen to Teresa Berganza live. In February 1977, she came to the Teatr Wielki in Warsaw. With its beginnings towards the end of the 1950s with roles in Mozart’s operas (Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*) at the Aix-en-Provence and Glyndebourne festivals, her career brought Berganza to the stages of all the grandest theatres. She visited Poland – a rarity for stars of her brightness – when her fame was at its highest, and she herself in perfect form. She was especially captivating in the second part of the recital, in the Spanish songs (the consummately interpreted series of seven works by Manuel de Falla). When the audience would not let her go, she continued to sing for another three quarters of an hour, bringing those present to near ecstasy with fragments of her stage incarnations, especially with the Habanera and Seguidilla from *Carmen*.

A year later, she recorded that opera of Bizet’s under Claudio Abbado, with Plácido Domingo as Don José. Teresa

Berganza was long begged to record *Carmen*, yet she preferred not to rush the decision. Once she agreed, the recording was one that would stand the test of time. Teresa Berganza was no dramatic mezzosoprano – her voice was lighter and more lyrical in sound, which may be the reason why her *Carmen* became more emotional. She is sensuous in that role, yet without even a hint of crudeness.

Teresa Berganza was lucky with her recordings, although not entirely. Among her Mozart incarnations, there is Zerlina in the famous film version of Joseph Losey’s *Don Giovanni*, yet her Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* was recorded with partners not of the highest calibre. We may take delight in her Angelina in *Cinderella* and Isabella in Rossini’s *L’italiana in Algeri*, yet phonography did not believe that she should also reach for heroic roles in the *opera seria* of the composer. I was lucky: in 1993, I listened to her sing beautifully the “Di tanti palpiti” aria from *Tankred* at the gala night of *Europa Musicale* in Munich.

That was not my last meeting with her. In December 1995, she came to Warsaw for another recital. Like 19 years earlier, she began with Haydn’s Cantata “Ariadne auf Naxos”. Recently, I found the recording of one of her masterclasses on the French “mezzo” radio. Teresa Berganza has lost nothing of her class and temper. Classes with her are a spectacle not less exciting than productions of Rossini’s operas.

Jacek Marczyński „Rzeczpospolita”

Minister on culture

Let’s begin with the anthem

Culture remains Poland’s best hallmark. This is due not only to Chopin and Szymanowski, but also to the young artists, conquering galleries and concert halls of the world

– says **Bogdan Zdrojewski**, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.

Sylvia Borowska: You stand at the helm of a ministry whose *raison d’être* has repeatedly been challenged.

Bogdan Zdrojewski: Especially now in a time of crisis, one hears opinions that other sectors are more important. People still perceive culture as a luxury. Yet it is one of the basic human needs. The task of the sector that I have the honour to run is to administer the realm of culture and support it wherever necessary.

What is the condition of culture in our country?

At the local level, we can boast fantastic artistic schools as well as a whole throng of artists for whom art is their only passion. One of my priorities since taking up this post has been the improvement of artistic education in comprehensive secondary schools. The first step to achieving that is signing an agreement with the Minister of Education, Katarzyna Hall, on reintroducing to schools classes in music and visual arts in the full curricular scope.

When you assumed the post, you didn’t realise that...?

... Polish museums, with a few glorious exceptions, are constructed in an exceedingly archaic manner. Almost as if they worked only for themselves.

Is it true that Poles are musically illiterate?

We have no tradition of common music-making. Even during football matches, Polish fans cannot cope with the melody of the national anthem. In musical competition tests, we rank below the average.

Do you find that embarrassing?

I would like most young Poles to be able to strum even a few of the simplest chords on a guitar, or play the piano for their own pleasure. Such skills should be common.

Unlike your predecessor, you actively joined in the preparation for the grand celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frédéric Chopin. What do you want to achieve?

