NADIA BOULANGER
AND HER WORLD

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Friend and Force: Nadia Boulanger's Presence in Polish Musical Culture

ANDREA F. BOHLMAN AND J. MACKENZIE PIERCE

On 11 October 1956, Nadia Boulanger commanded the room at the Polish Composers' Union, or Związek Kompozytorów Polskich (ZKP), the main professional association of Poland's composers. She had been accompanied by her dear friend and former student, Zygmunt Mycielski, on the walk from her apartment at the luxurious Hotel Bristol—accommodations only accessible to visitors from abroad at the time—to a gathering of her former students on the upper floor of a building facing Market Square in Warsaw's newly rebuilt Old Town. Boulanger was one of the most fêted guests at the first Warsaw Autumn Festival for Contemporary Music, and this stop was one of many during an extended visit to the Polish capital (see Figure 1). The trip was the first of several she would make to Poland over the following two decades. The bustling activity of the festival kept her busy, as her luminescence bequeathed importance on what would become one of the "most significant zones of cross-border cultural contact during the Cold War."[1] Boulanger reportedly attended all the festival concerts, made time for individual meetings, participated in musicological discussions, was welcomed by visiting delegations from nations East and West, and even observed and gave feedback in some of the rehearsals. She contributed to the festival's ceremony, but also to the informal encounters that would become the festival's trademarks.

On October 11, all eyes were directed at Boulanger. "My Polish students are like a large family among whom I now arrive with joy. I feel at home among them. Over the course of these meetings, the years fall away and the old Parisian memories return," the Union's newsletter reported her saying when pressed about her sense of occasion. The gathering was musically intense as she pored over and critiqued newly composed scores, gifts from the union's members.[2] Her remarks underscore her familial ties to Poland and Polish music, capture the intimate sociability and sense

Figure 1. Former students Grażyna Bacewicz, Kazimierz Serocki, and Zygmunt Mycielski, (left to right), welcome Nadia Boulanger, center, at Warsaw's train station in 1956.

of care—even responsibility—she felt toward the dozens of students from Poland she interacted with throughout her lifetime.

Of the twenty-four people gathered at the Union, she had taught nineteen. By the end of her life, more than fifty Polish pedagogues and composers would have studied with her. In her last letter to the Union, composed 9 January 1979, her opening salutations expressed how touched she was by the organization's "loyalty and affection."[3] Boulanger's Polish students extend across generations; some lived and worked abroad (Michał Spisak, Stanisław Skrowaczewski, Marta Ptaszyńska, Zygmunt Krauze, and Elżbieta Sikora), but most returned to Poland after studying with Boulanger in Paris. In the twenty-first century these former students still occupy leadership positions at the nation's top conservatories and musical organizations: the French composer's "Polish family" continues to grow.

In this essay, we consider Nadia Boulanger as a vital force for Polish musicians and musical institutions across the twentieth century and show how her intellect, energy, and eminence interacted in personal, musical, and institutional encounters. In the interwar period, Paris attracted not only composers but instrumentalists from across independent Poland. Boulanger student Grażyna Bacewicz, for example, also studied violin with André Touret during her sojourns there (1933–34, 1935). The

Association of Young Musician-Poles in Paris (Stowarzyszenie Młodych Muzyków Polaków w Paryżu) facilitated their community and nurtured their professional network. Here, Boulanger played a key pedagogical role: young composers from Poland were expected to join in her composition classes even if their stay in Paris was brief—a practice that would continue until her death. Those who studied longer and more intensely with her, such as Witold Rudziński, Bolesław Woytowicz, and perhaps most notably Zygmunt Mycielski, maintained epistolary relationships with their French mentor upon returning to Poland, where they took up leadership positions at Polish music institutions before and after the Second World War.

Her personal and professional relationships with Poles evolved as a result of the devastation of the war, which affected every aspect of everyday life as well as musical life in both Paris and Warsaw. The People's Republic of Poland shaped classical music as a triumphant marker of its modernization, and Boulanger came there to bestow international status on it, for example, as a juror for the International Chopin Competition in 1957. She welcomed students to Paris year after year, and both the Polish and French states funded these students' rigorous instruction in counterpoint and orchestration.[4] The new music scene in Poland thrived in contradistinction to other countries in the Eastern Bloc because of its international connections and exchange, as Lisa Jakelski has shown in her study of the Warsaw Autumn Festival.[5] Nurturing a connection to Boulanger was a crucial component of its vitality. This work was not only symbolic cultural diplomacy: her friendship with Mycielski, a prominent public intellectual, persisted through emotionally laden correspondence that reveals a compassionate mutual respect and affection. Boulanger cherished the reception and valued the community she had in her Polish family. Her relation with Poland and Polish musicians raises larger questions concerning the role of pedagogy as a source of prestige and even power during the Cold War, and of the role that the politics of friendship play for the realization of internationalist exchange. This essay follows the contours of her relationships to Poland, Polish music, and Polish musicians to historically—and musically—ground the affective warmth in her statements at the Composers' Union that October afternoon in 1956.

From Warsaw to Paris

The hundreds of Polish musicians who headed to Paris in the 1920s and 1930s chose to live and study there not only because of the city's unquestioned status as a center of modernist culture, but also because of the significance that France had acquired in the Polish cultural imagination

after the First World War. In 1918, Poland had regained statehood after having spent over a hundred years under partition. For independent Poland, France stood a safe distance from the onetime partition-era capitals of Berlin, Vienna, and Moscow, making it especially appealing to the state-backed funding organizations that supported studies abroad.[6] Many Polish Boulanger students traveled under the auspices of these official scholarships, while others were funded by the wealthy pianist (and former statesman) Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who was aware of Boulanger's support of Polish music and appreciated her efforts.

Those whose musical lives flourished in Paris noted specific affinities between Poland and France that had resonance in debates about the stakes and sounds of modernism. The ideological justification for the musical turn to Paris was provided by Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937). As a rare defender of new music in a highly conservative cultural environment, the composer of *King Roger* (1924) was respected and listened to by the younger generation of composers headed to Paris. In a series of widely read polemics from the 1920s, he argued that after Chopin's death Poland had become cut off from the culture of the West, engaging instead in a "hopeless plumbing of the depths of a once splendid past."[7] Rejecting the marriage of a tired academic style with folk-inspired tropes in the music of composers such as Władysław Żeleński (1837–1921) and Zygmunt Noskowski (1846–1909), Szymanowski claimed that Chopin's exile in France (and subsequent international fame) was proof that Polish music could be both nationally distinct while partaking in the mainstream of Western music history.[8] Though he did not endorse a return to Chopin's harmonic idiom or formal language per se, he insisted that France—standing in for civilization and modernity at large—was the arena in which Poland's musical ambitions ought to be realized. Szymanowski put his agenda into action, personally advising Mycielski, among others, to make the trip to Paris.[9] In return, Boulanger promoted Szymanowski's music in her public lectures on modern music in the mid-1920s and brought his compositions to her students.[10]

Poland's composers framed their studies abroad as serving a domestic agenda of musical nationalism that was underwritten by the purported closeness of French and Polish culture. The Association of Young Musician-Poles in Paris (1926–1950) justified their choice of city on ideological terms: "One must take into consideration the contemporary movement within Polish intellectual life (and especially within music) that aspires to establish close contact with Latin culture, in opposition to the prewar generation of musicians, who were educated chiefly in Germany."[11] The phrase "Latin culture" had ties to a discourse of racial purity in interwar

France. As used by right-wing French writers such as Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès, it denoted an unbroken continuity with Mediterranean civilization that they believed was guaranteed through the French race.[12] It is unclear to what degree the Association's members were familiar with the anti-immigrant connotations of this discourse, especially since working-class Poles were part of the "problem" that these writers described. It is clear, however, that the Association used this rhetoric to paint Poland as part of a Western cultural orbit, linkages underlaid by their shared Roman Catholicism and the Latin script of the Polish language.

Not all Polish musicians who traveled to Paris were composers and not all the composers studied with Boulanger. Yet it was often her students—including Bolesław Woytowicz, Zygmunt Mycielski, Feliks Łabuński, Witold Rudziński, Michał Spisak, Tadeusz Szeligowski, Michał Kondracki, and Antoni Szałowski—who occupied leadership positions among the community abroad.[13] One reason for this was that Boulanger quickly brought her students into contact with the latest musical trends of Paris. Mycielski's notebooks contain a hurriedly sketched copy of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* that he made from Boulanger's copy of the score when she lent it to him for a night before its premiere on 13 December 1930.[14] In such cases, connections to Boulanger promised access to the latest unpublished and even unpremiered compositions and offered insider insight into new musical thought. Unsurprisingly, many of her students adopted elements of the neoclassical aesthetics with which she was associated. Bacewicz's 1935 Trio for Oboe, Violin and Piano, for example, calls to mind the textural clarity, propulsive accompaniment figures, and prominent use of wind instruments that Stravinsky had pioneered over a decade earlier in his Octet.[15] Working with Boulanger enabled Poles to shape transnational social networks that long outlasted their Parisian sojourns.[16] Back in Poland, the musical press tracked Boulanger's public advocacy for her former students, reporting on, for example, the 1938 radio broadcast of her performance of Antoni Szałowski's jocular perpetuum mobile Overture (1936) at the helm of the BBC orchestra.[17]

