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*The works of Aleksander Zarzycki. Inspirations – genres – musical language*

Polish music of the second half of the 19th century – despite the growing interest in it both in the research and performance community – still remains a rare subject of research. It is worth noting, however, that during this period, marked by the Fryderyk Chopin's pianistic achievements, successive generations of composers very often remained in the shadow of the "great master", and their work was sometimes forgotten for many years. In the territories of Poland under the partitions there were many outstanding composers whose activities very often went beyond creative work. Such a figure was undoubtedly Aleksander Zarzycki (1834-1895) – Polish composer, piano virtuoso, cultural activist, pedagogue, as well as director of Warsaw musical institutions (Music Institute, Warsaw Music Society) and director of the choir and orchestra of St. John's Cathedral in Warsaw.

The subject of this dissertation is Aleksander Zarzycki's oeuvre, which includes forty opuses works and a dozen or so non-opus number works. The genres undertaken by Zarzycki perfectly reflect the creative tendency prevailing in Polish music of the second half of the 19th century, consisting in a significant disproportion between symphonic compositions (which were written relatively rarely) and works intended for smaller ensembles, especially for solo piano.

The aim of this work was therefore to bring back Zarzycki's work to circulation – both in science and performance practice, by showing its features and style – as well as to popularize this repertoire. In order to achieve this goal, it was necessary to place Zarzycki's legacy, but also all his activities, in the context of the era. In turn, the key to achieving the above-mentioned goals was to draw up a list of all Zarzycki's works, which will certainly be helpful not only for the researchers of 19th-century music, but also for its performers. The overriding goal of this dissertation was therefore the desire to fill the huge gap in the research on the work of Aleksander Zarzycki, which is an extremely important element in the context of the entire legacy of Polish music of the 19th century.

In Zarzycki's creative output, the most numerous compositions are solo songs with piano accompaniment, popular in Romanticism, which the composer combined into smaller or larger collections. Among these collections, the most significant can undoubtedly be his two *Songbooks*, Op. 13 and 14, in which the inspiration of Moniuszko's *Home Songbooks* is discernible. In his songs, Zarzycki made use primarily of texts by Polish poets – thus, among

other things, realizing the idiom of national music – but also of texts by foreign poets, who enjoyed widespread recognition among other composers.

In the course of the conducted research, it was possible to obtain many valuable conclusions that allow us to look at Zarzycki's work in a new light. The works for solo piano in Zarzycki's oeuvre are represented by 27 compositions that can be classified as lyrical miniatures. Strongly exposed in them are, on the one hand, references to works of dance provenance (mazurkas, waltzes), but also references to song genres (barcarole, "musical poems", *chants sans parole*). In this repertoire, a virtuosic factor associated with the assumptions of the brillante style is clearly evident, which testifies to the inspirations by the works of composers such as Chopin, Liszt, Henselt, and Hummel.

Symphonic and chamber music is much more modest – in terms of quantity – in Zarzycki's legacy. Among the symphonic works of this composer available today, we can mention one work for orchestra – *Suite polonaise*, Op. 37 – two compositions for piano with orchestra accompaniment (*Grande polonaise*, Op. 7 and *Concerto in A-flat major*, Op. 17) and two works for violin and orchestra (*Mazourka in G major*, Op. 26, *Introduction et Cracovienne in D major*, Op. 35). In all of these compositions, as in the works for solo piano, an important factor is the virtuosity, while maintaining easily audible cantilenas.

Thus, Zarzycki's work – in general – is characterized by the clear presence of the virtuosic factor, the realization of the national idiom (e.g., through numerous references to Polish national dances, or the use of Polish poetry in solo songs with piano accompaniment), as well as – to a large extent – following the stylistic and formal determinants of the musical genres in question. On the other hand, however, it is a musical language that is not devoid of individual characteristics. An excellent example of this can be the relatively free, for those times, formal shaping of some genres and the frequent use of a gradual departure from the periodic structure in the form-forming function in favor of reducing themes to phrases and motifs. A characteristic feature of Zarzycki's works is also the strategy of presenting themes, which usually consists in showing a given theme in its original form and almost immediately presenting its variant (or several variants), which then very often undergoes evolutionary development or, less frequently, is reduced. The creative individualism in some of Zarzycki's compositions is also evident in his use of different tunings of the same instruments even within a single work. Such actions result from the composer's great awareness of the color and sound qualities of instruments. Zarzycki also achieved a varied sound by using less typical tonal solutions in some works, which include the appearance of diminished chords, the use of ambiguous harmonic structures, or going beyond the third's structure of chords.

In this dissertation – in addition to organizing Alexander Zarzycki's creative output, presenting the results of the analysis of the composer's entire currently available repertoire, as well as an attempt to outline the characteristics of his works – an important aim is to introduce the figure of Alexander Zarzycki himself. This was done in the first part of the dissertation, in which such threads of the composer's biography are touched upon as: early years and musical education, piano career, important acquaintances, Warsaw activities, private life and personality of the artist.