



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biography	2
Career Highlights	5
Press Quotes	6
Press Reviews	9
Press Reviews (non-English)	16
Sample Recital Programs	21
Concerto Repertoire	23

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DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

B I O G R A P H Y

Daniel Wnukowski (vnoo-koff-skee) is a Polish-Canadian pianist whose insightful interpretations of the classics are complemented by projects that shed light on overlooked corners of the repertoire, particularly those that connect with his Polish and Jewish cultural heritage.

Mr. Wnukowski has performed throughout the Americas, Europe, and Asia in many prestigious concert halls, including at the National Philharmonic in Warsaw, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Salle Pleyel in Paris, Wigmore Hall and the Barbican in London, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and the Geidai University of the Arts in Tokyo. He has performed with orchestras including the Polish Radio Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia, Windsor Symphony, Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana, Poznań Philharmonic, and Arthur Rubinstein Philharmonic, and with conductors such as Jerzy Maksymiuk, Alain Trudel, David Amos, Tomasz Bugaj, Romolo Gessi and John Morris Russell. He is also an active chamber musician and duo pianist. His festival engagements include performances at the Festival Dei Due Mondi in Spoleto, Italy; the Pre-LSO Concert Series in London, UK; the Coppet Festival in Geneva, Switzerland; and the Euromusica Masterconcert Series and Uto Ughi Festival in Rome, Italy.

Mr. Wnukowski has an affinity for the music of Frédéric Chopin and other important Polish composers, and has performed at Chopin societies across the world in cities such as Paris, Rome, Vienna, Basel, Toronto, Tokyo, Detroit, Warsaw, Singapore, Duszyni Zdrój, and Buenos Aires, as well as with important Chopin festivals around the world including the International Music Festival "Chopin and His Europe" in Warsaw, and the International Piano Festival Chopiniana in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 2010, in commemoration of the Chopin bicentennial, Mr. Wnukowski performed the composer's works worldwide, including in recital with soprano Aleksandra Kurzak in Poznań, Poland; in recital at the "Chopin in Autumn Colors" Festival in Antonin, Poland; at the unveiling of a new Chopin monument in Tokyo, Japan; and at the "Chopin by the Lake" monument at Singapore's Botanic Gardens, among other celebratory engagements.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

The music of interwar Jewish composers also occupies a special place in Mr. Wnukowski's repertoire, especially that of the generation of composers that came of age around the time of WWI and was decimated by the rise of Nazism. Mr. Wnukowski is the recipient of numerous scholarships and grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and other foundations for researching and performing the works of exiled and perished Jewish composers such as Szymon Laks, Władysław Szpilman, Viktor Ullmann, and Józef Koffler, whose recently published piano concerto was recorded by Mr. Wnukowski with the Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra conducted by Christoph Slowinski for release on the EDA label in 2017. Additionally, Mr. Wnukowski's performance at the Austrian Parliament in remembrance of Holocaust victims targeted by Nazi Germany, was broadcast live on Austrian television for ORF-2.

This season he continues a focus on the music of Karol Rathaus, a Weimer-era composer whose music came to Mr. Wnukowski's attention in 2016 through his work with Exil.Arte, a Vienna-based organization whose mission is to restore "degenerate" music. In February 2019, Mr. Wnukowski performs the composer's Piano Concerto with The Orchestra Now conducted by Leon Botstein, as part of a Rathaus Festival presented by the Copland School of Music at Queens College, where Rathaus was on faculty; makes his Weill Hall recital debut in a program that includes the composer's Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 20; and releases an all-Rathaus recording of solo piano music on the Toccata label. Mr. Wnukowski will also be featured in a documentary on Rathaus produced by Michael Haas.

Mr. Wnukowski's recordings include exiled composer Walter Arlens' complete piano works (which Mr. Wnukowski edited for the Vienna-based publisher Doblinger) and chamber music with violinist Daniel Hope, soprano Rebecca Nelsen, and baritone Christian Immler for the Austrian label Gramola; works by Chopin and Szymanowski; and a DVD release of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue performed live on Polish television with the Warsaw National Philharmonic conducted by Jerzy Maksymiuk. His performances have been aired on radio and television stations throughout the world including CBC Radio, The New Classical FM 96.3, Oe1 ORF Austria, Polish Radio 2, Dublin City FM, Tuttoggi TV, Rai Uno, WGBH Boston, RSI Radio Svizzera and Last FM.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

Mr. Wnukowski is a laureate of numerous international piano competitions. In 2000, he was singled out for his readings of Chopin's music at the XIV Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw, and took first place at the National Chopin Piano Competition in Poland that same year, resulting in a government-awarded grant and many concerts throughout Europe.