Another likely reason for Boulanger's popularity among Poles was a compatibility between her pedagogy and Polish cultural politics, both of which were engaged in balancing the (national) individual with the wider universal of a cultural heritage. As Annegret Fauser has documented, Boulanger aimed to bring out the distinctive voices of her students from around the world while still analyzing works from across music history in terms of universal principles like *la grande ligne*.[18] Some students also recalled a deeper set of cultural similarities between France and Poland. Looking back in 1958 on her studies with Boulanger, Maria Modrakowska recalled that Boulanger

"often said that Polish culture (which she knows superbly) is so related to French culture that nothing divides them except language."[19] Indeed, Boulanger displayed a growing interest in Poland itself during the interwar period, expressing a wish to visit the country as early as 1934.[20]

Members of the Association of Young Musician-Poles recognized the cultural visibility that Boulanger could lend to their projects. In 1930, she became an honorary member and gave the Association financial support over the following years.[21] In return, its members nominated her in 1932 for the Order of Polonia Restituta, an award given by the Polish state for exceptional contributions to Polish culture. In justifying the successful nomination, the Association highlighted her role in frequently discussing Polish music in her lectures at the Ecole Normale de Musique, for helping to arrange performances of Polish works at the Société Musicale Indépendante, and in general her role in "informing French and international musical opinion about the direction of Polish music and the role that it plays in the general progress of musical culture."[22] By virtue of her eminence, she lent significance to this repertoire by programming Polish new music alongside that of France—"providing a sort of consecration to the concert of the young composers," as one review described.[23]

Zygmunt Mycielski (1907–1987) was among the Polish students who studied with Boulanger for the longest time. In the official biography for his application to the Polish Composers' Union, he reported that his studies lasted the decade between 1926 and 1936.[24] In addition to private composition lessons, he also took her courses in music history at the Ecole Normale, with notes from the 1934–35 school year showing Mycielski analyzing examples from Delphic hymns to Monteverdi madrigals.[25] The early 1930s were also the start of a long-lasting friendship. "[Mycielski] is—as you know—profound, understanding, and loyal," Boulanger described him at this time.[26] He was a conscientious student and composed consistently throughout his life, but Mycielski's larger impact on Polish musical culture—somewhat to his own regret—was as a critic, taste-maker, editor, and, in the decade after the Second World War, cultural official, when he served as vice president, then president, of the Composers' Union.

Mycielski owed his success as a writer to an ear for concise prose and a sensitivity for articulating the more complex issues of Poland's cultural politics. His essays were peppered with acerbic wit and playful irony, interlinking music with the arts and broad societal concerns. He shared Boulanger's desire to stay open-minded when hearing new works that eschewed his compositional principles. Upon hearing Krzysztof Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961) at the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1964, he wrote that the work, which he critiqued for its

static formal blocks, its orchestration defying common sense, and a near absence of pulse "should be bad, but it is good. It is music like oysters, snails, and vodka."[27] After Mycielski took a public stand against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 in the most influential émigré publication in Paris, *Kultura*, his published editorials addressed not just cultural politics, but the political questions at the heart of the opposition to state socialism (especially in the Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny*). After the military crackdown on the Solidarity movement in December 1981, the pages of his journal were occupied equally with drafts of letters to the imprisoned opposition leader, historian Adam Michnik, as they were with sketches of his *Liturgia Sacra* (1983–84), which would receive a commendation from one Warsaw-based arts council associated with the opposition to state socialism in 1986.

Among his peers, Mycielski also amassed clout because his brand of criticism activated long-standing beliefs that the intelligentsia had inherited the aristocracy's role as the spiritual leaders of the nation.[28] Echoing the rhetoric of earlier generations, he often emphasized the obligations of the artist to society and reflected on Poland's accomplishments or shortcomings from a bird's-eye perspective. Although not all members of the intelligentsia in Poland were descendants of the nobility, Mycielski was; this aristocratic background he shared with Boulanger. Although he often downplayed his class origins, all were aware of them—he was even occasionally referred to as "the Count." This position, of both acknowledging and denying his class, allowed him to slip with some ease into his chosen role as a member of the intelligentsia, and to be taken seriously when he attempted to speak on behalf of Polish culture.

Though he remained closeted during his lifetime, Mycielski's homosexuality was an open secret among the social circles of the intelligentsia of Communist Poland. Beginning in the 1950s he lived with a partner, Stanisław Kołodziejczyk, and socialized extensively with other gay male writers and artists, as he details in his posthumously published diaries.[29] Kołodzieczyk and Mycielski visited Boulanger together; in Paris, at least, she referred to the composer's sexuality openly.[30] In Poland, the social stigma against public discussion of male homosexuality allowed someone of his class and educational background to acquire power—or at least leave behind a historical record in which any homophobic retaliation he experienced must be read between the lines.[31]

Mycielski is certainly not among Boulanger's most famous students. Among those from Poland, Wojciech Kilar, who composed the score to Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1993), would probably earn that label on an international scale. But he played an outsized role in

mediating her relations with Poland and is the key figure for the story that unfolds in this essay. In the years prior to Boulanger's first visit (1956), he translated for her what was happening in Poland with more detail, passion, and cogency than any of her other Polish students. Across dozens of letters, he explained what the traumas of war and efforts at rebuilding meant to Poland. During her subsequent visits to Warsaw, he accompanied and guided her, hosting her at social gatherings in his home. After her visits, he was the most insistent of her former students promoting her cultural significance and defending her relevance, as when he published her impressions of Warsaw and the Warsaw Autumn Festival in *Przegląd Kulturalny* (see "A Letter from Professor Nadia Boulanger" in this volume). He explained that other countries would follow Poland's musical example because of the blessing implied by her presence. "By attending our festival," wrote Mycielski, "Professor Boulanger made a gesture that has great significance, one that will doubtlessly echo in the musical life of many countries."[32] Boulanger's relations to Poland are also a reminder of how friendships animate the histories of cultural exchange: her visits brought officials from the French Embassy to dinner tables with Poland's ministers of arts and culture and were essential to cultural diplomacy, even if Boulanger refrained from discussing politics on the record.

Wartime Intimacies

As the Second World War threw Poland under German and Soviet occupation, many of Boulanger's Polish students, including Mycielski, corresponded with her. For some, connections to Boulanger became a source of hope for escape. For Tadeusz Szeligowski, then in Lithuanian-ruled Vilnius, Boulanger's letter of support for his efforts to secure a French visa was like "a message from heaven."[33] Friends and family of Bolesław Woytowicz and Roman Palester likewise believed that letters from her could somehow extract these composers from occupied Warsaw.[34] Former Polish students who had remained in France also appealed for help, with Antoni Szałowski seeking written endorsement as he worked to obtain visas for himself and Michał Spisak to go to the United States.[35] In none of these cases was Boulanger able to secure exit visas for her students.

Students had begun to see her as a life-line to the musical and diplomatic world at large. Those who were already in the United States also asked for assistance with employment.[36] The wartime aid with the broadest impact was probably the April 1941 concert that Boulanger conducted that benefited Ignacy Jan Paderewski's Polish Relief Fund in New York City.[37] The program, built entirely of religious music, brought together selections from her trademark repertory (including Fauré's Requiem)

and a landmark of early twentieth-century Polish music, a movement of Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, with what Gary A. Galo has suggested was her own arrangement of the first piece of chant notated in the Polish language, the "Bogurodzica" ("Mother of God").[38]

Mycielski did not so much ask Boulanger for aid as he made her into an audience and witness to his trauma. His letters to her, preserved today in the Bibliotèque Nationale de France, read like a journal of his wartime experiences. After the campaign against the German and Soviet invasions of Poland failed, Mycielski fled across the Hungarian border. "All that I can tell you is that I am still alive," he wrote on 22 September 1939, a few days after the Red Army's attack. "But I don't know anything about the fate of my family and friends—of my brothers, mother, family, not to speak of everyone, of the entire country."[39] That he wrote to Boulanger at such a critical moment is telling of the importance he gave to this friendship. But it also presaged his course of escape, as he would eventually join the Polish Army in France.[40] "I didn't know anything of our army here [in France], but I decided to serve in any army that was fighting with Germany or Russia. . . . We are defending mankind. All that is not mankind—all that is beyond humanity—must be destroyed."[41]

Mycielski rarely tallies the everyday events of war for Boulanger, but instead shares his military mindset as they approach battle. In February 1940, while preparing in France, he described to her how

> we are learning to organize this terrible thing, war . . . it's a very different thing than "the civilian" believes to see, believes to know. War has its aspect of craft, of well-done work. Its classic aspect. . . . It's not that I equate war with art, but that art, like every human creation, is an act composed of an end and a means.[42]

After Mycielski saw action and was captured during the Battle of France, his attitude changed. Boulanger became a source of escape and ethical support while he performed forced labor in Germany. "All the days, during the long hours of work, during the nighttime hours, I talk with you. Your conscience is a guide, your heart a force."[43] We do not know how Boulanger responded to these letters and we cannot be certain of how she felt being Mycielski's absent dialogue partner.[44] Yet in many ways, the intensity of their intimacy at a distance, established first during Mycielski's captivity, would continue to her death in 1979.