I am keen to make Chopin lovers from all over the world aware that he was a Pole, and that the character of his music is strongly related to his place of origin. People come to Salzburg to seek traces of Mozart; why shouldn’t they come to Poland to understand who Chopin was? This is why a state-of-the-art multimedia museum on the composer is taking shape in Warsaw. We are renovating places connected to Chopin, for example Żelazowa Wola. We have paid close attention to the work of Professor Jan Ekier’s team, who have for years been working on the National Edition of Frédéric Chopin’s Works.

What music do you listen to privately?

Classical, jazz, I also frequently put on some blues or old rock. I like listening to music in peace, which I find little time for, unfortunately. More often I listen to it in the car.

Which of the Muses are closest to your heart?

As Minister of Culture, I may not favour the visual arts at the expense of music, or vice versa. My private passion is photography, which I used to engage in professionally. Now it’s only spare moments that I can devote to it.

Interviewed by
Sylvia Borowska





chordist, and conductor. The ensemble specialises in the music of the Viennese classics and Romantic composers. The musicians recorded Mozart's operas, symphonies, and concertos, Haydn's *The Creation* oratorio, and Schubert symphonies. For 13 years they have run the "Wiener Klassik" cycle in the famous Golden Hall of the Musikverein.

In Warsaw, they will present Joseph Haydn's oratorio *Il ritorno di Tobia*. Haydn's first oratorio, it has quite unfairly remained in the shadow of his similar later works: *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. Written in 1784, to the Italian libretto, based on the biblical tale of Tobiah, it abounds with virtuoso arias and magnificent choir parts. It will resound in Warsaw in an international line-up, with the solo parts sung by Joan Rodgers, Trine Lund, Stefanie Irányi, and Benjamin Hulett, accompanied by a *sine nomine* choir.

☞ Thursday, 2nd April, 7:30 pm
Warsaw Philharmonic Hall

A Pole in Vienna

It may be, as the old saying goes, that whatever is old must come from Vienna. Definitely it is from the capital of Austria that Europe's oldest symphonic orchestra – the Wiener Philharmoniker – hails. So does **Wiener Kammerorchester**, one of the chamber orchestras with

Orchestras, orchestras

Concerts by recognised orchestras are one of the greatest attractions of the Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival. Performing this year are ensembles from London, Vienna, and Monte Carlo.

We can start by recollecting the concerts by the radio orchestras of Hamburg and Munich, symphonic orchestras from Saint Petersburg, São Paulo, Madrid and Lahti, and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie from Bremen under Trevor Pinnock. And yet there were more besides. After five successive festivals, quite a catalogue of orchestras from all over the world has gathered. In this year, dominated by chamber ensembles, it will be expanded by further great additions.

First and foremost: English Chamber Orchestra

The legendary orchestra from London will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. It gained its fame

with elegant interpretations of Viennese classics, yet initially worked under the powerful influence of Benjamin Britten, who entrusted the orchestra with the world premiere of his Symphony for cello and orchestra (1963) with Mstislav Rostropovich as the soloist.

Three times the orchestra recorded all the piano concertos of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: with Daniel Barenboim, Murray Perahia, and Mitsuko Uchida. In the 1980s, they were triumphant with Mozart symphonies under Jeffrey Tate. Moreover, the orchestra participated in a recording that made it into the history of phonography: in 1989, together with bravado violinist Nigel Kennedy, at that time shocking with his "punk" hairstyle, they recorded Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, which markedly diverged from the established canon.

Since 2000, the main conductor of the orchestra has been Ralf Gothóni, a highly renowned Finnish pianist and conductor, who replaced in this post the man behind many of the

ECO's numerous successes, Jeffrey Tate. The English Chamber Orchestra from London will perform works by Joseph Haydn to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the composer's death.

