

## Lech Napierala – Summary of professional accomplishments

I am a graduate of the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music (currently, the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music) where I have received the Master's diploma in 2006, and of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien) – Master's diploma with honours in 2015. In May 2013, I defended my doctoral thesis *The specificity of performance of orchestral songs arranged for voice with piano accompaniment, as illustrated by "Wesendonck-Lieder" by Richard Wagner as well as "Urlicht" and "Rückert-Lieder" by Gustav Mahler* at the Academy of Music in Kraków, and in June 2013, I was conferred with the degree of doctor of musical arts by the Council of the Instrumental Faculty of this academy. Since October 2013, I have been employed at the Chamber Music Department of the Instrumental Faculty of the Academy of Music in Kraków.

The work of art I am submitting for evaluation in the habilitation procedure is *Dreamscape*, a disc containing music by Roxanna and Andrzej Panufnik, released in 2014 by the British record label Signum Classics, as a jubilee album to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Andrzej Panufnik. In many respects, this disc perfectly summarizes my artistic path so far and accurately reflects my musical interests.

Almost from the beginning of my stay in Vienna, where I live since 2008, I have been particularly concerned that programmes of my concerts should include Polish music. I had established a cooperation with the Polish Cultural Institute in Vienna, where I initiated a series of concerts devoted to Polish émigré composers. It started from Roman Maciejewski. Having discovered his mazurkas, for which I am deeply indebted to his brother Wojciech who had enabled me to do so, I set myself the goal of becoming an ambassador of his music. I would later perform many times at recitals in Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Romania, Moldova, France, as well as China, Singapore, and Malaysia. This was also the story behind the recording of a disc which, apart from Maciejewski's mazurkas, also contains mazurkas by Chopin and Szymanowski. That disc was released by the DUX label.

Other Polish composers whose music I would introduce to the Viennese audience included Mieczysław Karłowicz, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, and Alexander Tansman, to finally reach for the music of Andrzej Panufnik. After a series of concerts in which I have performed, together with Magdalena Szczepanowska (violin) and Piotr Hausenplas (cello),





chamber pieces by Andrzej Panufnik and his daughter Roxanna, a proposal has emerged to record them on a disc which would be a special jubilee edition to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the composer. Through the efforts of Roxanna Panufnik, as well as the composer's widow Camilla Lady Panufnik, the British record label Signum Classics took interest in recording and releasing of the disc. The album included chamber pieces by Andrzej Panufnik (piano trio), by his daughter Roxanna (*Around Three Corners*), as well as songs by both composers. A curiosity is the title track of the album – *Dreamscape* by Andrzej Panufnik, originally composed for a mezzo-soprano and piano as a vocalise. With full consent of Camilla Lady Panufnik, to whom this piece was dedicated, and indeed with her encouragement, we decided to record it in a version arranged for a piano and cello. The correctness of this decision may be confirmed by the fact that many cellists would later include this piece in their repertoire, whereas Lady Panufnik herself claimed that her husband had loved the cello and would surely not mind. Here, allow me to make the first reference to my artistic path and the first summary thereof.

As early as my studies at the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw (today, the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music), I had already been showing special interest in chamber music. Initially, I performed in a piano duo with Aleksandra Szczęsnowicz, winning the third award at the II International Competition of Piano Duo in Białystok. As early as the studies, we recorded and released our debut album with pieces for two pianos by Mozart, Milhaud, Tansman, Chopin, and Lutosławski. My friendship with Magdalena Szczepanowska and Piotr Hausenplas goes back to the student era as well. This friendship, extending to the musical sphere as well, has brought many joint performances about, initially in duo with each of the two other musicians, and later, in a piano trio. At that time, the opportunity to cooperate with such magnificent artists was immensely significant to my development as a chamber pianist. It was then that my approach to intimate music was established, in which I placed and place today great respect towards my fellow performers .. That was also a time when I learned how to draw pleasure from musical exchange of ideas and spontaneous mutual response to each other, both during rehearsals and performances. Over time, our cooperation turned into a permanent “musical friendship” which continues until this day.