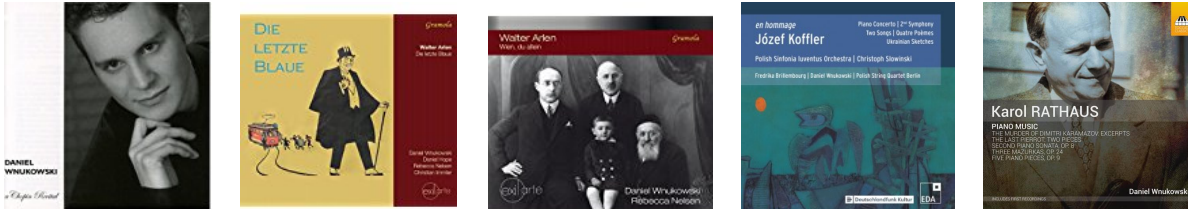
Born in Ottawa, Canada, Daniel Wnukowski became interested in the piano at the age of 3, when he saw a grand piano with a clear glass cabinet and became fascinated with intricate details of a piano's mechanism. He began piano lessons shortly thereafter and later studied at the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw with Piotr Paleczny, at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore with Leon Fleisher and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London with Ronan O'Hora and Graham Johnson. In 2006, he was awarded a scholarship to study at the International Piano Academy Lake Como.

Dedicated to giving back to the country that nurtured him as an artist, Mr. Wnukowski was awarded a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to perform outreach concerts in remote, Indigenous communities in Canada with five other pianists as part of [Piano Six – Next Generation](#). He is also a member of the Vienna-based [Varietas Ensemble](#), which performs concerts for handicapped children.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANT RECORDINGS



01. A Chopin Recital | Work by Fr. Chopin | CD IR 2003
02. Polish Radio Orchestra | Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2, op. 83 | LIVE DVD Archive 2007
03. Die Letzte Blaue | Works by W. Arlen | CD Gramola 2012
04. Wien, du Allein | Works by W. Arlen | CD Gramola 2013
05. en hommage: Józef Koffler | Piano Concerto (1932) | LIVE EDA Records 2017
06. Warsaw Philharmonic 2017 Gala | Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue | LIVE DVD Mteatr 2017
07. Karol Rathaus solo piano works | Toccata Classics 2019

RECENT EVENTS

- 2018/11/30 CLASSICAL FM 96.3 | LIVE RADIO BROADCAST [Canada]
- 2018/11/13 WESTWOOD JEWISH COMMUNITY | LECTURE RECITAL [U.S.]
- 2017/11/20 UCSD SAN DIEGO | LECTURE RECITAL [U.S.]
- 2017/01/01 WARSAW PHILHARMONIC HALL | INAUGURAL CONCERT [Poland]
- 2017/01/15 SCHOENBERG CENTER | LECTURE RECITAL [Austria]
- 2016/05/07 FESTIVAL OF MUSIC ENCOUNTERS | PREMIERE RECORDING [Poland]
- 2016/04/01 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO | LECTURE RECITAL [Canada]
- 2016/03/24 TSHINGUA UNIVERSITY | BEIJING DEBUT [China]

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DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

PRESS QUOTES

The dashing pianist, Daniel Wnukowski, launches upon a jaunty atonal string of notes, only to swerve into virtuosic pomposities recalling an earlier age [...] and the performances do [the composer] proud.

Geoff Brown, The Sunday Times, 2018

A fierce inner conviction and sense of discovery [...] mandatory listening for anyone with a serious interest in early 20th-century music.

