

Corina Marti & Michał Gondko: *Fantasiae, Cantiones et Choreae*

17 November (Sunday) ——— 5.00 pm

Royal Castle in Warsaw – Museum
Great Assembly Hall
4 Zamkowy Square

The concert shows gems of Polish Renaissance music presented in their instrumental versions. These are primarily lute, harpsichord or organ compositions: preambles, fantasias and various types of dances, which in the sixteenth century were often associated with songs that accompanied them, including of Polish origin. However, original vocal pieces were also played on strings and keys, adapting their musical texture to the one typical of a given instrument by means of diminution – the art of dividing longer rhythmic values with the help of conventional ornaments.

Concert programme

Anonymous, *Rex* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Nicolaus Cracoviensis (?) (first half of the sixteenth century), *Bona cor[ea?]* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Benedictus de Drusina (ca. 1520–ca. 1580), *Fantasia* (Benedictus de Drusina tablature, 1556)

Nicolaus Cracoviensis, *Ave Hierarchia* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Anonymous, *Polnischer Tantz* (Munich partbooks, 1520–1540)

Mikołaj Gomółka (ca. 1535–after 1591), *Kleszczmy rękoma* (*Melodies for Polish Psalter*, 1580)

Matthäus Weissel (ca. 1535/40–1602), *5 Polnische Tantzze* (Matthäus Weissel tablature, 1591)

Nicolaus Cracoviensis, *Praeambulum in G per B* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Zakłolam szją tharnem (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Wojciech Długoraj (1557/8–after 1619), *Chorea polonica* (Leipzig tablature, 1619)

Cantio polonica (Leipzig tablature, 1619)

Anonymous, *Jeszcze Marczyne* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Nicolaus Cracoviensis, *Hajduczkj* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Anonymous, *Praeambulum super d* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Ludwig Senfl (ca. 1489–ca. 1543), *Vita in ligno moritur* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Antonio de Ribera (first half of the sixteenth century), *Rex autem David* (Joannis de Lublin tablature, 1537–1548)

Wacław z Szamotuł (ca. 1524–ca. 1560), *Christe, qui lux es et dies* (after 1550)

Anonymous, *Potoraë Koniginn inn Polen Tantz* (Emanuel Wurstisen tablature, 1591–1605)

Anonymous, *Fantasia primi toni* (Gdańsk organ tablature, 1591)

Jakub Reys (Polonais) (ca. 1550–ca. 1605), *Fantasia* (Jean-Baptiste Besard, *Thesaurus harmonicus*, 1603)

Anonymous, *Pol[nischer] Tantz* (German organ tablature, 1593–1597)

Anonymous, *Ein gutter polnischer Tantz* (Christoph Löffelholz tablature, 1585)

Performers:

Corina Marti
harpsichord

Michał Gondko
lute

Corina Marti & Michał Gondko: *Fantasiae, Cantiones et Choreae*

The sixteenth century is rightly considered the time of the emancipation of instrumental music. This phenomenon also applies to the Renaissance Poland, as evidenced by preserved sources. In Europe, the most characteristic genres at that time were the preamble and fantasia. The former served as an introduction to a musical composition or to a group of works; the latter was a kind of interlude, often following preambles or separating expressively contrasting pieces. Both genres provided composers with numerous opportunities to experiment with the instrumental texture, while performers had a chance to display their skills in the field of improvisation. Therefore, musicians would apply the diminution technique to scored pieces – it consisted in dividing longer rhythmic values into ornamental groups of many shorter ones. For obvious reasons, these procedures were different for string instruments and keyboard instruments. Copyists rarely wrote down these ornaments, leaving their realisation to the musicians. Therefore, each performance of a Renaissance preamble or fantasia is different, especially when the musicians playing them have experience resulting from studying sixteenth-century treatises.

Knowing the secrets of this tradition allows performers to freely use the sources and to adjust the notation to the texture typical of a given instrument. Consequently, the concert

programme draws on sources written down in different types of instrumental notation – lute and organ tablatures. Despite the various types of notation, the repertoire that can be found therein could be performed on both string and keyboard instruments. This applies, among others, to the aforementioned strictly instrumental genres, which we find in the Kraśnik tablature of Joannis de Lublin. Some of these works are signed with the name of Nicolaus Cracoviensis, who, however,

was not necessarily their composer; it is likely that he was only a copyist or 'arranger' of their intabulations, that is instrumental arrangements of vocal compositions recorded in a kind of notation typical of these sources. Preambles written down in this tablature served primarily to consolidate a given key (or rather mode); hence the clarifications of their titles (*in G, super d*). Similar terms appear in the titles of slightly later fantasias known from a manuscript currently stored in Gdańsk (*Fantasia primi toni*). Another fantasia – also of Pomeranian origin – is conveyed by the print of Benedictus de Drusina, published in 1556 in Frankfurt on the Oder.

