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**Andrzej PANUFNIK : CONCERTOS**

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**ANDRZEJ PANUFNIK (1914-1991)**

- \* **Violin Concerto (1971)**
- \* **Cello Concerto (1991)**
- \* **Piano Concerto (1961)**

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**Robert KABARA** - violin

**Roman JABŁOŃSKI** - cello

**Bogdan CZAPIEWSKI** - piano

**The Symphony Orchestra of the Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk**

**Zygmunt RYCHERT** - conductor

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**Andrzej PANUFNIK** was born on 24 September 1914 in Warsaw, in a family with musical traditions. His father, Tomasz, was a highly regarded violin maker, while his mother, Matylda Thonnes, was a fine violinist. From 1932 to 1936 Panufnik studied at the Warsaw Conservatory, in composition with Kazimierz Sikorski and in conducting with Walerian Bierdiajew. He continued his conducting studies in Vienna with Felix von Weingartner and in Paris with Philippe Gaubert. In 1934 he composed his first serious piece – *Piano Trio*. During the war Panufnik wrote a charming cycle, *Five Polish Peasant Songs*, *Tragic Overture*, and probably his best-known piece – the song *Warsaw Children* – performed every year to remind people of the tragedy of the Warsaw Uprising. The Uprising was a painful personal experience for Panufnik, too, as it marked his life with two tragic losses – the death of his only brother, Mirosław, and the loss of all the works he had composed to that time. The scores, left in his Warsaw apartment after he left the city with his ailing mother, were all burned out. After the war, the composer managed to reconstruct from memory the three works that have just been mentioned.

In the late 1940s, Panufnik led the way among modern Polish composers and works he wrote then, like *Lullaby* for 29 string instruments and 2 harps and *Nocturne* for orchestra, remain a testimony to the most advanced sonic experiments carried out in Poland at that time. In addition, Panufnik was very active as a conductor – from 1945 to 1946 he served as first conductor of the Cracow Philharmonic and in 1946 he was appointed the first post-war Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic. He also conducted concerts abroad.

Thanks to the success as a composer and conductor he enjoyed in those first years after the war, in the early 1950s Panufnik was seen as “composer No. 1” in Polish musical life. Paradoxically, this exacerbated his political problems – Poland’s communist authorities had their own plans for the composer as he was increasingly recognized in Poland and abroad, and tried to coax him into collaborating with them. With time, Panufnik found it increasingly difficult to avoid compromises – for instance, he wrote several mass songs for official public occasions as well as the *Symphony of Peace*, which he later withdrew. At the same time his works, praised on one hand, were constantly criticized on the other. The situation was made even worse by the social aspirations of the composer’s wife, Scarlett, who liked to shine at her husband’s side in Warsaw’s high political circles. Panufnik was forced as he was to speak on matters far removed from music; constantly dragged away from composing, he plunged deeper and deeper into a creative crisis. Further depressed by the death of his daughter, who was barely a few months old, he finally decided to leave Poland illegally and start everything anew. Thus in July 1954, taking advantage of a brief visit to Zurich to make some recordings, he flew from there to London, where he asked for political asylum.

In Poland, he was proclaimed a traitor. The authorities tried to erase him from people’s memories, banning performances of his works and even forbidding his name to be mentioned in print. Meanwhile, in the U.K., after the initial interest of the press, Panufnik had to build his position as a composer practically from scratch. The first several years were exceptionally difficult, marked by financial and personal problems (in the late 1950s, his first marriage broke up). For two seasons – 1957/58 and 1958/59 – he accepted the position of Artistic Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, but then decided to devote himself entirely to composition and never to accept any permanent post again.

A breakthrough came only in the early 1960s, with the appearance in the composer’s life of Camilla Jessel, who in 1963 became his second wife and created their home in Twickenham, near London. That same year, Panufnik’s *Sinfonia Sacra*, written with the upcoming millennium of Poland in mind and filled with patriotic allusions, won first prize at the International Composers’ Competition in Monaco, reviving his hope for a better future. Indeed, the following decades brought magnificent compositions, often associated with his homeland (*Katyń Epitaph*, *Sinfonia Votiva* dedicated to Our Lady of Częstochowa, *Bassoon Concerto* dedicated to the memory of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko, and many others) and increasing recognition in the British and international musical world. Most of these works were commissioned by eminent English and U.S. musicians and institutions: *Triangles* was written for the BBC Television, *Sinfonia Votiva* for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, *Symphony No. 10* for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, *Arbor Cosmica* for the Koussevitzky Foundation, *Violin Concerto* for Yehudi Menuhin and *Cello Concerto* for Mstislav Rostropovich.