A focus on the quotidian mindsets of those struck by trauma is equally present in Mycielski's correspondence to Boulanger after the war. Indeed,

on the very day he was liberated, he wrote to Boulanger and two of her close associates describing, in a long and extraordinary letter, his angst and conflicting desires to return to Poland and see them in France. (See English and French versions of the letter, titled "What Awaits Them Now," in this volume.) After returning to Poland in late 1945, he continued to relay to Boulanger the sensibility of Poles living amid widespread loss. "For us, it is necessary to be content, yes, content, with all the beauty, sun, and rays that one day brings—this is already enormous."[45] He writes of musical events that signal renewal—the conductor Grzegorz Fitelberg's return, the premieres of pieces by Andrzej Panufnik—yet the emphasis is upon the rupture of the war and the all-consuming need of reconstruction. His desire to partake in a national, collective effort led to his decision to remain in Poland, when he could have easily sought exile in France.[46] His attitude and conviction extended beyond the early postwar moment. In 1950, he explained to her how, in Poland, "each person, according to his strength and means, should fight until the end. Each year—really, each month, each week, even each day—is a year, month, or day that we have won. We have won this time so that we may live, so that we may build again. All that matters is life. No one can grasp this who has not seen war from close up."[47]

Postwar Aesthetics and Cultural Diplomacy

In the decade following the Second World War, the significance of France within the Polish cultural imagination changed in ways that were both minor and significant. Musicians still sought to study in France and with Boulanger, but fewer managed to do so.[48] Critics and composers did not immediately reject the compositional techniques that they had learned from her in the 1930s, yet even Francophiles expressed skepticism about the formerly unquestioned status of Paris as the center of the musically modern.[49] In 1945, Mycielski described that in Paris "the rhythm of musical life flows along the old paths, depleted, rather than enriched, by the experiences that shocked that country."[50] But he also wrote to Boulanger that "it is useless to explain to you how much I wish to renew the bonds, already old, that connect almost all of us to French musical life."[51]

During the advent and debate over socialist realist aesthetics in Poland during the late 1940s and early 1950s, ambivalence toward neoclassicism and the lessons learned from Boulanger peaked. For Marxist commentators, French aesthetics cued up decadent Western excess.[52] But state doctrines that advocated for aesthetics founded in socialist ideology were largely abandoned by policy makers and composers when the cultural thaw of the mid-1950s reoriented classical music's institutions to the international avant-garde. By the time of Boulanger's first visit in 1956,

France had lost some of its prewar status in the Polish cultural imagination, even as the explicitly political discourse critical of her school of composition had dwindled. Instead, France was one player within the broader category of Western countries whose works and artists were aggressively sought out for programming at the Warsaw Autumn.[53]

Responding in part to these changing aesthetic and political circumstances, Boulanger's prewar students often reframed her ideas in order to maintain their relevance to new music in Poland. Early accounts, such as Mycielski's extended exegesis on her pedagogy from 1947, highlight the content (and ideology) of her teaching.[54] In the 1950s students lauded her tireless labor orchestrating, conducting, and teaching. Mycielski pointed to her moral authority, claiming, "She was concerned with the entirety of her students' artistic, psychological, intellectual, and even moral development."[55] Maria Modrakowska likewise focused on the dedication and commitment that Boulanger required of her students, recalling how in preparation for the performance or study of unpublished works her apartment "turned during the nighttime into a medieval monastery, where instead of monks, students copied out scores."[56]

However much the aesthetic debates of early 1950s Poland had disengaged Boulanger, by the time she visited in 1956, she was unquestionably a star and would remain so through her returns. "Among the many musical celebrities from all of Europe [at the Warsaw Autumn] Nadia Boulanger reigned supreme," wrote Jerzy Waldorff, comparing her with the Queen of Belgium.[57] The Composers' Union designated her the "most influential guest."[58] When she entered the National Philharmonic for the festival's first concert (mere moments before the lights dimmed), she received her own round of applause.[59] Her presence was amplified through newspaper reviews—at least twenty-three papers mentioned her attendance. The press coverage is littered with photos of her—arriving at the train station, in conversation with former students and cultural dignitaries at concert receptions, and in the Union offices, articulating her ubiquity and magnanimity.[60] One critic indicated how familial her relationship to former students was by describing her as the fount of Polish new music, a "friend of all young Polish composers over the last 35 years."[61] Another noticed that works by Boulanger's former students had a prominent place on the festival's program.[62]

Above all else, she was a selfless devotee of music. Commentators noted her seemingly ceaseless ability to attend every concert in the jam-packed week. Writing a color piece for the newspaper for younger readers, a journalist asked Boulanger as she passed through the lobby of the Hotel Bristol if she was going to take a rest. She replied, "A break? Never!"—and then lauded the sound of a Polish choir.[63] Such portrayals recycled

well-established tropes that had surrounded her in the 1920s, when critics reconciled her gender with the traditionally masculine work of conducting by painting her as a "servant" of music.[64] If her public image was somewhere between that of a celebrity and musical votary, Boulanger engaged specialist audiences of students and composers with what she considered the pressing issues of the music of the day. In a talk she gave to one such group at the Chopin Institute in 1956, she argued that the exhaustion of tonality had brought contemporary music to a decisive and dangerous crossroads. Boulanger claimed that "patience" was needed, that composers and listeners would need to go through several aesthetic systems—including dodecaphony—before finding a system that would be capable of equaling the accomplishments of tonality.[65] Opinions would necessarily be "extremely divergent and fragmented," a claim her former student Witold Rudziński heard as support for the festival as a platform for debate.[66] While positioning herself as a forward-looking advocate for new aesthetics, however, she remained skeptical of dodecaphony itself. Romuald Twardowski, writing after her death in 1979, would credit her postwar pedagogy with helping him "listen internally" and avoid pressure to follow trends and pressures from sounds beyond his "own musical creation."[67]

If Boulanger weighed in on particular works, she did so privately. Even as the Polish premiere of Stravinsky's jazz-inflected *Ebony Concerto* generated some of the most enthusiastic reviews from the festival, the connection between Boulanger and the Russian émigré, whom one organ of the Communist Party praised as the "father of modernism," went unmentioned.[68] But after the festival Boulanger would pay particular attention to Polish music, pointing to "those works that contain imagination, sonic sensitivity, vitality and rhythmic energy, and, ultimately, an originality of the melodic line and harmonic inventiveness"—all values that, albeit somewhat vague, reveal how she discerned a fundamental concern for melody and harmony in the new Polish music.[69] (See the translation "A Letter from Professor Nadia Boulanger" following this essay.) Thus Boulanger's written responses to the Festival, while seeking support for her own positions within music from Poland, also weighed into ongoing Polish debates about the direction of the avant-garde.[70]

A Public Friendship

Boulanger and Mycielski had likely seen each other in 1939 and again in 1949, when he visited France as part of a delegation sent to coordinate celebrations for the Chopin centenary.[71] Her 1956 visit to the first Warsaw Autumn was thus not their first reunion. But it was Boulanger's first visit to Poland, an occasion she did not take lightly. "If my arrival is important

for you," she wrote to Mycielski, "think of what it represents for me—I don't know how to tell you."[72] Several commentators noted that Mycielski and Boulanger were to be found side-by-side throughout the festival, and what had been an intimate epistolary friendship took on an element of public performance and allegiance.[73]

It was at this time that Mycielski presented Boulanger with an inscribed manuscript copy of two songs from his cycle *Ocalenie* (*Rescue*).[74] Composed in spring 1946, these songs were no longer congruent with his compositional outlook. But the gift was a powerful, even therapeutic, echo of the exchanges about war, suffering, and destruction that he had had with his French teacher, mentor, and friend over the preceding fifteen years. (The musical offering was reciprocated. In the 1950s, when imports were hard to come by in Poland, Boulanger helped rebuild Mycielski's long-playing record collection, gifting him new music from the West, such as Stockhausen, Boulez, and Nono, as well as pressings of her own recordings, notably a much-cherished recording of Rameau.)[75] The cycle sets a selection of poems from Czesław Miłosz's 1945 collection with the same title. *Rescue* is a literal description of the volume's contents—the publication contains poems his wife, Janina, was able to take with her when she fled Warsaw during the uprising at the end of the Second World War.[76] But it also summons a haunting specter: the failure of Catholic Poles to prevent the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. The canonic poems from *Rescue*, such as "Campo di fiori" and "A Poor Christian looks at the Ghetto," are about witnessing the Holocaust and the textual trace (or effort) of Miłosz's own experience as witness of the Ghetto's annihilation. Mycielski certainly would have been familiar with these texts laden with efforts, however impossible it seemed, to represent the barbaric murder of the Holocaust. His choice to set the concluding poem, "Dedication" ("Przedmowa"), of the second cycle in the collection ("The World: Native Poems"), maintains genocide's reality as a haunting presence—in the specific, dark and silent prelude that unfolds before his melody.

In his *Rescue*, Mycielski treated each of that poem's five stanzas as the text for a short song. He pared down the musical composition for Boulanger, choosing the first and third verses as his gift, thereby creating a thematically coherent selection that moves from the evocation of a lost acquaintance in the first stanza to the grave of the lost one in the third:

> You whom I could not save
> Listen to me.
> Try to understand this simple speech as I would be
> ashamed of another.