Naturally, dances were an important part of the instrumental repertoire. In tablatures, some of them bear names probably derived from dance songs accompanying their performance (*Jeszcze Marczyne*). However, a Polish-language title is not tantamount to the Polish origin of a dance: the dance *Zaklolał szją tharnem* [*I Got Pricked by a Thorn*], recorded in the Kraśnik tablature, is a typical Italian pavane, appearing in various sources of that time, from the print of Pierre Attaignant (1530) to the famous *Orchésographie* by Thoinot Arbeau (1588). This dance is, therefore, a local adaptation of a more popular 'hit' known in our country under the Polish incipit of the lyrics. The so-called Polish dances (*Polnische Tanz, chorea polonica*, etc.), appearing in many Central European sources (tablatures by Waisselius, Löffelholz, Długoraj and others), represent a similar phenomenon. These pieces are also – in terms of rhythmic patterns – popular European dances. However, they were disseminated as compositions with a characteristic melody, associated with the then fashionable music of Polish origin. Yet another group of dances is constituted by works related to locally known choreographic models (for example, *Hajduczkij*) or by those associated with the ritual of the Cracow royal court, recognisable not only in our country (*Rex*), but also abroad (*Potorae Koniginn inn Polen Tantz*).

The already mentioned intabulations make up a significant part of the organ and lute tablature repertoire. They were often used to consolidate a repertoire intended essentially to be sung, with an optional instrumental accompaniment. Modifications of the vocal prototypes appearing in some tablatures and attempts to adapt them to the instrumental texture (for example, through the diminution technique added at times) prove that these pieces were also present in the field of instrumental music. Liturgical compositions from the Kraśnik tablature, the Advent sequence *Ave Hierarchia* (known to this day as *Zdrowaś bądź Maryja, niebieska lilija* [*Hail Mary, the Blue Lily*]) or intabulations of Passion works by Senfl (*Vita in ligno moritur*) and Ribera (*Rex autem David*) provide a good example thereof. If a strictly liturgical repertoire was played on lute and harpsichord, then these instruments could have accompanied the performance of religious music sung at home, such as hymns by Szamotulczyk (*Kryste, dniu naszej światłości* [*Christ, Day of Our Light*]) and Gomółka (*Kleszczmy rękoma* [*O Clap Our Hands*]). An instrument could also replace the four singers needed to perform the vocal version and give these works more individual traits.

Tomasz Jeż



fig. Heinrich E. von Winter

Ludwig Senfl



Corina Marti – harpsichord



Dirk Letsch

The Swiss harpsichord and recorder player Corina Marti is recognised internationally for her ‘strikingly superior and expressive’ interpretations

(*Toccata*), and ‘infallible’ performances (*Diapason*). After studying the Baroque repertoire in Lucerne, she devoted herself to Medieval and Renaissance music, which she studied at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

Her extensive discography ranges from the fourteenth-century *istanpitte* and keyboard intabulations to the chamber music and solo concertos of the High Baroque and beyond, reflecting the variety of her musical interests and technical skills. She leads a full life as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher, travelling regularly across Europe, both Americas, the Middle and Far East. She has appeared with Hespèrion XXI, Coro della Radiotelevisione Svizzera Italiana and the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra,

and is artistic co-director and founding member of La Morra. Her research into aspects of the repertoire and the reconstruction of Late Medieval and Early Renaissance keyboard instruments and recorders has contributed substantially to the present-day revival of these instruments. She teaches the next generation of early-music performers at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and in masterclasses worldwide.

Michał Gondko – lute



Dirk Letsch

In Michał Gondko’s ‘deft and fluid’ (*Early Music Today*) lute playing ‘phrases come across like extempore thoughts chasing each other across the imagination, an effect many try for but very few succeed’

(*Lute News*). One of the leading lutenists of his generation, he pursues his artistic goals as a soloist and musical director. His first solo album, *Polonica* (Ramée/Outhere Music, 2015), received international critical acclaim. On

his most recent solo album, *Mortua dulce cano* (Ramée/Outhere Music, 2021), he explores the sound of a unique historical instrument: the so-called ‘Presbyter’ lute, built ca. 1595.

Michał Gondko is founder and artistic co-director of La Morra (www.lamorra.info), an ensemble widely recognised for its renditions of the Late Medieval and Early Renaissance repertoire, as confirmed by such marks of musical distinction as *Diapason d’Or*, *Jahrespreis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik*,

the American Musicological Society’s Noah Greenberg Award, as well as the Gramophone and the International Classical Music Award nominations. He is also the recipient of Fryderyk, the Prize of the Polish Society of the Phonographic Industry (ZPAV). He has shared the stage with such musicians as Dame Emma Kirkby and Jordi Savall, and regularly performs lute duets with lutenist Nigel North. Concert tours have taken him to most of the European countries, as well as to the USA, the countries of the Middle East, China and Japan.