Jim Svejda, Fanfare Magazine, 2018

After an energetic beginning, an electrifying music unfolds, enabled by the precise, rhythmic finesse of pianist Daniel Wnukowski. Also in the finale, the interpretation is thoroughly convincing through its sheer elegance and underlying irony. (*Translation from German*)

Stefan Drees, das Orchester 03/2018, Page 69

I've been a fan of Wnukowski's since I heard him perform at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. I was particularly impressed by his commitment to reviving works of exiled Jewish composers of the 20th-century including Wladyslaw Szpilman, Alfred Schnittke, Josef Koffler and others.

Robin Rogers, Ludwig Van Toronto, 2018

At his Toronto concert, Wnukowski performed mazurkas by the Jewish composers Alexandre Tansman, Wladyslaw Szpilman, Karol Rathaus and Roman Ryterband for an ecstatic audience.

Ruth Schweitzer, Canadian Jewish News, 2018

The performances are without any exceptions exquisite. [...] As the first CD [of the EDA label] dedicated to Koffler's music, this release is worth acquiring. (*Translation from Norwegian*)



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

Martin Anderson, Klassisk Musikk Norway, 2018

Wnukowski's enlightening introductory remarks enhanced our awareness of the devilish intervals of augmented fourths. The two artists displayed their commanding techniques and precise ensemble.

Eileen Wingard, San Diego Jewish World, 2018

With virtuoso brilliance, Daniel Wnukowski captivates as a soloist in the piano concerto. This particularly comes through in the third movement, which sounds joyfully light but maintains a spirit of underlying solemnity.

Oliver Fraenzke, The New Listener, 2017

Wnukowski is a first class pianist. [...]His lyrical passages sang, and his digital dexterity impressed in both works.

Eileen Wingard, San Diego Jewish World, 2017

Here are intimate piano solos, nostalgic songs and bittersweet violin music. Daniel Wnukowski is the devoted pianist, well supported by violinist Daniel Hope, and singers Rebecca Nelsen and Christian Immler.

Richard Fairbairn, Financial Times (Life & Arts), 2016

Violinist Daniel Hope and pianist Daniel Wnukowski join rapturously together in a glowingly recorded collection guaranteed to keep your index finger returning to the repeat button.

International Record Review, 2015

The varied program of solo pieces for piano, songs and chamber music is performed with commitment and sensitive inspiration.

Remy Franck, Pizzicato, November 2014



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

The pianist Daniel Wnukowski and the violinist Daniel Hope take on Arlen's works with great commitment and engagement.

Peter Sommeregger, Opera Lounge, December 2014

Wnukowski performed elegantly and with impeccable virtuosity, providing us with an authentic interpretation lavishly praised by its narrator. *(Translation from Italian)*

Francesco Calvani, Spoleto News (Italy), 2010

He came into his own in the enormously variegated 24 Preludes Op. 28 by Chopin, where he displayed not only his affinity with the style but also the big guns to deal with some of the atrociously difficult ones as if they were child's play; this was great playing and show Wnukowski to be a distinguished Chopinian.

Pablo Gardin, Buenos Aires Herald, 2010

It was gratifying to hear how Wnukowski kept the same tempo throughout the many variations, or the lightness and subtlety with which he performed the lengthy passages in the high registers of the keyboard, forming a successful and convincing interpretation. *(Translation from Spanish)*

Carlos Singer, Mundo Clasico (Classical World), 2010



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

P R E S S R E V I E W S

Koffler Piano Concerto
 Issue 42:1 (Sept/Oct 2018)
 Fanfare Magazine
 By Jim Svejda

If the recent CPO album (777 979-2) devoted to the piano and chamber music of Józef Koffler—the Polish composer murdered by the Germans (along with his wife and young son) in 1944—was a thought-provoking experience, then this new EDA collection devoted primarily to his orchestral music is close to a revelation. All the works here are presented in their world premiere recordings, a puzzling—if not downright shocking—state of affairs, given the quality and obvious importance of the music.

The first big jolt comes in the form of the Piano Concerto from 1932, which like the Piano Concerto that his hero Arnold Schoenberg wrote a decade later is about as far removed from the typical late-Romantic virtuoso display piece as it is possible to be. Although it represents Koffler's highly personalized adaptation of Schoenberg's system, like the Schoenberg Concerto itself it is also an unmistakably Neoclassical work, which opens with a lively Toccata whose propulsive rhythmic energy is matched by its bubbling wit. (Its Chopinesque opening flourish recalls something Clara Steuermann—widow of Eduard Steuermann, the Schoenberg Concerto's greatest champion—said of that work's opening phrase: "Play it like a Mendelssohn Song without Words.") The limpid second movement, Nocturne, has the same haunted, bittersweet quality of so much music produced in the 1930s—the parallel to be drawn here is not to Schoenberg but to Alban Berg—while the bouncy Krakowiak which concludes the work keeps flirting with full-blown tonality, though its sinister military music again places it firmly in that troubled decade.