☞ Wednesday, 1st April, 7:30 pm
Warsaw Philharmonic Hall

Wiener Akademie

Wiener Akademie is an orchestra established in 1985 by Martin Haselböck, eminent organist, harpsi-

the longest history, as it was established in 1946. Until recently, its artistic director was an eminent cellist, Heinrich Schiff. Last year, though, the ailing leader was replaced by the pianist Stefan Vladar. The Warsaw concert of the ensemble will be conducted by the versatile Jurek Dybał: bassist, conductor, soloist, and chamber musician. A graduate of the Academy of Music in Warsaw, this member of the Wiener Philharmoniker ensemble



has for some time been trying his hand at conducting. Studied under the recognised Jorma Panula from Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Together with the I.J. Paderewski Chamber Orchestra, which he established, Dybał recorded works by the ensemble's patron on the DUX label. Resounding under the baton of Dybał in the Warsaw Philharmonic Hall will be Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies, and the latter's *Concerto* in D major for harp and orchestra, with the soloist

Massenet and Camille Saint-Saëns entrusted them with the world premieres of the works.

An important chapter in the history of the orchestra was its cooperation with Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, which moved from Paris to Monte Carlo in 1911. Diaghilev had a gift for acquiring talented artists: towards the end of his life, he tried promoting a budding composer from Kyiv, Igor Markevich, who became famous as an outstanding conductor after the death of his pro-



Xavier de Maistre, the harpist of the Viennese Philharmonic.

📅 Tuesday, 7th April, 7:30 pm
Warsaw Philharmonic Hall

The grand Orchestra from Monte Carlo

Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo is among Europe's oldest orchestras. Following the *genius loci*, their debut took place in the casino, where they played a medley of popular dances in 1856. Soon, the ensemble gained in importance, changed its repertoire, and increased its line-up to 70 musicians. In 1878, they acquired a concert hall designed by Charles Garnier, the architect of the Opera in Paris. At that time the then still relatively unknown French composers Jules

tector. In 1967–1972, he was the musical director of the Monte Carlo Orchestra, and he significantly improved its artistic level. The ensemble experienced similar prosperity in recent years under the direction of Marek Janowski.

Since last year, the orchestra's artistic director has been the Russian conductor Yakov Kreizberg. It is under his baton that Franz Schubert's Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4, and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's Piano concerto in G minor, performed by an eminent German pianist Lars Vogt, will resound at the Easter Festival.

📅 Monday, 6th April, 7:30 pm
Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera.

Anna S. Dębowska



Leipziger Streichquartett: Tilman Büning, Stefan Arzberger, Ivo Bauer, Matthias Moosdorf

A stratigraphy of the classics

Beethoven's String quartets

Alfred Einstein, an eminent musicologist, claimed that life teems in each bar of Beethoven's works, and every detail of his compositions has justification outside music.

The sonic DNA of the genius of Bonn is best sought in his chamber works – which he created throughout his life.

This is the music that Beethoven brought from aristocratic salons to concert halls and bestowed with a new meaning. In the hands of Beethoven, chamber works became a form of expression condensing all creative ideas. Possibly this is the reason why Beethoven's idea of the "pure work of art" was so quickly taken over by the Romantics, who threw themselves at duos, trios and string quartets...

In Beethoven, it is in the string quartet – according to theoreticians the greatest achievement among his works, on a par with the symphony and the piano sonata – where we find most information about the composer's genetic code. This is the case as all his life is contained in the 16 string quartets which Beethoven authored from 1785 to 1826: his passion and torment, the inexhaustible joy of creation and the deep sadness of an idealist, the lyrical pining for the mysterious beloved, and even disputes with his patrons for whom all these works were composed. The history of the last quartets – masterpieces that have triggered so many words of awe and rapture – may be what shows most vividly the composer's incessant skirmishes with his protectors. Nikolai Dmitriyevitch Galitsyn, an aficionado of Beethoven's work and amateur cellist living in Petersburg, ordered a few quartets from the composer in 1820 and promised to pay as much as he deemed right. By mid-1826, Galitsyn received three compositions (in E flat major, B flat major and A minor), yet payment for them was hard won – and not without long bargaining – only by Beethoven's heirs. The other so-called "late quartets" – *Great Fugue* in B flat major Op. 133 and *String Quartet No. 14* in C sharp minor Op. 131, which will be brought before us during the Festival by the Leipziger Streichquartett, are an ideal of unity between form and sound – a great synthesis of the composer's language. Imagining the creation of this music, Theodor Adorno wrote,