Hugely important to the composer were his friendships and artistic collaborations with artists and institutions of the stature of Leopold Stokowski, Yehudi Menuhin and the London Symphony Orchestra, with which he began to work in the early 1970s and which commissioned three compositions from him. At the beginning of 1991 Panufnik was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to musical culture in Great Britain. Sir Andrzej Panufnik died on 27 October 1991 in his home in Twickenham near London. He was posthumously awarded the Order of Polonia Restituta by the Polish government, which is among Poland’s highest civilian and military Orders.

Panufnik’s oeuvre is dominated by symphonic works. He composed ten symphonies, two overtures (*Tragic* and

*Heroic*), works for symphony and chamber orchestra (including *Landscape*, *Autumn Music*, *Concerto Festivo* and *Arbor Cosmica*), as well as four solo concertos – for piano, violin, bassoon, and cello. In addition, the catalogue of Panufnik work includes pieces for solo piano, chamber ensembles (among them three string quartets) as well as vocal-instrumental works (including the cantata *Universal Prayer*). All are characterized by formal order and varied emotional hues. The combinations of these two elements constituted an enduring value of art for Panufnik. As early as 1952, he wrote: "Music expresses emotions and feelings. My ideal is a work in which poetic content is combined with musical craftsmanship. Poetry alone does not determine the musical value of a work, just as craftsmanship on its own carries a risk of descending into lifeless and dry formulas. Everlasting beauty is born only when these two elements are balanced."

Panufnik's music occupies an important place in Poland's 20th-century musical culture, and in that of the world. Full of inner warmth and always exquisitely structured, it maintains its distinctiveness and originality, a quality characteristic of great masters.

*Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska*

**Andrzej PANUFNIK** was a 'true symphonist' – this is how he was described as early as 1946 by the outstanding critic Zygmunt Mycielski. Indeed, when writing for the orchestra Panufnik was in his element and the orchestra remained for ever, as he used to say, his 'favourite instrument'. Even though the list of his works includes many chamber works, symphonic music constitutes the backbone of his output. In addition to the cycle of ten symphonies, the concertos also play a significant role, including the three featured in the present recording: the Piano Concerto (1961), the Violin Concerto (1971) and the Cello Concerto (1991). Written in different periods of Panufnik's life, they all nevertheless testify to what is of primary importance in his music – structural perfection coupled with a highly personal musical idiom and an intimacy and depth of musical utterance, with no lack of virtuoso elements and dance-like spontaneity. Each of the three concertos is bound to move listeners with their various shades of emotions and moods, leaving no-one indifferent.

### **Violin Concerto (1971)**

The violin was very close to Panufnik's heart from his childhood. Small wonder, considering that his mother was a talented violinist (albeit not performing in public) while his father was a respected luthier. It was natural therefore that, when his friend Yehudi Menuhin asked him to write a violin concerto for him in 1971, Panufnik lost no time in getting down to work. This is how he recalled that time some years later: "My primary consideration, I concluded, must be to display the violin as an instrument of warm expression. (...) In writing for the violin, I suppose that I felt the pull of my childhood memories – the smell of wood as my father constructed his instruments, and my mother's constant playing – so that the work became a sort of pilgrimage into my past and inevitably emerged filled with Polish atmosphere." From the formal point of view, in its general outline the concerto follows the traditional tripartite pattern – *Rubato*, *Adagio*, *Vivace*. The inner structure of each movement, however, is treated in an individual manner. The 'Polish atmosphere', which Panufnik mentions in his comment, is particularly evident in the last movement, with its rhythms of a folk dance, the 'oberek', and in the lyrical, melancholy second movement. The entire work is permeated by a mood of warmth and nostalgia, while purely virtuoso material takes second place to projecting the emotional depth and beauty of the violin sound. In all the movements the composer employs a strictly selected, reduced sound material, explaining his approach as follows: "This discipline served to exploit to the utmost Menuhin's rare powers of spirituality in his interpretation, and it gave him every opportunity to maximise the singing quality of the instrument. Throughout the Concerto, I consciously avoided the temptation to include purple passages of virtuoso 'pyrotechnics' (so beloved to technically adept but less profound violinists). I was composing a piece to expose the soul of the performer rather than to transform the fingerboard of the violin into a gymnasium for bouncing fingers." In his Violin Concerto, Panufnik indeed fully explored the depth of expression and refined beauty of the violin sound, further underlining and strengthening it by the homogenous timbre of the accompanying string orchestra. Even though Panufnik does not attempt to dazzle listeners with excessive virtuosity, the Violin Concerto can hardly be described as a non-spectacular piece. On the contrary, its refined soundworld seduces listeners with its charm and warmth from the first bar to the last. It is not surprising that it continues to be one of Panufnik's most frequently performed compositions. The Violin Concerto was premiered on 18 July 1972 in London, during the City of London Festival, by Yehudi Menuhin and the Menuhin Festival Orchestra, conducted by the composer.

