
FOREWORD

In recent years, there has been growing interest in Polish music from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – a difficult period when Poland did not exist on the map of Europe, divided between three partitioning powers. Extremely valuable works languished in archives, often never published, left solely in manuscript. The discovery of Polish music from these times increased exponentially with the celebration of the centenary of Poland regaining independence, in 2018. Shortly afterwards, Moniuszko Year 2019 gave another powerful impulse to the exploration of the musical heritage discussed here, not only at home, but around the world). The father of Polish national opera, as Moniuszko is commonly called, attracted interest and even enthusiasm among elite European artists. Presented to the world in outstanding, groundbreaking interpretations, he quickly turned out to be equal in talent to the most recognized opera composers in Europe.

The interest among performers was mirrored by the involvement of scholars. Discussion of Moniuszko's well-known operas has resumed, and researchers' inquisitiveness has also resulted in completely new discoveries. Such is the case with the studies by Magdalena Dziadek and Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn. These two Moniuszko experts (their current projects include a new edition of the composer's correspondence and exploring his legacy as part of the 'Moniuszko – Dzieła' project) present here the results of their latest research: an article on the libretto for Moniuszko's unfinished opera *Aleksota*, written by Seweryna Pruszkowa. The authors shed new light on the circumstances surrounding the writing of the libretto and the start of Pruszkowa's ultimately unsuccessful collaboration with Moniuszko, as well as revealing traces of *Aleksota* in other works Moniuszko was writing at that time.

Stefan Keym takes a bird's eye view of Moniuszko's work: his article concerns the formal structure and semantics of the Polish composer's overtures. Keym argues that 'Moniuszko followed typical genre trends of his time but also found original solutions of his own. His overtures indicate a growing interest in transitions and in a more careful integration of material from the respective opera. Furthermore, the semantic connotations of the combination of this material become more complex in the later works.'

This volume is complemented by two extremely interesting texts: Amadeu Corbera-Jaume writes about the largely unknown episode of the establishment of the Chopin Festival in Majorca in the 1930s and the controversies surrounding it, while Michał Bruliński takes a revealing look at Chopin's unique relationship with the piano.