Written 18 years apart, the Two Songs, op. 1, and the Quatre poèmes, op. 22, reveal how far Koffler had come in those two decades: from a fin de siècle decadent reminiscent of Zemlinsky and Schreker to a full-blown exponent of the Schoenberg school whose quietly disturbing settings of Verlaine, Arnaud, and Alfred de Musset rival the best work of the Schoenberg pupils Hanns Eisler and Egon Wellesz.

Surprisingly—or perhaps not so surprisingly; as Schoenberg himself said, "There is still plenty of good music to be written in the key of C major"—the latest work here, the String Quartet No. 2 from 1941, is also the most thoroughly traditional, with an opening movement full of the unmistakable accents of the stetl. Though barely 8 minutes long, it's a colorful, evocative score and one in which the composer—then living in Ukraine and



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

forced to renounce the 12-tone system in favor of the prevailing Socialist Realism—clearly celebrates his Jewish heritage.

The major discovery here is the Symphony No. 2 from 1933, in which Koffler manages to combine his own very original adaptation of Schoenberg's system with a beautifully proportioned Neoclassical structure, making it one of the most satisfying products of the early 12-tone era. Not only is it a superbly organized structure that seems to waste not a single note or gesture (or a moment of the listener's time), but it also captures much of the tension and gnawing uncertainty of the period. It's also witty, buoyant, and brilliantly scored, a kind of 12-tone analogue to Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony.

All the performances—especially those of the orchestral works—communicate a fierce inner conviction and sense of discovery and are not only mandatory listening for anyone with a serious interest in early 20th-century music, but should also provide a catalyst for further exploration of this tragic, undeniably important figure.

Classical Review: Józef Koffler: En hommage
 March 2018
 The Sunday Times
 By Geoff Brown

As a collector of classical music recordings, which way do you swing? Is it the interpreters that really matter, or do you crave wide-ranging repertoire? Would you rather have 50 recordings of Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata, or 50 voyages of discovery into the unknown? Me, I lean more to the latter, and this week's voyage leads us to Józef Koffler, a significant Polish-Jewish composer of the 1920s and 1930s, whose biographical trail runs cold after the family's arrest by the Gestapo in 1944. One can guess what happened next. None of the pieces on this important tribute album has been recorded before, and each bears witness to an imaginative artist caught up in turbulent times and changing political regimes. Consider the extraordinary Piano Concerto of 1932. The dashing pianist, Daniel Wnukowski, launches upon a jaunty atonal string of notes, only to swerve into virtuosic pomposities recalling an earlier age. Mystical impressionism meets Viennese modernism in the slow movement's night music, while the last bears the stamp of a syncopated Polish dance, the *krakowiak*. Ukrainian Sketches, a wartime string quartet, offers folksy simplicity, but with an enigmatic twist. Symphony No 2 rattles along, tartly neoclassical. In all of these Koffler is the explosive master of the stylistic mix and match.

And the performances do him proud. Wnukowski aside, there's the lustrous voice of American mezzo-soprano Fredrika Brillembourg, features in two song cycles, while the



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

conductor Christoph Slowinski and the Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra clearly relish Koffler's fast-changing tone colours and quick-footed wit. The 51st recording of Beethoven's "Moonlight" can wait for another day.

PIANIST BRINGS 20TH-CENTURY JEWISH MUSIC TO THE WORLD

December 2018

Canadian Jewish News

By Ruth Schweitzer

Canadian concert pianist Daniel Wnukowski has recorded music composed by Walter Arlen, a 97-year-old Holocaust survivor from Vienna who's been living in Los Angeles for nearly 70 years.

Wnukowski performed some of Arlen's compositions at a 2017 concert at the Austrian Parliament, in remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust. "It was an incredibly moving experience," he said.