### **Cello Concerto (1991)**

Panufnik's last large-scale work, it was completed shortly before his death. The concerto was commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra with Mstislav Rostropovich as the soloist. Panufnik composed it in the summer of 1991, completing it on 19 September. In the manuscript score, Panufnik put an exclamation mark after the date 19.9.91 as he was amazed by its perfect symmetry, something which relates closely to his creative ideas – symmetries are also evident, in the structure of the Cello Concerto. The work consists of two movements, strongly contrasted in terms of expression and character. The first, *Adagio*, is dominated by dark, even somewhat gloomy colours; the second, *Vivace*, is very rhythmic and has elements of scherzando. It is not cheerful, however, rather it communicates a sense of anxiety. The first movement is based on broadly expanded cantilenas, with individual parts being treated polyphonically. In the second movement, it is the other way round – the cantilena gives way to dance rhythms performed with great precision by the homophonically treated orchestral instruments. In terms of dynamics, too, the two movements are contrasted with each other. The *Adagio*, proceeding across a long *piano-forte-piano* arch, finds its reflection in the dynamic *forte-piano-forte* arch of the *Vivace*. What we witness therefore is a structure built with the utmost precision, in which both the whole and its elements are constructed according to the principle of symmetry, this time based on the figure of mandorla which lay at the very origin of the concerto. At the same time, with this work Panufnik paid tribute to the great Russian cellist and the London Symphony Orchestra with which he had enjoyed a fruitful relationship for many years. In his comment on the Cello Concerto, Panufnik wrote: "The cello is my favourite musical instrument, but in writing this Concerto I was above all inspired by my deep admiration for the great interpretative powers of Mstislav Rostropovich and my joy that he had asked me to write this work. I am proud also that this is my third commission from the London Symphony Orchestra. This time I decided to limit the choice of instruments and to spotlight some of the principal instrumentalists as well as accommodating also the soloist's preference for a modest-sized orchestra (5 wind instruments, drums and strings)". It might be expected that, with such modest instrumental forces, the cello part would be assigned a very prominent role, yet Panufnik engages the soloist in a dialogue with the ensemble, making them equal partners in communicating the work's emotional features. The cello is not treated in a strictly virtuosic manner, with the composer laying the emphasis rather on showing the beauty of its sound, and the depth and power of expression, even in the solo cadenza towards the end of the second movement. As a result, the Cello Concerto is a heartbreaking, dramatic and extremely moving piece. It was premiered after the composer's death, during a concert dedicated to him, on 24 June 1992 at the Barbican Hall in London. Mstislav Rostropovich was the soloist and the London Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Hugh Wolff.

### **Piano Concerto (1961, revised 1972, 1983)**

Of all Panufnik's works, the Piano Concerto took probably the longest to finish. Its first version was completed in 1961 and premiered on 25 January 1962 by the British pianist Kendall Taylor, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under the composer's baton. The work was in three movements but after its premiere Panufnik decided to delete the first. For many years it was performed as a concerto in two movements – a contemplative *Molto tranquillo* and a virtuosic *Molto agitato*. The work was given its present shape, reverting to three movements, as late as 1983, when Panufnik added an opening movement (*Entrata*), at the same time renaming the existing ones as *Larghetto molto tranquillo* and *Presto molto agitato*. *Entrata* exhibits some similarities with the rejected movement of the first version but is much shorter (ca. 4 minutes) and has the character of an introduction and preparation for the main, slow movement of the concerto. The work's central movement is the most important, with its piano sounds of exquisite beauty, poetical touch and delicacy, subtly spiced with highly coloured orchestral sounds. The beauty of 'pure music', created by means of extremely subtle combinations of single notes and motifs, is a fascinating aspect of Panufnik's oeuvre. As the conductor Wojciech Michniewski said: "To be able to create such an extraordinary mood, using the seemingly sterile 'dripping' of the music, is great art indeed." (*Panufnik. Architekt emocji / Architect of Emotions*, PWM 2014). The sense of enchantment and nostalgia in the central movement is contrasted with the mood of the third which is imbued with a huge amount of energy and a dance-like vitality. The music moves continually forward, coming to a halt only for a moment in a lyrical, chorale section, only to captivate listeners again with its rhythm to the vivacious final climax with its spectacular orchestral tutti. The orchestra, incidentally, is the soloist's equal partner in the work. In both its dialogue with the piano, or in the dialogue between various instrumental groups, the orchestra and the soloist co-create the soundworld of the concerto in a masterful way. In his note to the Piano Concerto, Panufnik wrote: "My purpose in writing my Piano Concerto was to compose a virtuoso work for the pianist which would give him the chance to demonstrate his capacity for poetic expression as well as his technical skill and bravura. I wanted also to exploit and explore the range of the piano, from sustained, singing notes to very dry, percussive