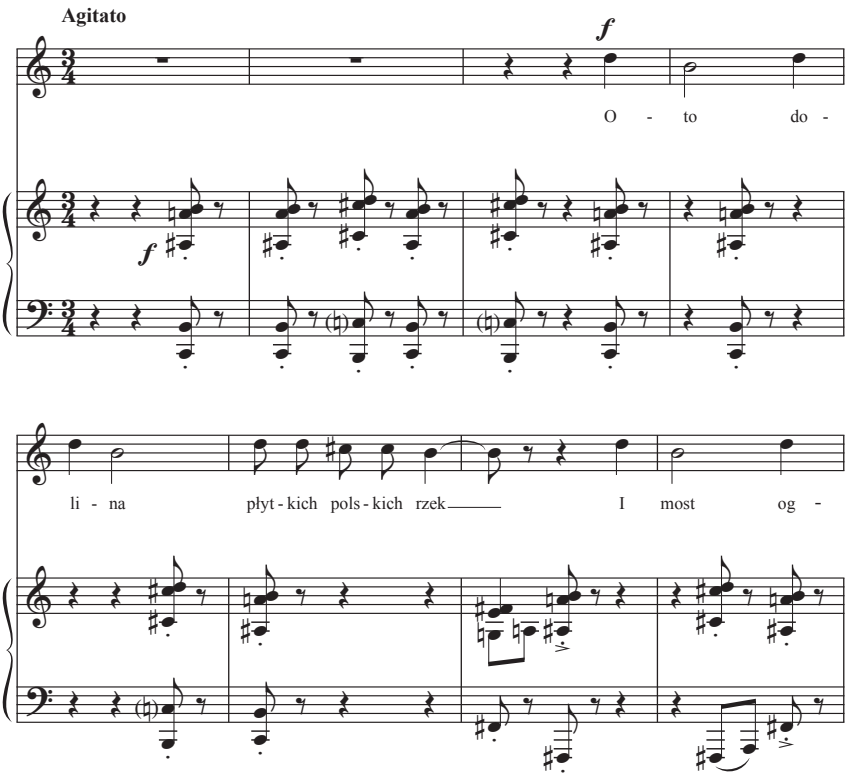
I swear, there is in me no wizardry of words.
I speak to you with silence like a cloud or a tree.

. . . . . .

Here is a valley of shallow Polish rivers. And an immense
bridge
Going into white fog. Here is a broken city;
And the wind throws the screams of gulls on your grave
When I am talking with you.[77]

By choosing these two songs, Mycielski omitted the more didactic—and historically specific—songs of this cycle. In the second the speaker suggests their mourned acquaintance was unable to resist encroaching ideologies of hate. Mycielski supplies the fourth with a recitative-like setting that asserts "Poetry which does not save / Nations or people" is a "connivance with official lies." The pairing for Boulanger avoids the verses that grapple with complex responses to death (relief, retaliation), focusing instead on a more universal portrait of loss that dwells upon the closeness between the narrator and the dead as well as mourning's expressive difficulty.

Mycielski's settings strip musical language down to a core of counterpoint that, unmoored from a harmonic context, produces unforgiving and even grating harmony. Perhaps Mycielski anticipated that these techniques would resonate with Boulanger's own pedagogical emphasis on line and counterpoint. Still, one wonders what Boulanger had to say about this raw rendering, this caustic musical language, since she and Mycielski spoke often of Polish-language poetry and its musical settings.[78] In the opening of the third song, for example, the moment in which the speaker points to the landscape in which the grave is situated is set by using two staccato clusters a whole step away from each other (see Example 1). Mycielski distributes the pitches across octaves, reducing somewhat their dissonance. Yet they are still a harsh accompaniment for a melody that is disarming in its simplicity and limited ambitus. All told, there is only one moment of consonance in the entire song: the bare, open-octave A♭s in the fourth-to-last measure. These are wiped out in the following measure by another cluster (distributed across four octaves), which "resolves" via stepwise motion to a four-octave C and C♯ chord to conclude the song. This final chord thereby recalls the first song, which begins and ends with motion between C and D♭ (see Example 2). Perhaps because of this harsh musical language, Mycielski's settings remained private utterances, and the songs were never published during his lifetime. For the Polish

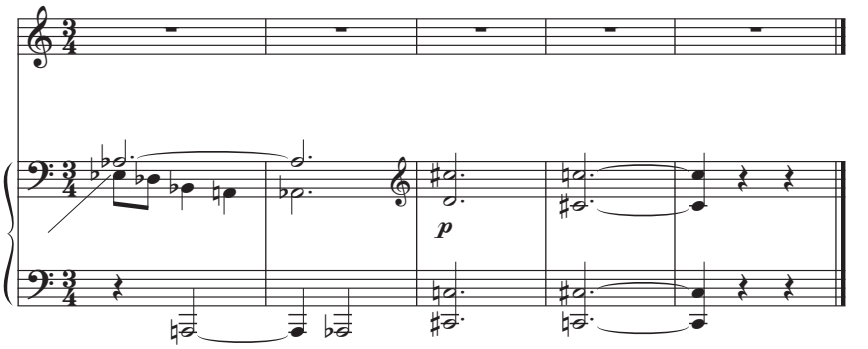


Example 1. Zygmunt Mycielski, *Ocalenie*, 3.
"Here Is a Valley of Shallow Polish Rivers," mm. 1–8.

composer they were intimately linked with Boulanger: he revisited them after her death as part of the mourning process, as he listened to choral music by Gesualdo and recalled her lectures on the madrigals.[79] In fact, the songs' existence was only brought to attention when the manuscript he had dedicated to Boulanger was found in her papers after she died.[80]

Mycielski's view of Poland's recent wartime past—and the obligations it spelled for the future—were echoed in Boulanger's reactions to the Warsaw Autumn Festival. She emphasized the collective effort needed to carry out the event and linked this energy to the war and Poles' recovery from it:

> And, finally: Warsaw. I finally saw—next to her terrific destruction and ruins, which shake with their ghastliness—the reborn and rebuilt New and Old Towns. They are happy and colorful; they speak to your past and of a present being built through great effort, so that you may have a beautiful future.



Example 2. Zygmunt Mycielski, *Ocalenie*, 3.
"Here Is a Valley of Shallow Polish Rivers," mm. 27–31.

. . .

> Thanks to my friends, I could also perceive that which has vanished from Poland as well as that which was systematically annihilated through the terrible historical events that struck your land. But I observe that your nation is full of life, that it finds inspiration in its past, that your grace depends on your values. Here, heroism has become an everyday matter.

To be sure, Boulanger's rhetoric played into the founding ideologies of the Warsaw Autumn. The leaders of the postwar music scene, gathered at the Polish Composers' Union, saw the new music festival as a crucial means to combat cultural isolation and compensate for lost time. Lisa Jakelski has shown that it was none other than Mycielski who took the lead on this matter behind the closed doors of the Union: he worried that Poland would become a "backwater."[81] In Boulanger's comments, however, she exudes empathy toward her Polish family and their experiences rather than focusing on the vitality of their institutions. She understands survivors as the resilient bearers of cultural heritage, that past and present are visible through human effort. Indeed, she had considerable interest in seeking out the present remains of the past while attending the festival, visiting key monuments of Polish early modern history in Cracow.[82] Throughout Boulanger's published letter of gratitude, she holds herself to her students through pledges to act as well as displays of intimacy. She presents herself as a leader for and cultural force within the postwar Polish milieu. Her private thanks to Mycielski ran even deeper,

describing how he "left me with something so profound that I do not know how to describe it—we so often forget what matters."[83]

Boulanger's presence at the first Warsaw Autumn Festival adorned the new institution with prestige; her feedback and enthusiasm underscored that the visit was no mere performance. The Polish Composers' Union symbolically marked this special relationship by distinguishing her with an honorary membership in 1957, to be celebrated during her next visit to Warsaw as a juror for the International Chopin Competition that September. In the decades that followed, Boulanger's visits to Poland deepened not just her friendships—her sense of Polish family—but her official institutional relationships and responsibilities. At the helm of the Union, Boulanger's former students did the administrative work for the Polish Artists' Agency (PAGART), seeking out choirs Boulanger might conduct, conservatories she might visit, and reminding bureaucrats that the guest of honor would only travel by train.

Composers communicated with Boulanger in ways both official and unofficial after the 1956 festival, often using her connections with the Union as a means for strengthening their contacts. The organization sent messengers to Paris and received materials in return. A Mrs. Zacharzewska brought an official letter wishing Boulanger a happy seventieth birthday in 1957, an occasion upon which she received the Commander's Cross with a Star from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in recognition of her "outstanding pedagogical achievements in the education of Polish musicologists and contribution to the deepening of Polish-French friendship."[84] Włodzimierz Kotoński was charged with picking up tapes and vinyl from Boulanger on his trip to Paris in 1959, though his luggage (and thus recording bounty) was breached upon his journey into Poland.[85] That encounter no doubt generated an interesting, if now lost, meeting between Polish music past and present. Kotoński surely learned some of Boulanger's pedagogy through his teacher Tadeusz Szeligowski in Warsaw, but as a student at the Darmstadt Summer Courses in 1957 he had been electrified by serial techniques and was in Paris to study not with Boulanger but with Pierre Schaeffer. His *Study on One Cymbal Stroke* (1959), a pioneering work of *musique concrète* and an attempt at total serialism, is one of the first pieces realized at the Experimental Studio of Polish Radio. As Boulanger sent scores and recordings from Paris, the composer's lifelong commitment to promoting her sister Lili's music also shaped her gifts to and activities with the Union. After a 1960 visit she sent via Mycielski's hands an LP of Lili's music for the Union's library, where it is still accessible. In 1964, Nadia conducted Lili's psalm settings in Cracow.

As Boulanger and Mycielski continued their correspondence over the years, he racked up some regrets—for example, that he could not manage

Figure 2. Nadia Boulanger delivering a lecture to students at Warsaw's music academy, with Zygmunt Mycielski observing (1967).

to write something for her seventieth birthday when commissioned by Michał Spisak and that it was Lutosławski, not himself, who traveled to celebrate that milestone in Villars sur Ollon.[86] But he did travel to visit her in the 1960s and 1970s and welcomed her to Warsaw every time she traveled to Poland. Mycielski modeled his own discerning attention to new compositions on her powerful and engaged presence when she was teaching, as we observe in a photograph of her lecturing at Warsaw's music academy in 1967, with Mycielski perched beside the piano, peering at and over her (see Figure 2).