Wnukowski was in Toronto recently, playing a program of mazurkas written by Frédéric Chopin and several Jewish composers, at a concert at ZoomerPlex that was broadcast on a local radio station.

Wnukowski began exploring music written by 20th-century Jewish composers to connect with his roots, he said. His grandfather, Stanley, who died in 2012 at 92, was a Holocaust survivor from Lublin, Poland.

He met Arlen, whose last name used to be Aptowitzer, in Vienna in 2013. Arlen was looking for a pianist and Wnukowski had been recommended. "We immediately hit it off. As soon as we went to a piano, I performed some of his works and did my best to capture the wistful nostalgia," Wnukowski said.

Arlen is a composer of lieder, a style of German compositions that set poetry to music. "The song really captures the ability of the composer to express some of his deepest pain, sorrow, feelings of isolation, the incredibly anti-Semitic society that was growing even before Hitler came into power in 1933," Wnukowski said.

He has recorded and edited Arlen's complete piano works for the Austrian record label Gramola, which released two double CDs, *Die Letzte Blaue* and *Wien, Du Allein*.

At his Toronto concert, Wnukowski performed mazurkas by the Jewish composers Alexandre Tansman, Wladyslaw Szpilman, Karol Rathaus and Roman Ryterband for an ecstatic audience. Wnukowski said Chopin wrote 59 mazurkas, while Tansman comes in a close second with 36. Along with Wnukowski's activities as a performer – he plays at



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

prestigious concert halls around the world – he heads an organization that will be bringing live classical music to remote communities in Canada.

Born in Windsor, Ont., Wnukowski, 37, left Canada at the age of 15 to study internationally. Now he makes his home in Vienna. “Canada was always very supportive of my activities, whether in the form of private donors or the Canada Council for the Arts. I have received numerous grants from them over the years,” he said.

There just comes a point in a person’s life where one feels the need to give back to the community that brought them up.”

Wnukowski has resurrected Piano Six, which took established pianists to outlying areas in Canada from 1994 to 2010. Picking up the torch again, Piano Six – Next Generation will be sending pianists to remote communities like Slave Lake, Alta., Fort St. John, B.C. and the Attawapiskat First Nation in northern Ontario, starting in April.

“I feel when I come back to Canada that there are so many disadvantaged communities that have popped up over the years, in that they possibly had live music at one point and it’s no longer around,” Wnukowski said.

The six of us individually can go out all over the country and make a difference, make a long-term impact, so that these places can once again experience that spark, that live encounter with people who have dedicated their life and passion to making music.”

He said he’s heard that people from Attawapiskat are learning piano on YouTube. “What better way to ignite their passion and just give them a brotherly hug and inspire them to keep going,” he said.

A typical visit by a Piano Six musician lasts two to three days and could include a masterclass for music students, a workshop for piano teachers and a school or community concert. The new Piano Six will be using technology – video streaming of performances and social media – to maintain connections with members of the communities that are visited.

MAJOR CHORDS | We Don't Mean To Alarm You But The Piano Six Super Group Is Back
March 2018

Ludwig Van Toronto

By Robin Roger

Between 1994 and 2004 a collective of six of Canada’s finest pianists known as Piano Six performed in small communities throughout this country’s most remote regions, reaching over 100,000 people. This highly worthwhile outreach program, updated for a new



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

generation of music lovers is poised to roll out a second time with a new group of pianists and an updated name: Piano Six: The Next Generation.

Masterminded and coordinated by Vienna-based, Canadian pianist Daniel Wnukowski (pronounced vnoo-koff-skee), The Next Generation is a positive example of what goes around comes around. At age 18, in 1999, Wnukowski was able to participate in Janina Fialkowska's free master class when she performed and taught in Windsor, Ontario as part of the first Piano Six program."

In just one lesson, I received important artistic insights handed down directly from Arthur Rubinstein – ideas that have never left me to this day" says Wnukowski of the experience for which he is still grateful. Like him, the other five pianists – Marika Bournaki, David Jalbert, Angela Park, Ian Parker, and Anastasia Rizikov, are all eager to "give back to the country that nurtured them as artists," according to Wnukowski.

It's hard to think of another group of six equally astounding pianists, except possibly the original Piano Six: Janina Fialkowska, Angela Cheng, Marc-Andre Hamelin, Angela Hewitt, Andre Laplante and Jon Kimura Parker.

