

PREFACE

*Bo muzyka musi pójść i pójdzie nowymi drogami,
a w dążeniu tym nie wstrzyma jej gromada wsteczników,
tak jak ręka ludzka nie zatrzyma słońca i gwiazd w ich biegu!*¹

MIECZYŚLAW KARŁOWICZ

I FIRST LISTENED TO *Epizod na maskaradzie* and to the ‘trptych’ *Odwieczne pieśni* in their entirety many years ago, almost by chance, and I experienced a particularly intense feeling. Beyond the emotional impact, within those scores I sensed a depth of thought which would compel me to come back to them again and again, in order to probe their roots and thoroughly explore the work of a composer who was (and still is) largely unknown — as he was to me at the time.

In this volume I aim to examine the figure of Mieczysław Karłowicz in the broader sociocultural context which fostered his work. The attempt to contextualize an immense intellectual patrimony — despite being restricted to a tiny number of works when compared to more prolific authors, especially in the context of the XIX and the XX centuries — is always a complex and hazardous task. This is all the more true if we consider that a careful investigation should take in account a whole range of issues, both *internal* and *external*, gravitating around a composer. However, the bibliography on Karłowicz (aside from a few milestone works like the books by Henryk Anders, Leszek Polony and Alistair Wightman²) is not very extensive. As a result, in recent years a need has arisen to gather a number of scholars with the objective of clarifying the situation and stimulating research: a goal that is still more imperative given the centenary of Karłowicz’s death (1876-1909).

¹. «For music must go forward and take new roads, and in this process it can not be held back by a swarm of reactionaries, just like man can not stop the movement of the sun and the stars»; KARŁOWICZ, Mieczysław. ‘Henryk Urban’, in: *Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne*, n. 52 (1900), pp. 617-618.

². POLONY, Leszek. *Poetyka muzyczna Mieczysława Karłowicza: Program literacki, ekspresja i symbol w poemacie symfonicznym*, Kraków, PWM, 1986; ANDERS, Henryk. *Mieczysław Karłowicz. Życie i dokonania*, Poznań, ABOS, 1998; WIGHTMAN, Alistair. *Karłowicz, Young Poland and the Musical Fin-de-siècle*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1996.

PREFACE

My primary intention in organizing the volume has been to explicate Karłowicz the man as well as Karłowicz the composer, against the complex background of the European *fin-de-siècle*. The various essays aim to present the reader with an exhaustive reconstruction of Karłowicz's intellectual work. This includes symphonic music, *Lieder*, a violin concerto, but also sketches for musical theatre. There are also writings on the music and the cultural reality of his time, published in magazines, gazettes and as essays³, providing an important framework for understanding the personality and intellectual character of the Polish composer.

Karłowicz's oeuvre offers a broad artistic portrayal of Poland at the end of the nineteenth century as a fast-evolving country, politically divided and filled with contradictions. Hence the necessity to investigate the *fin-de-siècle* context with its social and historical implications, showing the influence of the European cultural milieu on the composer's poetics and on his thought. We shall examine the spectrum of relationships and affinities linking Karłowicz's works to the Polish cultural world (on the wave of the rising 'autochthonous' avant-garde movements) and to the wider cultural life pulsating beyond its borders, with special reference to German Wagnerism and Symphonism. Essentially, we are striving to define the uniqueness of his oeuvre, which — in relation to the manifold influences co-existing in Poland, an insubstantial nation from the political viewpoint and divided along three socio-cultural fronts — could be defined as distinctively Polish, yet ultimately *European*.

As far as Karłowicz's philosophical universe and musical poetics are concerned, the Tatra mountain landscape plays a crucial role. In the conclusion, therefore, I included an appendix presenting some little-known photos taken by the composer himself, probably in the years between 1906 and 1909.

Concerning the catalogue of Karłowicz's complete works, I shall refer to the volume published by PWM⁴ in 1986. The same House is in the process of publishing the critical edition of his works⁵. With respect to the titles of the symphonic poems and, more generally, of the works quoted in the volume, I

³. Among other things, a special note deserves his work of selection and collection of Chopin's writings and unpublished letters. See *Nie wydane dotychczas pamiątki po Chopinie*, edited by Mieczysław Karłowicz, Warsaw, Warszawskie Towarzystwo Muzyczne, 1904, French translation by Laure Disière, *Souvenirs inédits de Frédéric Chopin*, Paris-Leipzig, H. Walter éditeur, 1904.

⁴. CHMARA-ŻACZKIEWICZ, Barbara - SPÓZ, Andrzej - MICHAŁOWSKI, Kornel. *Mieczysław Karłowicz. Katalog tematyczny dzieł i bibliografia*, Kraków, PWM, 1986.

⁵. KARŁOWICZ, Mieczysław. *Dzieła / Werke / Works*, 12 vols., directed by Leszek Polony, Kraków, PWM, 1988—.

PREFACE

decided not to offer translations within the essays but to maintain the authors' original citations. For this reason a numbered record of Karłowicz's works is provided at the end of the volume. The titles are listed in Polish and in the English translation.

In conclusion I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to all those who made possible the realization of this book. *In primis* Wanda Rutkowska-Łysoń, who first aroused my interest and supported my researches on Mieczysław Karłowicz during our talks at the Institute for Musicology in Kraków, many years ago.

Moreover, I'm grateful to the Polish Institute for Culture in Rome and to Magdalena Widłak-Avolio, who supported this project from the beginning and firmly believed in its importance; to Francesco Groggia and Alistair Wightman for some translations from Polish; to the magazine *Muzyka* for kindly allowing me to publish the translation of the text from Ryszard D. Golianek⁶; to Jacek Ormicki and the Central Library for Mountain Tourism of Cracow (*Centralna Biblioteka Górską Polskiego Towarzystwa Turystyczno-Krajoznawczego*) for their permission to publish the photographic material presented in the appendix.

My genuine appreciation obviously goes to the authors for the patience they have demonstrated during the last few years, to Beppe for his support, and to the colleagues of the *Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini* in Lucca for their valuable help in the editorial preparation of the volume, for their work on editing the text, the pagination of the book, and their patient work on the musical examples.

My thanks go to the editorial staff of *Ad Parnassum Journal* and to the Ut Orpheus Edizioni (Bologna), who enthusiastically welcomed the subject of this book.

Luca Sala

Paris, November 2009

⁶. *Cf.*: GOLIANEK, Ryszard Daniel. 'Charaktery i symbole muzyczne w poematach symfonicznych Mieczysława Karłowicza', in: *Muzyka*, XLIV/1 (1999), pp. 55-82.