not without a certain emphasis, about the creator, torn between the extremes: "a gesture of late Beethoven, who, in his shirt, mutters in fury while painting the huge, blown-up notes of the Quartet in C sharp minor on the wall of his room! Like a paranoiac: fury and love turn one into the other... The quartets from Op. 59 come from the middle period and are dedicated to the Russian ambassador in Vienna, Prince Andrey Kirillovich Razumovsky, and show how often Beethoven's revolutionary music met with a lack of understanding during his lifetime. This was the case with the *String Quartet* in F major, Op. 59/1, which at times is on a par with "Eroica". Unconventional rhythms, distant harmonies, and an original selection of motifs puzzled musicians to the extent that they refused to play these works. Finally, in the six first Quartets from Op. 18 – which consumed the composer to the extent that he wrote no major works while working on them – Beethoven the lyricist may be glimpsed. In the *String Quartet* in F major Op. 18/1, which will also resound during the Festival, we discover one of Beethoven's most touching melodies, composed with the tomb scene in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in mind. Here, the composer even wanted to place the words "Les derniers soupirs" ("The last sighs"). Studying Beethoven's biography and listening to his chamber works – *Quintet* in C major, Op. 29, *Septet* in E flat major, Op. 20, and the *12 Variations for cello and piano* – during the Easter Festival, we should try to search the recesses of his fascinating personality. The fact that many of the basic attributes of Beethoven's compositions may be drawn from what has been written and said about Beethoven for the last two centuries does not mean that his phenomenon has already been discovered. **Ada Ginał**

📅 Leipziger Streichquartett:
Tuesday, 31st March, 5 pm, The Royal Castle;
Wednesday, 1st April, 5 pm, The Royal Castle.



Vineyards in Ruedesheim on the Rhein.
The native land of the Riesling that Beethoven loved so much,
says **Wojciech Bońkowski**, musicologist and sommelier.

Beethoven and wine

Anna S. Dębowska: We are talking about Beethoven drinking Ruedesheimer, a Riesling from the Rheingau region. This is the very wine that the dying composer asked for...

Wojciech Bońkowski: ...and he received from the publisher Schott a case of 12 bottles of this wine, but he never managed to drink it.

Could it have tasted the same in the days of Beethoven?

This is the same type of wine, but the taste has definitely changed, because the production technology was different, and it didn't undergo quality control as it does today. It definitely wasn't this light, rather amber in colour. It contained less alcohol, barely 8-9%. In the days of Beethoven, wines were decidedly weaker, because the climate was cold.

So drinking one bottle a day with lunch, as is rumoured to have been Beethoven's custom, was nothing unusual?

They used smaller bottles, usually half a litre. There was the sediment at the bottom too, so not all wine was drunk. We can safely assume that our composer drank one bottle for lunch, one for dinner, and also some wine for breakfast.

For breakfast?

Yes. Remember that the morning meal at the time was not an espresso and croissant, but oysters and meats. Beethoven was no alcoholic: his contemporaries consumed an average of 150-200 litres of wine a year per person! Such quantities may be shocking, but in the imperial capital there was no drinkable water to speak of at the time. You were left with the bullion and wine, usually white.

Did Beethoven like wine?

His letters prove that he did, although he was not a gourmet. Only aristocrats were connoisseurs, and the

notions of tasting and classification were not known at the time. From his birth, Beethoven lived in a culture where wine was a part of everyday reality. It was the drink of inns, and palaces and burger houses.

He is said to have preferred Rhine wines.

Because he was born in the Rhineland. At his time vineyards were popular in the vicinity of Bonn. "Drachenblut", or "dragon's blood", was the famous wine from Bonn.

What other wines did he drink?