Like the first generation, Piano Six will perform in school gymnasiums, churches, restaurants, town halls, community centres and other venues in municipalities such as Red Lake, Ontario (population 5000) and Behchoko, Nunavut, on the top tip of Great Slave Lake. At each location, they will also offer other outreach activities including master classes. A new direction will be including as many Canadian compositions as possible, especially by living and emerging composers. This includes composers who celebrate Indigenous folk music by integrating First Nations musical themes into their work in a respectful fashion.

I've been a fan of Wnukowski's since I heard him perform at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. I was particularly impressed by his commitment to reviving works of exiled Jewish composers of the 20th-century including Wladyslaw Szpilman, Alfred Schnittke, Josef Koffler and others. I was also lucky enough to learn from David Jalbert when he taught at the Toronto Summer Music Festival Community Academy in 2016. This makes me rather envious of the 2828 folks in Princeton BC and the other communities who will be lucky enough to be on the destination list.

Fortunately Piano Six: The Next Generation plans to include some urban destinations on their tour. They will be giving a gala concert in Toronto later next year. Before then, Torontonians can hear Rizikov play on March 17 at Robert Lowrey's piano store. You can sign up for announcements on their website www.pianosix.com.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

Bravos for guest conductor, pianist at TICO concert
 December 2017
 San Diego Jewish World
 By Eileen Wingard

SAN DIEGO — Robert Zelickman, professional clarinetist and retired UC San Diego Wind Ensemble Conductor, served as guest maestro for the Nov. 12 and 14 concerts of the Tifereth Israel Community Orchestra (TICO). He substituted for TICO's music director, David Amos, who had suffered an injured ankle in an accidental fall.

The opening work, the Overture to "Martha," by Friedrich von Flotow, sounded well-rehearsed, with good intonation, rhythmic precision and attention to dynamic details. Most impressive was Zelickman's handling of "An American in Paris" by George Gershwin. This expansive work, peppered with horn honks and simulated street sounds, jazzy rhythmic patterns and melodic blues, was well-executed. There were many admirable solos by the violin, the viola, the flute, the clarinet, the sax, the bass clarinet, the trumpet, the horns, and, even the tuba. Most of all, the orchestra played with spirit.

After intermission, piano soloist, Daniel Wnukowski took center stage. He performed two works, the Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra by Cesar Franck and the Burlesque for Piano and Orchestra by Richard Strauss. Although the orchestral accompaniments for these two works were a bit ragged compared to the tightly delivered performances in the first half of the program, the soloist managed to carry the day. Wnukowski is a first class pianist. He has technique and energy to burn, with octave runs moving so rapidly, his hands were a blur to watch. His lyrical passages sang, and his digital dexterity impressed in both works.

The seldom-heard Strauss Burlesque, which he composed at the age of 21, had passages reminiscent of his later Rosenkavalier Waltzes.

The slender, youthful-looking Wnukowski, a native of Canada, now living in Austria, has become deeply committed to the performance of Jewish composers of the Holocaust. As encores, he played two short works by composers who managed to escape the Nazi horror. The first was by the Austrian-Jewish emigre to Hollywood, Erich Korngold. It was one of a group of pieces Korngold called, "Little Waltzes," each of which he named for one of his lady friends. This one was "Gretl." It proved to be a charming confection.

The second encore was "Oberek," a dance in $\frac{3}{4}$ time with the accent on the third beat. Wnukowski zipped through it with rapid flare. This virtuoso gem was by a Polish-Jewish composer, Roman Ritterband, who escaped on the last train to Switzerland in 1942. Amos, although not on the podium, still gave introductory remarks as he maneuvered on a scooter with his elevated injured leg.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

The orchestra will be under his direction at the next concert, January 28, at the First United Methodist Church, 1200 East H Street, Chula Vista, and January 30, Tifereth Israel Synagogue, 6660 Cowles Mountain Blvd. San Diego. The program will feature the acclaimed Russian-born mezzo-soprano, Suzana Poretzky, with music by Mahler, Haydn and Von-Suppe.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

P R E S S R E V I E W S (N O N - E N G L I S H)

Das Wiederaufblühen einer Größe (German)

