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Franz SCHUBERT : Winterreise D. 911

Stanisław KIERNER - baritone

Michał ROT- piano

DUX Małgorzata Polańska & Lech Tołwiński ul. Morskie Oko 2, 02-511 Warszawa

tel./fax (48 22) 849-11-31, (48 22) 849-18-59

e-mail: dux@dux.pl, www.dux.pl

Aleksandra Kitka-Coutellier – International Relations kitka@dux

If I were to define beauty, I would seek it in simplicity. It is the foundation of the greatest pieces of art. Beauty based on simplicity combined with a universal message can provide immortality to a masterpiece. These features can be understood as the fundamental truth incorporated in a masterpiece which is interpreted similarly by every generation, every culture, regardless current customs.

Winter Journey (Winterreise) – a song cycle by Franz Schubert with Wilhelm Müller's lyrics, is that kind of a masterpiece.

In the rich output of German poets of the Romantic period speech gets a new face and has a new meaning. Heinrich Heine's collection of lyric poetry works *Buch der Lieder (Book of Songs)* published in 1827 is a good example. It was the source of the greatest inspirations for almost all German song creators of the 19th century. The conciseness of form, the rhythmicity of text structure and the brilliance of message encouraged them to give poetry a musical punch-line. The tone of the word, its sound, very often of onomatopoeic character, resembles a real thing, a real event or a feeling. Vowels expose their sophisticated shapes, consonants gain voicing – some of them are clearer, whereas the other are produced deeply with the use of the rear part of tongue and soft palate.

These unique features of German language make it significantly different from Slavonic languages and in result the Slavs encounter many difficulties with pronunciation. I also had to face them. Music, however, carrying its non-verbal message inspires everyone. This way it induces deeper searching and allows the receivers of different nationalities to find mutual features despite cultural differences.

That onomatopoeia, painting with words, is a distinguishing feature of the German style and an attribute of the greatest representatives of German vocal lyric poetry, which flourished in the first part of the 19th century. Even on the example of Schubert's, Schumann's and Brahms's output, it can be easily observed how the musical language of romantic utterance evolved, how it intensified and enriched, how next generations of composers inspired one another, which constantly bore fruit in new, more and more sophisticated composing techniques. The strength and precision of the artistic expression benefited from them – not only as far as the singing is concerned, but also the piano part.

The greatest masterpieces, however, have always been founded on simplicity which among others was expressed in the right balance of musical means but invariably the primary aim was to emphasise the poetic content.

The *Winterreise* cycle D.911 was composed in 1827 just before the composer's death. It is said that it is an autobiographical masterpiece describing longing for love, pilgrimage, loneliness and lack of acceptance. The metaphor in the title gives an image of a human who desperately longs for love – the feeling providing warmth, solace and rest. The narrator does not find it during his winter journey. He does not lose hope however! He is searching further... He is fighting till the end! In the last song he asks a perpetual lyricist: will my heritage endure, will I remain on people's lips, in their memory and hearts – even then when I am gone?

He remained in mine...

Stanisław Kierner

Stanisław KIERNER (bass-baritone), singer, pianist and educator, born in Łódź. graduated from the city's Music Academy, where he studied at the Department of Voice and Drama (with Włodzimierz Zalewski) and the Instrumental Department (piano performance with Maria Korecka-Soszkowska).

He completed his studies at the Opera Studio of the Théâtre La Monnaie and at the Queen Elizabeth's Chapelle Musicale in Brussels, where he developed his skills under the guidance of José van Dam, gaining a diploma with distinction. He completed a year-long postgraduate course at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris (the class of Mireille Alcantara). He has also participated in numerous masterclasses given by such artists as Tom Krauze, Thomas Quasthoff, Susan Manoff, and Susanna Eken.

His honours include First Prize and three special awards at the Edmund Kossowski Competition of Polish Artistic Song in Warsaw, First Prize at the Bacewicz International Chamber Music Competition in Łódź (the voice and piano category), First Prize and a special award for the best interpretation of a song cycle at the Ada Sari International Vocal Competition in Nowy Sącz, and the Special Award at the ARD International Vocal Competition in Germany. He was also a finalist of the MEZZO TV International Opera Competition and Festival and a laureate of the Andrzej Hiolski International Vocal Competition in Kudowa-Zdrój.