Beside the instrumental pieces, the album also includes songs. This is particularly significant given that it was due to song, as a musical form, that I left for further study at the





University of Music in Vienna. The wish to investigate the repertoire of vocal lyricism and the secrets of vocal accompaniment had led me to Prof. David Lutz who set the direction of my further musical search. Quite quickly, I found my genuine passion in interpreting of poetic lyrics, while simultaneously searching for interpretation relationships between the word and the music. It is the richness of the word, of poetry, that became my inspiration for a new search for musical means of expression. Shortly after my arrival in Vienna, I became a stage partner of many renowned singers, including Tomasz Konieczny, Olga Pasiecznik, Aida Garifullina, Monika Bohinec, Çiğdem Soyarslan, or Paul Schweinester. I would expand my skills through participation in courses and song festivals, under the direction of outstanding pianists specialized in this repertoire, such as Charles Spencer or Gérard Wyss. The musical genre of song, so intimate in its expression, has led me to the major concert stages of the world – Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Berliner Philharmonie, the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, the National Opera in Ljubljana, the Philharmonics in Ljubljana, the new hall of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, and many others. Many times, my recitals were recorded and broadcast or retransmitted by radio (Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Österreichischer Rundfunk, Radio Slovenija) and television stations (Bayerischer Rundfunk, TV Slovenija). It is song that opened the doors of many prestigious stages of the world to me and gave momentum to my career. The songs on the disc, recorded with a British mezzo-soprano Heather Shipp, include such relatively simple pieces, charming in their expression, as *Love Song* by Andrzej Panufnik, set to a poem by Sir Philip Sidney, or *Modlitwa* with lyrics by Jerzy Pietrkiewicz (an unfinished song by Andrzej Panufnik, completed by his daughter) on the one hand, as well as compositions by Roxanna Panufnik, sophisticated and subtle in their lyrics/music relation, set to the poems by William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth and George Herbert, on the other hand. It was, among others, the work on the repertoire of this album that has given me an opportunity to discover the universality of means of interpretation. My studies in Vienna, focused primarily on the repertoire of the greatest classics of this genre (Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strauss, Mahler, etc.) have given me a base I can benefit from in every repertoire, including the modern one. Its central point is the impact of lyrics on music (music is set to lyrics). However, sometimes it is music, or rather a musical interpretation of poetry by a given composer, that may stimulate reflection on the lyrics and meaning thereof.

In October 2013, I took a new challenge of pedagogical work at the Chamber Music Department of the Academy of Music in Kraków. I conduct courses for students in the area



of chamber ensembles, piano duos and accompaniment teaching. In the latter field, I put special emphasis on vocal accompaniment, providing students with my knowledge acquired during my studies in Vienna and resulting from my experience of a concerting piano accompanist. My goal is not only to show the beauty of the song repertoire and the joy from work on interpretation thereof but also to make students realize that openness to such disciplines as vocal accompaniment, or piano chamber music in general, may become a source of their great artistic satisfaction in the future. I am very pleased with the quickly growing interest of pianists in this area and the will to cooperate of vocalist students who increasingly go beyond the world of opera, heading towards vocal lyricism as well.

I regard my contact with the works of Andrzej Panufnik as an immensely important event in my artistic life. I consider it true happiness that I was able to meet his family, to live at his house in London, to practise on his piano, or even to drink my morning coffee sitting on his bench in his garden. I had no opportunity to meet Andrzej Panufnik in person. Through this contact with his deeply intimate world, through friendship with his family, my attitude to his music has become much more emotional and personal. I think *Dreamscape* is a reflection of my artistic path so far. This path, of course, still goes on, bringing new challenges for me to face. I am glad that I can constantly broaden and expand my knowledge and experience I share with my students. I am also convinced that the opportunity of work with students has had a very beneficial effect on my development as a pianist, being the source of many valuable inspirations.

Józef Tischner made a certain distinction, writing that "...philosophical thinking, as if instinctively, gravitates towards some kind of truth, and artistic thinking – towards some kind of beauty" (*In the element of beauty*). Not wanting to start a dispute with the author, especially that his quote is taken out of a wider context, I still incline towards a reflection that the concept of truth in art is very important. The study of song has convinced me that what I look for in the first place when studying a given piece is not beauty but "veracity" of emotions I intend to convey to the listeners. In my pedagogical work, I also seek to inspire my students to examine and constantly broaden their means of expression, so that truth and beauty could coexist. I regard the sincerity of message and the power of expression to be consequences of search for truth in music. I would like my future artistic path to be an endless and relentless continuation of this search.

*Sech Wojciora* 4