December 2017

The New Listener

By Oliver Fraenzke

Eine Hommage an den polnisch-ukrainischen Komponisten Józef Koffler bringt das Label EDA heraus, das für die Reihe „Poland Abroad“ bereits Kammermusik Kofflers aufnahm. Erstmals ist symphonisches Schaffen des Komponisten auf CD erhältlich, und zwar Livemitschnitte des Klavierkonzerts op. 13 und der Zweiten Symphonie op. 17. Von diesen Kolossen eingerahmt werden Zwei Lieder op. 1, Quatre poèmes op. 22 und das Zweite Streichquartett op. 27 „Ukrainische Skizzen“. Es spielt das Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra unter Christoph Slowinski, im Klavierkonzert mit Daniel Wnukowski als Solisten, das Polish String Quartet Berlin, und es singt Frederika Brillembourg, am Klavier begleitet vom Dirigenten.

Wenn man die großartigen Künstler aufzählen würde, die von den Nazis aus dem öffentlichen Bewusstsein gefegt wurden, so wäre die Liste endlos. Immer wieder treten größere oder kleinere Namen auf die Bildfläche, die Opfer der Verfolgungen wurden. Viele davon sind es wert, wieder entdeckt zu werden, und einige davon stechen ganz besonders hervor. Zu diesen gehört, woran ich keinen Zweifel offen lassen möchte, Józef Koffler, der nach jahrelanger Unterbringung im Ghetto 1944 mit seiner ganzen Familie ermordet wurde. Sein Schaffen ist von geringem Umfang, doch von hoher Substanz. Sein Lebenslauf war durchwachsen: 1896 im galizischen Stryj geboren, musste er sich erst gegen den Wunsch der Familie, Jura zu studieren, durchsetzen, und ließ sich zunächst in Lemberg (Lwiv), später in Wien von Egon Wellesz, Robert Lach und Guido Adler ausbilden und promovierte bei letzterem über Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Während seines Studiums wurde er im Ersten Weltkrieg in die Armee eingezogen. 1924 kehrte er nach Lemberg zurück. Dort erhielt er eine Professur für Harmonielehre und atonale Komposition, eine absolute Neuerung in Polen. Neben vielfältigem Lob zog er als „Erster polnischer Dodekaphoniker“ auch regelmäßig Spott auf sich. Als Jude wurden Koffler bereits in den 1930er-Jahren Anfeindungen zu Teil, die sich nach dem Überfall auf Polen drastisch verschärften und schließlich auch seinen Tod in einer öffentlichen Massenerschießung zur Folge haben sollten.

So sehr Koffler die Musik der Zweiten Wiener Schule inhaliert hatte, machte sie doch nur einen Teil seines Stils aus. Charakterisiert wird dieser hauptsächlich durch eine durchgehende und ausgeklügelte Kontrapunktik, durch dissonant angereicherte und bis



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

an die Grenzen der Verständlichkeit geführte Harmonien, polnisches und ukrainisches Kolorit und durch ausgewogene thematische Arbeit, die zu festen und strikt eingehaltenen Formkonstrukten führte, welche aber nicht rein akademisch erdacht, sondern innerlich erspürt klingen. In den Kurzformen wagte sich Koffler auch an neuartige Strukturen, im symphonisch ausgedehnten Format hingegen hielt er sich an bewährte Formen wie dem Rondo oder einer bogenartigen Struktur. Kofflers Musik wirkt teils befremdlich und eigenwillig, gelegentlich gar sperrig, und besitzt doch immer wieder geradezu Ohrwurmcharakter. Diese Werke lassen den Hörer nicht so schnell wieder los und klingen noch lange nach.

Das Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra unter Christoph Slowinski hebt die Kontrapunktik deutlich und verständlich hervor und lässt, wenngleich teils gehetzt wirkend, viel von der musikalischen Struktur durchscheinen, geht gefühlvoll auf die Thematik ein und all dies mit einer adäquaten Dichte von Klang und Ausdruck. Mit virtuoser Sicherheit und Glanz fesselt Daniel Wnukowski als Solist im Klavierkonzert, sichtlich Spaß hat er vor allem im dritten Satz, der freudig leicht und doch mit unterschwelligem Ernst erklingt. Wohl artikuliert, mit wuchtiger Kraft begleitet Slowinski die opernhafte schmetternde Frederika Brillembourg in den Liedern op. 1 und 27. Lyrisch durchzogen und von zarter Sehnsucht erfüllt betören die Ukrainischen Skizzen in der musikalisch ausgewogenen Darbietung des Polish String Quartet Berlin. Ausgezeichnet auch der vorbildlich informierende Booklettext.