Mycielski remained devoted to Boulanger during her final months. After eating dinner with her in February 1979, he noted that her "mind and memory functioned with complete clarity."[87] She reflected upon that visit in what would be her last letter to him: "You are with me as in 1935, as always."[88] He visited her again in August as she convalesced, cared for by a Polish nurse, Anna. In this last conversation—held at a whisper, according to the composer's diary account—Boulanger tried to speak about Mycielski's ongoing compositional projects.[89] Till the end, their relationship was personal and intimate, threaded by a responsibility to music.

Mycielski's connections to Boulanger gave him networks in the West that put him on the radar of the Security Service (Służba Bezpieczeństwa). In the late 1960s, the government watchdog opened an investigation into him in response to private anti-regime statements as well as his criticism of the 1966 celebrations of the Polish millennium of Christianity.[90] An informant reported:

> On the topic of Mycielski, one must note first and foremost that he is one of those people who had the exceptional ability to study at the famous school of composition led by NADIA BOULANGER in Paris. The very fact of completing studies in this school places the student more or less on a pedestal, as far as all musical values are concerned—and besides, Mycielski is talented as both a composer and a writer. Going further, studies at that school gave him the support of friends among many of the famous figures of the musical world. Because of this Mycielski has no problems—and I mean none—if he finds himself in France, England, Germany, or the United States. [The studies with Boulanger] were the first and perhaps most important moment of his career. A second area of concern is his international connections with many pederasts [*z wieloma pederastami*], whose only guiding principle is to aid one other. The third is that his title is that of Count.[91]

In this discriminatory profile, Mycielski's education under Boulanger trumps what were, in the contemporary political climate, understood as international (and internationalist) conspiracies against the People's Republic of Poland: homosexuality and aristocracy.[92] The informant was providing a depiction preordained by the Security Service. At the same time, the report mirrors Mycielski's own self-portrait of his relationship with Boulanger as wrapped up in his connections with her. When he spent time with Aaron Copland during the American composer's stay in Warsaw in 1965, their conversations lingered on cherished recollections of Boulanger and a shared distance from the avant-garde. Copland's note to Boulanger upon returning home signals her importance for Mycielski: "When I was in Warsaw last week (conducting) we spoke of you constantly, especially with Mycielski. What a charming fellow he is!"[93]

Boulanger's Polish Echoes

For Boulanger's eightieth birthday, the Union of Polish Composers rolled out the red carpet during a thirteen-day visit in December 1967.[94] Though her death twelve years later would spur another wave of reflection on her importance for musicians from Poland at concerts, across personal reflections, and through published obituaries, the 1967 visit consecrated Boulanger in the eyes of Poland's composers, performers, and politicians as the most important international figure in music of the twentieth century. In the words of the funding requests the Union sent to governmental agencies and the invitation she received, she was "inextricable" from Polish music.

Although Boulanger's visits were by then nothing exceptional, this trip involved a volume of commitments and service that spoke to the immense weight Poles attached to her presence. They hoped that the birthday celebration would rival, in both lavish ceremony and musical substance, recent celebrations for her in Monaco and Madrid. Boulanger's demanding schedule allotted one and a half days to listen to tape recordings of new compositions and radio performances at Polish Radio. For meetings, the demand was so great that Union members were convened in groups: her former students (forty-nine of them), young composers, and others with an interest in speaking with her. There was a press conference and a cocktail hour at the French Embassy. She was received at the Ministry of Arts and Culture twice. She attended Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* at the National Opera and many rehearsals of local ensembles. She delivered two lectures and conducted a concert at Warsaw's music academy (now the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music). A ceremonial banquet that took up a third of her entire visit (and cost nearly 19,000 złoty) was held at Jabłonna Palace; at the table with her former students she was seated next to Mycielski and

Bacewicz, while cultural ministers and diplomats shared a second.[95] She was presented with the scores of works dedicated to her—many published by the Polish Music Publishers (PWM), and was honored as a teacher with a concert by the National Philharmonic of her students' compositions, including Tadeusz Szeligowski's *Epitafium on the Death of Szymanowski* (1937), Michał Spisak's *Concerto Giocoso* (1948), and Wojciech Kilar's *Riff 62* (1962).[96]

Boulanger's unprecedented agency within the Polish musical milieu drew in equal parts on her musical, diplomatic, and interpersonal acumen. Likewise, her focus on musical aesthetics—commentary to young pianists, hours spent listening, and vibrant public addresses—kept her disengaged from any critique of the political realities of everyday life under state socialism, from which the Union also worked to distance itself. What had begun decades earlier as a modest promise of entrée into the Paris musical scene for young students had grown in scope and ambition. By the height of the Cold War, not only had her "Polish family" grown by dozens, but this matriarch had become a metonym for a broader set of values, standing in for composers' desire for international prestige, their search for foreign cultural capital, and their hope that avant-garde music could be both cutting-edge and relevant. Her public persona, bolstered by a dense network of private friendships, became a symbol for selfless dedication and the aesthetic evenhandedness that the Polish musical milieu had come to see as its calling card within Europe and the world at large.

Yet, at the conclusion of her final visit in 1967, it was not her countless roles behind the scenes and inside the classroom that mattered most, but rather that she embodied the power of the sounds she helped to create. This visit highlighted her role as a conductor, and she concluded her trip by leading a work that had long been dear to her: Fauré's Requiem. The applause that followed the concert was without a doubt even more thunderous than that which greeted her in the same hall eleven years earlier at the Warsaw Autumn Festival. Certainly, it was an accumulated expression of gratitude for fifty years of generous inspiration, demanding musical scrutiny, and compassion for an unfolding traumatic history. But it was also an immediate response to Boulanger's effort to revitalize Fauré on the Polish stage. It is poignant that, though her importance to musicians from Poland resonates profoundly across her many contributions to music in the twentieth century, her final appearance in Warsaw was on the stage, guiding an orchestra to rest after a magnificent performance. She was seen, heard, and applauded making music.

NOTES

1. Lisa Jakelski, *Making New Music in Cold War Poland: The Warsaw Autumn Festival, 1956–1968* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 1.

2. *Biuletyn Informacyjny Związku Kompozytorów Polskich* 3 (1956): 6.

3. Nadia Boulanger, personal file (86A), Polish Composers' Union (ZKP), Polish Music Information Center, Warsaw.

4. Romuald Twardowski, who studied with Boulanger in 1963 on a stipend from the French government, waxed poetic about the school's beauty and the paradox of NATO's nearby presence, a clear sign of the Cold War circumstances that brought about his sojourn. Romuald Twardowski, "Nadia Boulanger," *Kultura*, 25 November 1979, 14.

5. Jakelski, *Making New Music in Cold War Poland*.

6. Jan Piskurewicz, *W służbie nauki i oświaty: Stanisław Michalski, 1865–1949* (Warsaw: PAN, Instytut Historii, Nauki, Oświaty i Techniki, 1993), 137.

7. Karol Szymanowski, "On Contemporary Musical Opinion in Poland," *Szymanowski on Music: Selected Writings of Karol Szymanowski*, ed. and trans. Alistair Wightman (London: Toccata, 1999), 73–94.

8. Barbara Milewski, "The Mazurka and National Imaginings" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2002), 111–65.

9. Teresa Chylińska, ed., *Karol Szymanowski: Korespondencja*, vol. 3 (Cracow: Musica Iagellonica, 1997), 318.

10. "Les Cours de musique moderne de Nadia Boulanger," *Le Monde musical* 37/6 (June 1926): 242–44.

11. *Stowarzyszenie Młodych Muzyków Polaków z Paryżu: Dotychczasowa działalność, cele i dążenia* (Warsaw, 1930), 4. By 1935, the Association had 111 members; its main objectives were providing information, financial support, and performances for Polish musicians arriving in Paris. See "Członkowie Stowarzyszenia Młodych Muzyków Polaków w Paryżu," Collection of the Association of Young Musician-Poles in Paris (SMMP), Archive of Polish Composers (AKP), University of Warsaw.

12. Ihor Junyk, *Foreign Modernism: Cosmopolitanism, Identity, and Style in Paris* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 16.

13. "Zarządy Stowarzyszenia Młodych Muzyków Polaków w Paryżu," SMMP, AKP.

14. "Notatki: 1930–31," Zygmunt Mycielski Collection, National Library of Poland (Biblioteka Narodowa) (henceforth PL-Wn), Warsaw, II14345.

15. A full evaluation of Bacewicz's life, including her relationship with Boulanger, will need to wait until her heirs allow unrestricted access to her papers at the National Library of Poland. Our understanding of Polish neoclassicism builds on Zofia Helman, "Neoclassicism in Polish Music of the Twentieth Century," in *The History of Music in Poland*, vol. 7, trans. John Comber (Warsaw: Sutkowski Edition, 2015), 487–683. This chapter is a complete translation of Helman's earlier *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku* (Cracow: PWM, 1985).

16. For example, Mycielski communicated with Henry Leland Clarke at the University of California, Los Angeles, into the 1950s. Zygmunt Mycielski, *Dziennik 1950–59* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1999), 187.