His correspondence proves that he knew of the existence of various kinds. In Germany, they drank primarily Rhine, Moselle, and wines from Franconia. In Austria, "imperial" wines, with the main producer being the huge vineyards that surrounded Vienna. To this day, it must be the only European capital within whose administrative borders wine is produced on a commercial scale. Beethoven drank local wines served in the taverns, known as *Heurige*. He spent a lot of time in the country, where he lived and dined in peasant taverns. His cook would go down and buy wine, which was poured into the jug straight from huge barrels.

Also, he could drink red wines from Hungary.

Tokay?

Yes, but occasionally, for it was a very expensive drink.

He probably knew wines from the southern part of the Austrian Empire.

Might he have known Bordeaux?

He might have, but it was not all that popular in Austria, due to colossal duties. The best wines of the world were drunk only in palaces. It is known, however, that he drank champagne, which - after the Congress of Vienna of 1815 - became an important drink in Austria. It was discovered when the

Austrian army was stationed in Champagne. All in all, it was hard to come by high-quality thirst-quenchers. In his letters, Beethoven complains about sour wines. He must have come across watered-down wines.

Did drinking customs change in the days of Beethoven?

Revolutionary changes influenced many aspects of life, and this was no exception. Bottling became a common practice in the 18th century. Earlier, wine was kept at home and barrels, and it was also used for cooking and pickling. Bottles were an English invention that was initially used only for the most exclusive wines, earmarked for long maturation. Beethoven complained in his letters about their inordinate prices. At times, such wines cost two or three florins a bottle, so the equivalent of € 15-20 today.

There is a hypothesis that the reason behind the composer's death was lead poisoning, as the wine he consumed contained trace quantities of lead. How did it get into wine?

Examination of Beethoven's bones and hair proved that he suffered from lead poisoning. The reason for this condition was most probably wine. Primarily, because it was drunk from lead mugs. One of these, which used to belong to Beethoven, has been preserved to this day and can be seen at Bonn's Beethoven-Haus. Secondly, wines were sweetened with lead. In Beethoven's days lead was already known to be poisonous, but it was only in the latter half of the 19th century that this kind of practice was banned. An old Roman method of sweetening was lacing the drink with so-called "sugar of lead", i.e. a vinegar solution of lead. It must be remembered that at that time true sugar was

very expensive, as it came from the colonies. Beethoven was exposed to the effects of lead for many years; it was a very slow poisoning. Alas! Wine does cast a tragic shadow on his life.

To what wine would you compare Beethoven's music?

I am sceptical about the tradition of seeking analogies - developed especially in France - between wine on the one hand, and music and art in general. There is no sense in forcibly building parallels between these two utterly different fields. So many myths have grown around wine, and it acquired the nimbus of an exclusive product: almost artistic; yet in the days of Beethoven it was an everyday commodity, which was not dwelt upon too much. Yet, I would look for an auteur, individualistic wine, exceeding its context.

Beethoven is believed to have said that "music is the wine that stimulates people to new deeds". He compared himself to Bacchus who "pours this delicious beverage for them and intoxicates their spirit with it". Where do these wine-related metaphors come from when his Seventh and Eighth symphonies are discussed?

The authenticity of this quotation is dubious: it originated with a friend of the composer, Bettina von Arnim. She had strong myth-creating inklings. The Dionysian aspect later became very important for Nietzsche - the author of the division of art into Apollonian and Dionysian - and also for Wagner, Mahler, and Richard Strauss, all of whom wanted to perceive their spiritual patron in Beethoven.

This late-Romantic interpretation, where art is conceived as a strange kind of religion, and an artist as a priest or a near-deity, still influences us today. Yet Beethoven did not perceive himself in this way, although he was a great authority for his contemporaries. He did not construe art as a higher incarnation of the spirit, nor was he an anti-bourgeois artist. On the contrary, he aspired to the bourgeois. He was aware of the romantic tension between society and himself, true. Some Messianic, Promethean elements can be perceived in his works, yet Beethoven himself was strongly set in the ideas of the Enlightenment. He wanted to educate, to show the path of progress and unification to humankind, as he did in the finale of the Ninth Symphony.