He made his operatic debut in 2002 as Don Alfonso in Mozart's "Così fan tutte" (dir. Jonathan Miller, cond. Manfred Honeck) in an international project 'Opera Island' in Røenø (Denmark).

His most important repertoire includes the main parts in operas by Wagner („The Flying Dutchman”), Puccini ("Tosca" – Scarpia, "Gianni Schicchi"), Szymanowski ("King Roger"), Penderecki ("Paradise Lost" – Adam and "The Devils

of Loudun" – Grandier), Viktor Ullmann ("Der Kaiser von Atlantis"), (,), Bellini ("Il Pirata" – Ernesto), Bizet ("Carmen" – Escamillo), and Ravel ("L'heure espagnole" – Ramiro), performed in Poland and abroad

He also excels in the oratorio and song repertoire – both classical as well the modern one – Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Ralph Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony*). He has performed in Piotr Moss's *Kawafis Poems*.

He performed with many outstanding orchestras, i.e. Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, in Katowice, English Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre National de Belgique, conductors –Tadeusz Wojciechowski, Wojciech Michniewski, Andrzej Straszynski, Tadeusz Kozłowski, Michał Klauza, Eraldo Salmieri, Manfred Honeck, directors – Jonathan Miller, Bertalan Bago, Vincent Boussard, Reto Nickler, Herbert Adler, Waldemar Zawodziński, Laco Adamik, Beata Redo, Krzysztof Kolberger and pianists – Michał Rot, Marek Szlezer, Beata Cywińska, Witold Holtz, Julia Samojło.

In 2013 he recorded *Les espaces du sommeil* by Witold Lutosławski for DUX Recording Producers together with the Łódź Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Daniel Raiskin.

Michał ROT – Polish pianist of the young generation. Abiturient of the Music Academy Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz in Łódź, graduated with distinction in 2012 under Prof. Cezary Sanecki piano masterclass. Moreover honed skills in Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Stuttgart, piano masterclass of KS Prof. Andrzej Ratusiński and Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Mannheim, chamber music under Prof. Michael Flaksman and Prof. Jelena Očić.

Artist is a laureate of many national and international music competitions. The most important are: Distinction on Chopin Competition Władysław Kędra in Łódź, 2nd Prize and Special Prize for best perform of polish modern piece on XVII International Chamber Music Competition in Łódź, Special Prize for best pianist on XVIII International Johannes Brahms Competition in Pörschach.

Huge impact on his artistic development have had contact with great musical personalities such as: Paul Badura-Skoda, Andrzej Jasiński, Elza Kolodin, Dang Thai-Son, Jonathan Zak, José Gallardo, Eduardo Hubert, Peter Efler, Paul Gulda, Victor Chestopal and many others.

Michał Rot leads an active concert life both in his country and abroad. He had performed on number of significant music festivals, only to mention: Ascoli Piceno Festival, Gaude Mater, Days of Karol Szymanowski music, Heidelberger Kammermusikfestival, Presentations – Żelazowa Wola, Łódzkie Schumanniana, Kubinska Hudobna Jesen, August with Talents, Castle meetings with opera in Książ, Vienna Music Festival.

Pianist have had collaborated with prominent artists like: Michael Flaksman, Roberto Trainini, Jerzy Salwarowski, Jerzy Swoboda, Tomasz Daroch, Jelena Očić, Tomasz Chmiel, Andrzej Kosendiak, Aleksandra Szejewska-Belica.

Constantly cooperate in two duos: since 2008 in Reger Duo with cellist Krzysztof Karpeta and with outstanding violinist Patrycja Słomczyńska.

Vocal lyricism is an area of pianists fascination. Since 2007, the pianist creates a chamber music duo with his wife Joanna Rot (mezzo-soprano), on which several years of artistic care took remarkable Polish singer Urszula Kryger. Later artists were developing their skills under supervision of Ulrich Eisenlohr in Mannheim and world-renowed baritone Olaf Bär in Dresden (2010-2014).

Parallely collaborates with an excellent Polish baritone young generation Stanisław Kierner and other recognized singers: Szymon Komasa, Katarzyna Haras, Bernadetta Grabias, Karina Skrzyszewska-Trapezanidou, Anna Lichorowicz, Ziemowit Wojtczak.

Artist received a scholarship from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for outstanding achievements in the field of music. Starting in 2012 as an assistant Chair of Piano Chamber Music Academy in Łódź.