17. "Co słychać w świecie muzycznym?," *Rampka: Tygodnik teatralny, filmowy i muzyczny* 3 (1938): n.p.

18. Annegret Fauser, "Aaron Copland, Nadia Boulanger, and the Making of an 'American' Composer," *The Musical Quarterly* 89/4 (2006): 534–37.

19. Maria Modrakowska, "Wspominając studia u Nadii Boulanger," *Ruch Muzyczny* 11 (1958): 11.

20. Łabuński to Boulanger, 19 May 1934, Bibliotèque nationale de France (henceforth F-Pn), N.L.a. 78(336).

21. AKP, K-LXIV/109; AKP, K-LXV/56.

22. AKP, K-LXIV/195. She received the award in 1934.

23. A.M., "Association de Jeunes Musiciens Polonais," *Le Monde musical*, March 1935.

24. Zygmunt Mycielski, personal file (239A), ZKP.

25. PL-Wn, IV 1407.

26. Boulanger to Maria Modrakowska, n.d., PL-Wn, Rps 12373. The letter was likely written in 1935 or 1936, since Boulanger alludes to Mycielski composing a ballet at the time (likely *Narcyz*, 1936) and to a presumed male lover whom Mycielski had while living in Paris.

27. Zygmunt Mycielski, "Przeżyłem VII Warszawską Jesień," *Ruch Muzyczny* (1–15 November 1964): 5.

28. Aleksander Gella, "The Life and Death of the Old Polish Intelligentsia," *Slavic Review* 30/1 (1971): 1–27.

29. In the 1980s, Mycielski writes aware that his diaries' posthumous circulation—first to Barbara Stęszewska, to whom he left his papers—would make his private life, including his homosexuality, public. In Zygmunt Mycielski, *Niby dziennik ostatni, 1981–1987* (Warsaw: Iskry, 2012), 240.

30. Ibid., 299.

31. Krzysztof Tomasik, *Homobiografie: Pisarki i pisarze polscy XIX i XX wieku* (Warsaw: Krytyka Polityczna, 2008). For example, Kołodziejczyk was fired from a bureaucratic position at the Composers' Union in 1951, a decision immediately clouded by political rumor, as discussed in David G. Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line: Music and Politics in Early Cold War Poland and East Germany* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2013), 82n97.

32. Zygmunt Mycielski, "Przyjazd prof. Nadii Boulanger na Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej," *Przegląd Kulturalny* 38 (1956): 6.

33. Szeligowski to Boulanger, 18 January 1940, F-Pn, N.L.a. 109.

34. Wanda Woytowicz to Nadia Boulanger, 23 January [1940], F-Pn, N.L.a. 118; Antoni Szałowski, Michał Kondracki, and Michał Spisak to Boulanger, 31 January 1940, F-Pn, N.L.a. 294.

35. Szałowski to Boulanger, 14 August 1940, F-Pn, N.L.a. 109, 301.

36. Łabuński to Boulanger, 12 March 1942, F-Pn, N.L.a. 78.

37. Gary A. Galo, "Nadia Boulanger: The Polish Relief Benefit Concert—4 April 1941," *ARSC Journal* 38/2 (Fall 2007): 183–93. Paderewski died two months later, so the concert was not, as some have suggested, a memorial.

38. Galo bases his hypothesis on a harmonic analysis of the choral arrangement and the fact that Boulanger asked the members of the chorus to return their parts. Galo, "Nadia Boulanger," 189–91. If this is in fact true, this concert would represent a unique moment in Boulanger's reciprocal relationship with Poles, in which she responded *through music* to Polish culture. The chant, a supplication to the Virgin Mary, had been a touchstone for cultural nationalism during the nineteenth-century partitions.

39. Mycielski to Boulanger, 22 September 1939, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

40. Mycielski to Boulanger, 2 December 1939, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

41. Mycielski to Boulanger, 18 February 1940, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

42. Mycielski to Boulanger, 8 February 1940, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

43. Mycielski to Boulanger, 9 June 1941, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

44. His papers, held at the National Library of Poland, include Boulanger's letters beginning only in 1952, catalogued as IV14368.

45. Mycielski to Boulanger, 21 May 1946, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

46. Mycielski to Szałowski, 2 August 1947, PL-Wn, Rps 10300 III, 41. After being freed from forced labor in 1945, Mycielski first went to Paris for several months before returning to Poland.

47. Mycielski to Boulanger, 1 November 1950, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

48. For one account see "Życie muzyczne Paryża (rozmowa ze St. Skrowaczewskim)," *Ruch Muzyczny* 4 (1949): 12.

49. Helman, *Neoklasycyzm,* 50 and 76.

50. Zygmunt Mycielski, "O naszej pracy uwag kilka," *Ruch Muzyczny* 5 (1945): 5. Graz˙yna Bacewicz echoed Mycielski's sense of lost Parisian time. See "Rozmowa z Grażyną Bacewiczówną," *Ruch Muzyczny* 10 (1947): 12.

51. Mycielski to Boulanger, 9 April 1946, F-Pn, N.L.a. 89.

52. Zofia Lissa, "Aspekt socjologiczny w polskiej muzyce współczesnej," *Kwartalnik Muzyczny* 6/21–22 (1948): 104–43, at 135.

53. Jakelski, *Making New Music in Cold War Poland*, 38–39.

54. Zygmunt Mycielski, "Wspominaja˛c wykłady N. Boulanger," *Ruch Muzyczny* 17 (1947): 2.

55. Zygmunt Mycielski, "Przyjazd prof. Nadii Boulanger na Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej," *Przegla˛d Kulturalny* 38 (1956): 6.

56. Maria Modrakowska, "Wspominając studia u Nadii Boulanger," *Ruch Muzyczny* 11 (1958): 11.

57. Jerzy Waldorff, "Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej: Z dużej chmury…," *Stolica Warszawa*, 4 November 1956.

58. *Biuletyn Informacyjny Związku Kompozytorów Polskich* 3 (1956): 6.

59. Ludwik Ludorowski, "Pierwszy koncert 'Warszawskiej Jesieni,'" *Sztandar Ludu*, 17 October 1956. Lisa Jakelski analyzes the ritual pomp of the first concert, including Boulanger's portrait as figurehead, in *Making New Music in Cold War Poland*, 29.

60. These claims are based on the folder of press clippings assembled by ZKP (11/2) for its own internal reference.

61. Jerzy Młodziejowski, "Warszawska jesień," *Ekspres Poznański*, 15 October 1956.

62. M.B., "Uczniowie Nadii Boulanger," *Słowo Powszechne*, 17 October 1956. The critic, likely musicologist Michał Bristiger, mentions Antoni Szałowski's Overture (1936), Stanisław Skrowaczewski's *Night Music* (1952), and Bolesław Woytowicz's Second String Quartet (1947). He also notes that Tadeusz Szeligowski's tonally conservative and sumptuous string orchestra lament, *Epitaph on the Death of Szymanowski* (1937), was his favorite.

63. Stefan Wysocki, "O festiwalu z dygresjami," *Sztandar Młodych*, 20–21 October 1956.

64. Jeanice Brooks, "*Noble et grande servante de la musique*: Telling the Story of Nadia Boulanger's Conducting Career," *Journal of Musicology* 14/1 (1996): 92–116.

65. Summarized in Jerzy Waldorff, "Po 'Jesieni Warszawskiej': Zachwyty, zawody, niepokoje," *Świat*, 28 October 1956.

66. Witold Rudziński, "Jeszcze o 'Warszawskiej Jesieni'," *Życie Warszawy*, 2 November, 1956.

67. Twardowski, "Nadia Boulanger."

68. M. F., "I Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej," *Żołnierz Wolności*, 19 October 1956. It is worth noting that the first jazz festival in Poland also occurred in 1956 with state support, in the vacation town of Sopot.

69. The Polish avant-garde's propensity for expression and reinvention of traditional sonic means has often been noted. For example, Lisa Jakelski, "Górecki's Scontri and Avant-Garde Music in Cold War Poland," *Journal of Musicology* 26/2 (2009): 205–39.

70. Lisa Cooper Vest, "The Discursive Foundations of the Polish Musical Avant-Garde" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2014), 302–47.

71. "Sprawozdanie z pobytu delegatów Komitetu Roku Chopinowskiego w Paryżu od dnia 4–17-ego lutego 1949," Archive of Modern Records (AAN), Warsaw, 366/12 238.

72. Boulanger to Mycielski, 26 September 1956, PL-Wn, IV 14368, 21.

73. See, for example, articles by Jerzy Młodziejowski and Jerzy Waldorff in ZKP, 11/2.

74. PL-Wn, Rps 14173.

75. Zygmunt Mycielski, *Dziennik 1950–59*, 233 and 253. Mycielski's hearing of Darmstadt's darlings is also shrouded in wartime trauma as he journals, "This music—it sounds like the hydrogen bomb has already exploded." The Rameau recording was most likely Boulanger's 1953 release of opera excerpts on the Decca label.

76. Bożena Shallcross, *The Holocaust Object in Polish and Polish-Jewish Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 72–73.

77. Czesław Miłosz, *The Collected Poems 1931–1987*, trans. Czesław Miłosz (New York: Ecco Press, 1988).

78. Zygmunt Mycielski, *Niby-dziennik* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1998), 67. Here Mycielski recalls a conversation about another internationally renowned poet from Poland, Zbigniew Herbert.