In order to understand its author, we should reach to his time, and there are no Dionysian elements there. They turned up later, a product of the latter half of the 19th century.

Interviewed by **Anna S. Dębowska**

Wojciech Bońkowski is a musicologist, researcher of Frédéric Chopin's works, an Italianist, recognised sommelier, editor of "Magazyn Wino", and co-author (with Marek Bieńczyk) of the guide *Wina Europy 2009*.



Exhibition of manuscripts in the Jagiellonian Library

Manuscripts don't have a smell

Mendelssohn had a beautiful hand, Beethoven was careless about the legibility of his scores. Shown for the first time this year in Kraków are hand-written Handel works in Mozart's instrumentation, Haydn's symphonies, and Mendelssohn's *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*. The Music Collection Department of the Jagiellonian Library. Page by page, I am browsing the scores from this year's exhibition of manuscripts. Here comes Joseph Haydn's Symphony "La Chasse" ("The Hunt"). On thick handmade paper and staves drawn laboriously by the copyist, the composer wrote one of his "Paris Symphonies" 228 years ago. Semiquavers, quavers, crotchets, minims, rests and dots stand upright in their bars, like soldiers in the ranks. Sylwia Heinrich, the curator of the exhibition of manuscripts, turns my attention to watermarks: three half-moons at the top of the page. "This is a hint, sometimes it helps to determine the year the manuscript was written," she explains.

Bastien and Bastienne, a singspiel composed by the 12-year-old Mozart. "Nothing crossed out." I smile, remembering this scene in Miloš Forman's *Amadeus*. "It is a myth," Sylwia Heinrich shakes her head. "There were no corrections, but Mozart rejected some fragments. Here, he crossed out an entire page." The curator is turning the pages. I am checking whether they smell. "Manuscripts don't have a smell. It's only the old prints that do," says Heinrich. Finally, displayed before me is the *Septet* in E flat major, Op. 20, which Ludwig van Beethoven dedicated to Maria Theresia. He used red ink to mark the articulation – the arches and dots below them. The manuscript is bound in leather, and the cover bears the stamp of the Prussian Library in Berlin. A library card drops from between the pages – someone was browsing through the *Septet* in December 1939. No other browser looked at it for another 40 years.

Priceless collection

This is but a small fraction of the masterpieces in the collection of the Prussian Library in Berlin, since 1946 in Kraków. After the war, 9000 handwritten documents and letters by luminaries of culture and science found shelter in the Jagiellonian Library. They include the musical manuscripts of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Brahms, Paganini, and Cherubini. Until the early 1970s, the au-

thorities of the People's Republic of Poland concealed the fact that the – miraculously preserved – collection was to be found in Poland; no one but museologists had access to it. A dispute continues today between Germany and Poland about the place where the collection should be stored. Germans want it to be returned to Berlin, while Poles claim compensation for the Polish works of art destroyed by the Nazis, whose value is estimated at \$20 billion.

What was Beethoven's handwriting like?

"The exhibition of manuscripts should be the greatest event of the year for music lovers," believes Sylwia Heinrich. They were shown for the first time to the general public 12 years ago, during the inauguration of the Beethoven Festival in Kraków. Now, they are made available to music lovers for two weeks every year. An exceptional ace in the Easter Festival's pack: you can listen to a musical work live and see its manuscript with your own eyes. This year, you can do so with Felix Mendelssohn's *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, which has found its way onto the programme of the festival and the exhibition, and has never before been presented publicly in Poland.

The subject of this year's exhibition are the links between nature and culture, for this is also the motto of the 13th Festival. Moreover, the scores were chosen with anniversaries in mind: the 250th anniversary of Handel's death, and 200th anniversary both of Haydn's death and of Mendelssohn's birth.

What shall we see?