sounds. In addition, I wanted to make the orchestra's participation one of real significance, with a powerful role to play." One can safely say that Panufnik fulfilled his idea, penning a concerto which is being performed by a growing number of pianists and which should earn a permanent place in the canon of twentieth-century piano concertos.

*Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska*

**Robert KABARA** has served as Principal Conductor of the Silesian Chamber Orchestra in Katowice since December 2013. He had earlier founded Sinfonietta Cracovia and served as its music director, leader, soloist and conductor for 20 years. A virtuoso violinist, he won Third Prize at the Wieniawski International Violin Competition in Poznań (1986), First Prize at the Australia Bicentennial Competition in Adelaide (1988) and a special award at the Zino Francescatti Competition in Marseilles (1987). He was concertmaster of the Polish Festival Orchestra, which was founded and conducted from the piano by Krystian Zimerman for a world-wide tour marking the 150th anniversary of Chopin's death in 1999. He was also Poland's representative in the World Orchestra for Peace, which brought together outstanding musicians from 70 leading orchestras from 40 countries. He has worked closely with many prominent conductors, including Jerzy Maksymiuk, Krzysztof Penderecki, Antoni Wit, John Axelrod, Gabriel Chmura, and Lawrence Foster. He has made numerous recordings for radio, television and various labels. His recording of Penderecki's Violin Concerto (with Sinfonietta Cracovia under the composer's baton) for the Dutch label Channel Classics won the Diapason d'Or in France. The CD with Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* for DUX received the Polish Fryderyk Award in 1998. His discography also includes works by Witold Lutosławski (for the French label Arion) and by Andrzej Panufnik (for DUX). He is a member of faculty of the Music Academy in Kraków and is often invited to the jury of international violin competitions. The latest of these comes from the Wieniawski Competition in Poznań in 2016.

**Roman JABŁOŃSKI** was born in Gdańsk into a well-known family of musicians. His father was a composer. He studied at the Moscow Conservatory and the Yale University of Music in the United States. In 1972 he won First Prize at the International Music Competition in Dallas. It paved the way to a brilliant career, including a debut at Carnegie Hall four years later and performances with some of the leading orchestras, including the Berliner Philharmoniker, New York Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, RAI Roma, Santa Cecilia di Roma, Cleveland Orchestra, ZDF Köln, and BBC orchestras. He has also scored successes at music festivals in Antwerp, Edinburgh, Toronto, Rome and Lisbon. He has made numerous recordings for radio and various labels in Poland and abroad. Teaching is an important part of his activity. He has led a cello class at the Conservatory in San Sebastian in Spain for the past few years and gives masterclasses at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, Akademie für Kunst in Berlin and Yale University of Music. He has also been invited to the faculty of music courses in Norfolk (USA), Perth (Australia), Rheinsberg (Germany), San Sebastian and Głuchołazy (Poland). Witold Lutosławski hailed Roman Jabłoński as one of his favourite interpreters of his Cello Concerto. He performed the work under the composer's baton around the world, in concert and recording session, thus contributing to its acclaim as one of the finest compositions in twentieth-century music.

Witold Lutosławski: "He (Roman Jabłoński) is, in my conviction, among the select group of the best cellists of our times."

Jerzy Waldorff: "The Number One Polish cello."

The New York Times: "Roman Jabłoński has played with technical perfection and passionate involvement."

Der Tagesspiegel: "Der fabelhafte Roman Jabłoński." (The fabulous Roman Jabłoński)

The Daily Telegraph: "A first-class player."

**Bogdan CZAPIEWSKI** was born in 1949 in Gdynia. He studied piano with Zbigniew Śliwiński at the Music Academy in Gdańsk and continued his studies at the Music Academy in Warsaw and the Indiana University School of Music in Bloomington. He is a prizewinner of numerous international piano competitions, including the Ferruccio Busoni Competition in Bolzano (1975), the Viana da Motta Competition in Lisbon (1975) and the Montreal Music Competition (1976). In 1987 he received the Grand Prix du Disque Liszt during the International Record Competition in Budapest. Foreign tours have taken him to many European countries, Asia and the United States, with performances in such

venues as St. Petersburg's Philharmonic Hall, the Palais de Beaux Arts in Brussels, the Tonhalle in Zurich, the Salle Gaveau in Paris, the National Philharmonic Hall in Budapest and the Tivoli Hall in Copenhagen. He is a Professor at the Piano Faculty of the Music Academy in Gdańsk.

**THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN GDAŃSK** was founded over sixty years ago, soon after the establishment of the Music Academy. Even though the line-up of the orchestra changes from year to year, it has maintained high artistic standards, working closely with leading conductors. Its concerts have been met with both critical acclaim and enthusiastic reception from audiences. At present the orchestra works under the artistic guidance of Professor Zygmunt Rychert. In order to fulfil its educational role, the orchestra has a very diverse repertoire, both in terms of musical genres and styles. It regularly performs in the Concert Hall of the Music Academy in Gdańsk, the 'Ołowianka' Hall of the Polish Baltic Philharmonic, the city's churches and other venues in Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot and other towns. The orchestra has also taken part in joint musical projects with such professional orchestras as the Polish Baltic Philharmonic and the Polish Chamber Philharmonic in Sopot. The orchestra also gives concerts abroad within the framework of the Academy's contacts with music academies in several European countries. It has performed together with the students of the Hochschule für Musik in Lucern and the Junge Philharmonie Zentralschweiz (a series of concerts in Lucern and Basle). It has also been invited to the festivals in Siena and Florence (1997) and the Max Reger Festival in Weiden (1999, 2000, 2003). It also made a three-week tour of the east coast of China. The orchestra has had the privilege to work with such prominent conductors as Krzysztof Penderecki, Claudio Desderi, Paul Esswood, Jan Latham-Koenig, Thuring Bram and Christfried Göckertitz. The orchestra also takes part in opera productions given by the Academy's Department of Voice and Drama, in this way gaining experience that is important for future careers as members of orchestras in opera companies. In 2014 the CD '*Wojciech Kilar – Angelus, Exodus, Victoria*' (DUX 0966), recorded with the academic choirs and the soprano Anna Fabrello, conducted by Zygmunt Rychert, received the Fryderyk Award of the Polish recording industry, the first time such an accolade was given to a student orchestra.

*Conductor: Zygmunt Rychert*

**Zygmunt RYCHERT** was born in Gdańsk in 1947. He started taking violin lessons at the age of four. In his teens, he worked as an organist in the city's churches. He graduated from the State Higher School of Music in Poznań, where he studied conducting with Witold Krzemieński (gaining a diploma with distinction in 1971) and composition with Florian Dąbrowski. He has received numerous awards at competitions for both composers and conductors (while still a student, he was a prizewinner at the 1st Conductors' Competition in Katowice, being the youngest participant in the event). Upon graduation, he worked as an assistant conductor at the National Philharmonic in Warsaw (1971-74). In 1974 he founded the Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra and served as its Artistic Director till 1981. In subsequent seasons, he held the post of Artistic Director of the opera companies in Bydgoszcz and Gdańsk, with which he worked on a wide range of opera, ballet and operetta productions, including *Otello*, *Carmen*, *The Barber of Seville*, Moniuszko's *Flis* (The Raftsmen) and *Verbum nobile*, Ludomir Różycki's ballet *Pan Twardowski*, and Karl Zeller's *Der Vogelhändler*. He has also worked closely with the Toruń Chamber Orchestra, the Pomeranian Philharmonic and other Polish symphony orchestras. Foreign tours have taken him to almost all European countries, from Iceland, Spain and Malta to Russia and Ukraine, to Japan, China, the Near Middle East and the United States, with such soloists as Igor Oistrakh, Mstislav Rostropovich, Krystian Zimerman, Konstanty Andrzej Kulka, Paul Badura-Skoda, Narciso Yepes, Piotr Paleczny, Janusz Olejniczak, and Waldemar Malicki. His repertoire spans music from chamber works to Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand*, which he conducted on several occasions with international forces, and even works performed by 3,000 musicians and singers (during the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1999). He has made numerous recordings for Polish Radio, Polish Television and various labels. He has reconstructed, orchestrated and given first performances of many works which had existed in sketches, including Ludomir Różycki's Violin Concerto (recorded with Ewelina Nowicka with the National Polish Radio SO in Katowice), Ignacy Jan Paderewski's Violin Concerto, *Hexameron* by Liszt-Chopin-Czerny-Thalberg-Pixis-Herz and Tadeusz Kościuszko's Two Polonaises. His distinctions include two Gold Crosses of Merit. He is in charge of the class of symphonic and opera conducting at the Academy of Music in Gdańsk. He has served as conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of the Academy of Music in Gdańsk since 2009.