79. Mycielski, *Niby-dziennik ostatni, 1981–1987*, 231.

80. Zofia Helman, "'. . . Tylko to jest ocalenie': Zygmunt Mycielski—pie¸c´ pies´ni do słów Czesława Miłosza," in *Melos, logos, etos: Materiały sympozjum pos´wie¸conego twórczos´ci Floriana Da¸browskiego, Stefana Kisielewskiego, Zygmunta Mycielskiego*, ed. Krystyna Tarnawska-Kaczorowska (Warsaw: ZKP, 1987), 141–58. Mycielski's *Ocalenie* was subsequently published by PWM in 1989.

81. Jakelski, *Making New Music in Cold War Poland*, 19–21, at 19.

82. Maria Modrakowska, "Prof. Nadia Boulanger zachwycona Krakowem," *Echo Krakowskie*, 16 October 1956.

83. Boulanger to Mycielski, 30 November 1956, PL-Wn, IV14368.

84. Nadia Boulanger, personal file (86/A), ZKP.

85. ZKP, 16/19.

86. Mycielski, *Dziennik 1950–59*, 283, 289.

87. Mycielski, *Niby-dziennik*, 123.

88. Boulanger to Mycielski, 16 March 1979, PL-Wn, IV14368.

89. Mycielski, *Niby-dziennik*, 157.

90. Danuta Gwizdalanka, "Głosy i dygresje do 'teczek' i *Dzienników* Zygmunta Mycielskiego (1)," *Ruch Muzyczny* 57/3 (2013): 13.

91. Institute of National Memory (IPN), Warsaw, BU 0246/998.

92. See the study of Michel Foucault's security service file by Anna Krakus and Jessie Labov (forthcoming) for a discussion of the organization's practices and discourse around homosexuality, class, and Western intellectuals.

93. Copland to Boulanger, 20 November 1965, Aaron Copland Collection, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/copland.corr0474/.

94. The records of the visit were kept in Boulanger's personal file (86/A) at ZKP.

95. It is difficult to offer a useful historical conversion for the złoty because of the currency's periods of volatile inflation under state socialism, but as a point of reference her twelve-night stay in an apartment in Warsaw's most luxurious hotel cost approximately 3,000 złoty.

96. Originally she had proposed conducting Mycielski's Second Symphony, among other works, on a concert of Polish music, but this did not come to pass.

"What Awaits Them Now?" A Letter to Paris

ZYGMUNT MYCIELSKI
TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY J. MACKENZIE PIERCE

This letter was written by Polish composer and Boulanger student Zygmunt Mycielski as he was freed from a German labor camp in May 1945. At the outset of the Second World War in 1939, Mycielski had joined the defense of Poland against German and Soviet invasion but fled to Hungary when Poland's defeat became inevitable. He then journeyed to France and joined the Polish Army there, but was captured on June 17, 1940, while defending the Maginot Line during the Battle of France. He spent the next five years performing forced labor as a prisoner of war. Throughout his captivity he wrote to Boulanger, upholding a correspondence that would continue until her death. He received in return several letters from Boulanger and her former pupil and close friend Marcelle de Manziarly (1899–1989), a pianist and composer with whom Mycielski had a lifelong correspondence (and who accompanied Boulanger to the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1956). In addition to Boulanger and Manziarly, the letter below is addressed to Annette Dieudonné (1896–1991), another former pupil who worked closely with Boulanger on both pedagogical and performance projects. The letter is held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, N.L.a. 89 (241–44).

Sonderlager
Kr. Gef. Arb. Kdo. 98 [*Kriegsgefangenen-Arbeitskommandos*]
Quickborn-Himmelmoor II
The day of the cessation of hostilities —4th of May 1945

Dear friends—Yesterday the barbed wire was broken down; it's the end of bars, padlock, cells, doors, and keys. Yesterday, we left—I can write these words—finally, finally. Your three letters from America and three from Marcelle were the big events of this life here—nothing else arrived.

But you know that your presence, your memory, never left me; it was my strength, each day, every day, most of all here, in captivity—for nearly 2,000 days.

I write to you all, *together*. Time is pressing. Impossible otherwise—but you all know how I bring you together in my heart, as if I never left you. Annette who stayed there [in Paris], who suffered cruelly, remaining alone after the loss of her father.[1] I never knew how to express [this] well, out of fear of weakness, out of a lack of strength for all that is sensitive and to which we were no longer entitled, out of a lack of courage. There are no more tears or laughter, one must be a piece of wood; Annette, forgive me, but you know, don't you; friendship, all this, no, I close my eyes again; it is no longer possible, but is still the same thing, it's profound, much more profound, centered, buried, let us not touch it, there is no more *sentimentality*, it's too profound.—And I remember, from far away, your remark: "I don't like it when France is criticized"—it was then that I understood what you are, from the tone of this remark—and then I saw you, but I never said anything. Then, here, I measured all whom I had the opportunity to approach; according to their true worth, according to the worth of that which remains in us for all the long days; each of you left me such a plain, clear, strong, evident yardstick, that I could carry this friendship inside me without growing weak and, in the decisive moments, think about you and know how to act: Mademoiselle Boulanger was so much the benchmark for gesture, for action: saying (of whom???), "He would never let a child be beaten in front of him."—When I saw a (Polish) twelve-year-old beaten, kicked—(she was there)—I took this phrase to my mother—in action—and still today, when the tanks rolled out—when I could touch them, when it was over, you understand, over—and the old ladies sitting in the ditches, and the gray columns, wobbly, bags, cars full of children—after what I had seen, with us [in Poland], with you [in France] (you, us, them???)—this is why I talked with them, offering the little that I had—since it is their turn for the kicks of the cowardly, of the weak, of those without courage.[2] Nadia, why is man the way he is? To ask for nothing, but one cannot sleep. It is them, now. Justice, but why the cowardice? It is as difficult to be oppressed as it is to oppress (since it's always about oppression). That which is, is always the same thing. Should one keep quiet? Keeping quiet is also cowardice, the worst kind, perhaps? So, always dying, without bearing fruit?

In front of these broken barbed wires, this change in role from one hour to the next, where man the master became from one minute to the next the slave, and the slave has his toys again: revolvers, rifles, rancorous

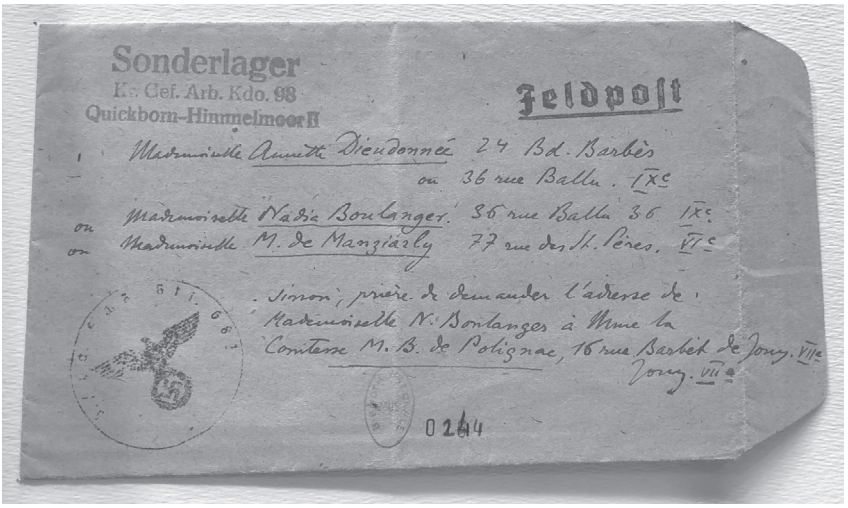


Figure 1. Envelope containing Mycielski's letter sent by field post from Labor Subcamp Quickborn-Himmelmoor to three possible Paris addresses.

looks, the look of a whipped dog who can die without fear. Let's spit out the word, kill without fear—even without danger! I think about you, about Marcelle's laughter, about your world, about your lives, about all that you give to others in terms of strength, courage, and true nobility. If humans could only resemble you! But it is not so: they are cruel, stupid, cowardly, mediocre, and yet, no, they are not evil. They are poor. We were not able to keep them busy, to fill their hours of life with anything other than a war. Because egoism is at the root of our projects, our "systems," of our organizations. Because we are cowards, who fear death, poverty, and suffering. One must always search for sin in the "grand people," *always*.

I once heard Mme Rot[hs]child (I name her, yes) talk of poverty. I had enough of that. Enough. It is worse, it was worse than truncheons, kicks, bayonets, bullets in the neck. (But the system that our century invented of mass deportations is the worst of all.) Take me at my word, it is what she said.[3]

If I write to you, it is because I must go over there [to Poland], to my mother, my brothers, children, all my brothers. You know that I am not a chauvinist. But it was evident that in [19]40 it was necessary to be with you, and now—over there, after what they have gone through. What awaits them now, what is happening in Central Europe?

But I would like to be able to visit you for several months. Yes. Imagine that I would like to write several symphonic works, see Marcelle often during

this work, then hear my compositions quickly. Don't jump from indignation. This is what I want to do. But first it is necessary to be over there, in Poland.