- by Joseph Haydn: Symphonies: "La Chasse" ("The Hunt") in D major, "The Clock" in D major, and the 1st Act of the Opera *The World on the Moon*
- by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Bastien and Bastienne*, and one act from the Opera *Così fan Tutte*.
- by Georg Friedrich Handel: pastoral opera *Acis and Galatea* and *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* rescored by Mozart to the commission of Baron Gottfried van Swieten.
- by Ludwig van Beethoven: *Symphony No. 7* in A major, the third movement from *Symphony No. 8* in F major, and *Septet* in E flat major Op. 20
- by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: *Symphony No. 3* in A Minor "Scottish", *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*.

Anna S. Dębowska

Beethoven, Nature and Culture, exhibition of manuscripts
Curator: Sylwia Heinrich
Design: Lech Dziewulski
Opening of the exhibition:
midday, 27th March 2009
Admission free

Is that Pan Edek coming?

If it were to turn out that the price that Polish cultural life has to pay for the great economic crisis is the cutting back of Ministry of Culture grants by PLN 200 million in 2009, the thing would be unpleasant but not dramatic, even if especially harsh on the small, one-off cultural events whose very chance to exist is dependent on a ministerial grant. This can hardly be considered such a catastrophe, however, because budget cuts come at a time of markedly increased prospects for financing culture from a variety of EU funds. Moreover, regions and large cities – being the real patrons of cultural life in their area – are quite well off, even though – quite obviously – not as perfectly well off as a year or two ago.

It is private sponsorship that is the worst off. When you browse through the web pages of e.g. American operas, you see how seriously limited the repertoires are on the famous stages. This is because the crisis hit first and most spectacularly those market establishments that used to earmark large funds for the building of their charitable image: banks, insurers, the automotive industry. Similarly, major festivals and great artistic events in Poland have for years founded their existence on the capacity to acquire major private resources. The Beethoven Easter Festival might be one of the best examples here. The risk is high that the owners of these businesses, if not already the receivers, (which may often be the case), might withhold funds for such purposes. Moreover, this can seriously influence the potential in coming years, and particularly in 2010. In a crisis, state patronage may turn out to be far safer. A drastic drop in the revenue from advertisements in Polish papers and magazines is symptomatic for what may come in the realm of culture.

The economy demonstrates that a crisis purifies, as it is a moment of truth. Swindlers prove to be no more than swindlers, and losers – losers. It is highly probable that in a healthy economy such a "purification through crises" at least twice a century is, all aspects considered, beneficial. It is not so in culture, however. The rules of competition that apply in such cases and save the best in the market only apply to cultural phenomena in a highly limited way. In culture, rescue or ruin may hang on the whim of a president or a supervisory board never in fact knowing that what they rescue or ruin is important indeed. Worse, the decisive role in such cases lies with a network of informal interpersonal contacts, which does not have to favour the best artistic phenomena.

The truth I find most unpleasant and which I discovered through nothing else but crisis, is the one about Polish public opinion. The recent polls conducted in the context of cuts in the government budget leave no doubt: Poles want politicians to reduce all expenditure on themselves and on the entire state administration. Interestingly, no one is persuaded by the sensible argument that it will make getting anything done in those institutions even more difficult. What I find especially interesting are the next two items on the list of things which it is permitted to cut. They are sports and culture. I find them both a surprise. The first, because I believed sporting emotions to be the most commonly experienced collective feeling in the contemporary world. Yet this evidently is not the case, what I used to believe common is valid only for a decided minority of so-called sports fans. As far as culture is concerned, I deemed a particular hypocrisy to be absolutely binding here: even if we do not care at all about another philharmonia concert or yet one more theatrical premiere, as a group we are afraid to admit our disregard for high culture. Here I was mistaken as well. Clearly, after all, the times when people were ashamed to admit they had never read any books are gone. The crisis made me aware that Pan Edek from Mrożek's *Tango* may again be on the offensive.

Jan Rokita