If they deport me to Siberia or elsewhere as a "lustful viper of capitalism," know that nothing physical affects me. Besides, my heart is broken to the core and I would not hold up for even a few months of forced labor. My lovely health—it is done, and it's good like this. It facilitates a wisdom, belated, but a certain wisdom. (Without the smile of Anatole France.) One must love life, but not fear death—neither one's own nor that of others.[4]

To talk with you, to speak to you about what is going on in Poland is too grim to attempt. The last letters I received from my mother were too simple to try to explain to you: the facts, too poor, poverty? All of civilization is a function of wealth and poverty; but there is also something else. Marcelle knows this very well, you know it very well; all of you; the simplicity of all this. Like your mother. She was also like [my] Mother; because of what my mother had seen, she has become like the women of the people, very varied—in France, what one sees with the Breton women, who, as shown in *images d'Epinal,* are a symbol of virtues in face of the Ocean where the husband, man, son expose themselves and perish, but the women remain "themselves."[5] The concentration camps of Oświęcim [Auschwitz], Dachau, Warsaw and all our territory took away one by one, and martyred in a manner that is too cruel to express in words, our dear ones, our dearest ones; months and years passed without any news. And my mother put all this in a card, without being able to name it, to say it—but one understands all: "He was able to take a little linen away with him"—and *voilà*—that is all my mother was able to write to me, but she said it, and she is there and I will take a bicycle and go over there, trying not to die, in order to be once more, a little bit, near to her, who has none of us four close to her.

Let us never again ask why such a world surrounds us, never again ask for the reasons, for the cruelties, all that, so that they may forget it, that they may stop, no longer accumulate, no longer do these shameful things.

Nadia, Marcelle, Annette, I can write to you because I remained honest. Often a real idiot, but I never asked for anything, I never signed anything, never calculated anything for the cowardly "pros." It's negative, but there is always that, otherwise I would not have the courage to write this first letter after what is called liberty. Only my failed escapes complicated my captivity.—It was too long. If for the few millions on only one side of the globe for whom all this has happened, and this debris, this burning sky, this Ocean of misery, if our poor Europe can no longer live otherwise than on the towline of a bloody injustice, well, always

remember that, over there, somewhere, there will be strength until the end. Mother knows it—she wrote me, often speaking of you.

Otherwise, perhaps we will see each other again. And then I know what I will find in you, with you, my dears, my very dear friends whom my heart unites—and you know, understand, how and why.

Z. Mycielski
From the location where disciplinary Kommando of Himmelmoor (Holstein) was.

[Addressed to:]

Mademoiselle Annette Dieudonné 24 Bd. Barbès or 36 rue Ballu IXe
Or Mademoiselle Nadia Boulanger 36 rue Ballu IXe
Or Mademoiselle M. de Manziarly 77 rue des St Pères VIe

If not, please ask for the address of Mademoiselle N. Boulanger from Mme la Comtesse M.B. de Polignac, 16 rue Barbet de Jouy VIIe

NOTES

1. Dieudonné remained in Paris during the war and moved into Boulanger's flat during the Occupation to prevent it from being requisitioned.

2. It is unclear what, if any, specific scene of early postwar hardship and displacement Mycielski is describing. In any case, his generosity and sympathy toward the German civilians, whom he believes will now suffer from the Allies, is striking.

3. Although Mycielski is criticizing Rothschild, it is unclear if he thinks it is her hypocrisy or the experience of poverty that is worse than war.

4. Mycielski alludes to Anatole France's statement, one often quoted by Boulanger: "The artist should love life and show us that it is beautiful. Without him, we would have doubts" ("L'artiste doit aimer la vie et nous montrer qu'elle est belle. Sans lui, nous en douterions"). *Le Jardin d'Epicure* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1895), 33. Thanks to Jeanice Brooks for this source.

5 . *Images d'Epinal* are brightly colored, inexpensive prints, especially popular in rural France, that tend to project a traditional, simplistic view of the world in depictions of rural life, fables, and famous battles, among other topics.

A Letter from Professor Nadia Boulanger

Przegląd Kulturalny vol. 10 (1956), issue no. 46

TRANSLATED BY J. MACKENZIE PIERCE

Written following Boulanger's visit to the first Warsaw Autumn Festival of Contemporary Music in 1956, this letter was likely intended for publication. The French-language manuscript is held in Mycielski's papers (National Library of Poland, IV14368). The Polish translation that appeared in Przegląd Kulturalny (The Cultural Review) *is presumably by Mycielski, though he is uncredited. The paragraph on audiences was excerpted, in the original French, for a pamphlet advertising the second Warsaw Autumn, held in 1958.*

A letter from Prof. Nadia Boulanger, written while she was returning to France, has arrived in Mycielski's hands, along with authorization to publish it in our periodical.

As I leave Poland, I wish to send my regards, my thanks, and my admiration to all of you. Your undertaking was tremendous, and it would have been impossible had you not all taken part in it and used all the means available in service of this enormous result.

You offered all of your time, all of your energy, you completely forgot about yourselves in order to bring this idea to realization. And you were rewarded with complete success.

Petty minds will debate about the selection of this or that work, about this or that artistic orientation, and also about the program's omissions and inclusions. From the 10th to the 21st of October, we could hear 78 works from 53 composers hailing from twelve countries—works performed by nine symphonic orchestras from six European countries. There were works performed by two Polish choirs and two quartets—one Hungarian, one French. Fifteen soloists and sixteen conductors performed. Among these performers, some are already well known across Europe, but the true revelation was the younger cadre of conductors. They are already outstanding, and we were filled with admiration for the seriousness and musical authority with which they worked with ensembles.

I was completely impressed by your audiences. The impartiality with which they applauded works and performers. They seem to measure a performance's success only through the emotions it conveys or the lack thereof. The audiences amazed me thoroughly, always showing concentration and attention without regard for the accompanying social environs. In my view, the audience was as impressive as the festival itself: an amazingly attentive, enthusiastic, and impartial public filled the halls throughout the festival, a public that could not be distracted on those evenings. They demonstrate that your efforts are not just for show, nor are they cordoned off from the vital artistic needs running deep in your society.

Over eleven days we listened to works from abroad that represented the most disparate, even opposite tendencies. Next to works of Khachaturian, Berger, or Dutilleux, who belong to the generation of 1903, 1905, and 1916, we heard works by Alban Berg, Myaskovsky, Bela Bartók, and Stravinsky, all of whom were born between 1881 and 1885. Hearing Polish works alongside these allowed us to better evaluate the great fecundity, vitality, and artistic weight of the Polish School. Previously, such an evaluation had only been possible through score reading. In the course of those eleven days, we were able to evaluate the excellent discipline and exceptional quality of orchestral sound of several unfamiliar ensembles, including both the Moscow and Bucharest orchestras, as well as—from Poland—the Warsaw orchestra and the two orchestras of the Polish Radio, from Katowice and Cracow. And finally, your marvelous choirs, so well rehearsed, with such a subtle and balanced sound. The quality and value of soloists, the diligence of their work, their talent and technical level—all of it was, in most cases, a great revelation for us, since these ensembles are not well known throughout the world.

As guests we received ceaseless care from the festival's organizers. They attended to the smallest details of our stay and itinerary. Thanks to this, our stay was not only a pleasure but will remain in our memory as an unforgettable experience.

And, finally, Warsaw. I finally saw—next to her horrific destruction and ruins, which shake with their ghastliness—the reborn and rebuilt New and Old Towns. They are happy and colorful; they speak to your past and of a present being built through great effort, so that you may have a beautiful future. I saw people deep in prayer and beautiful children who were happily playing, like birds on the street. I saw your excellent concert hall, marvelous, and—moreover—not overdone. By removing some of its old decorations, you created a new image for the hall that loyally draws on the Warsaw Philharmonic's famous old hall.

I admired your artistic taste while visiting the Chopin Society in the old Ostrogski Palace on Tamka Street. It shows the best, simply refined

taste, in which nothing has been overlooked: the walls, the floor, the furniture, the upholstery—everything there emanates effort and love. This palace has been turned into a true temple of art.

I visited the music schools and conservatory where you prepare children and youth in a serious manner for serious work, which should then become a source of joy. I could see that you remember that both training and artistic work must be connected to joy.

Thanks to my friends, I could also perceive that which has vanished from Poland as well as that which was systematically annihilated through the terrible historical events that struck your land. But I observe that your nation is full of life, that it finds inspiration in its past, that your grace depends on your values. Here, heroism has become an everyday matter.

All of these impressions are thanks to your festival, which I consider an amazing undertaking. It also proved that your energy, if shaped by the intrinsic conviction of your cause's righteousness, can surmount all difficulties.

Thanks to this meeting, I conversed again with my friends. Neither time, nor distance, nor historical events—which separated us for so long—were able to break those bonds that only death can sever. In my friends' music I heard expression that was deep, serious, fundamental, original, and unique.

I would like to be able to articulate my admiration, respect, and attachment to my friends' work through action. I wish to work so that these compositions that show their art's specificity are better known. I am thinking specifically of those works that contain imagination, sonic sensitivity, vitality and rhythmic energy, and, ultimately, an originality of melodic line and harmonic inventiveness. This inventiveness is sometimes hidden by an overly rich sonic apparatus, and a saturation of orchestral techniques. But it is also possible that such a sonic sumptuousness is the price that must be paid in exchange for the inexhaustible store of creative energy that infused the Polish works performed at the festival.

As I leave you, my mind returns to all of you. My ears and my heart ring with something more than the sounds of individual, dazzling compositions. My mind returns to those works full of the specificity of your poetry. It returns to those works that were especially moving, in which the full phenomenal vision of the soul of your greatest artists pulses—artists who have achieved universal significance while remaining distinctly Polish. I still have much to say about this. But today I wish only to make note of these impressions. They are for me full of deep significance. I feel a great responsibility as I become aware of what I experienced with you. I wish that my friends will learn of my feelings and accept my most heartfelt thanks for this stay.