Józef Koffler En homage (German)

March 2018

das Orchester 03/2018 , Seite 69

By Stefan Drees

Wohl kaum ein Label hat sich seit seiner Gründung so stark für die Wiederentdeckung und Rehabilitierung von Werken vergessener polnischer Komponisten eingesetzt wie EDA Records. Die jüngste Veröffentlichung knüpft an das gewohnt hohe Niveau der bisherigen Produktionen an: Mit einem umfassenden Booklet und einer über zweieinhalb Jahrzehnte reichenden Werkauswahl widmet sich die CD dem von den Nationalsozialisten ermordeten Józef Koffler (1896–1944), der aufgrund einer synthetisierenden Lesart von Dodekafonie und Neoklassizismus einen ganz eigenen Stil entwickelte und damit zu den interessantesten Gestalten der modernen Musikszene seiner Zeit gehörte.

Das vielleicht überzeugendste Argument hierfür ist das außerordentliche Klavierkonzert op. 13 (1932). Nach energetischem solistischen Beginn entfaltet sich eine elektrisierende



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

Musik, deren rhythmische Finessen der Pianist Daniel Wnukowski mit präzisiertem Vortrag adelt. Auch im Finale, das mit klar konturierten Linienführungen aufwartet, überzeugt die Interpretation durch Eleganz und Hervorkehrung unterschwelliger Ironie. Herz des Stücks ist jedoch das atmosphärische, vom Solisten stellenweise fast rhapsodisch frei angestimmte Notturmo, das von zarten Streichertexturen voller Leuchtkraft und flirrenden Tonhöhenwechsel durchzogen ist.

Auch Kofflers Symphonie Nr. 2 op. 17 (1933) erweist sich als originelle Repertoireerweiterung: Jeder einzelne der vier kurzen Sätze wartet mit einer individuellen klangfarblichen Auslotung des kleinen Orchesters auf, wobei der Komponist immer wieder zu überraschen weiß und sich – vor allem im Finale – auch einiger ironischer Spitzen bedient.

Von Kofflers stilistischer Vielfalt zeugt darüber hinaus das suitenartige sechssätziges Streichquartett Nr. 2 op. 27 (Ukrainische Skizzen, 1941), dessen kompositorische Aneignung folkloristischer Quellen samt ihrer Ausformung zu untereinander stark kontrastierenden Stimmungsbildern mitunter an entsprechende Werke Bartóks erinnert. Die beiden eingespielten Liedergruppen wiederum stehen stellvertretend für zwei unterschiedliche Pole von Kofflers Schaffen: Während die Zwei Lieder op. 1 (1917), früheste Komposition der CD, von verwehenden Spuren verschwenderischer impressionistischer Harmonik und arabeskenartigen Klavierwendungen durchzogen sind, hat Koffler mit den Quatre poèmes op. 22 (1935) eine stark konzentrierte, harmonisch herbe Musik geschaffen, die sich durch Verzicht auf überflüssige Elemente auszeichnet. Entstanden ist hier eine auch von interpretatorischer Seite her rundum gelungene Produktion, mit der das Label seine außerordentliche Reihe von Entdeckungen fortsetzt. Die gelungene Mischung lässt Koffler als einen Komponisten auferstehen, dessen Schaffen eindeutig in den Konzertsaal gehört. Eigentlich kaum zu glauben, dass bislang keines der Stücke auf CD eingespielt wurde.

Koffler (Norwegian)
June 2018
Klassisk Musikk Norway
By Martin Anderson

Klaverkonsert, op. 13;* To sanger, op. 1;** Strykekvartett nr. 2, Ukrainske skisser, op. 27;*** Fire dikt, op. 22;** Symfoni nr. 2, op. 17**Daniel Wnukowski (klaver); Polish Luventus Symphony Orchestra, dir. Christoph Slowinski; Fredrika Brillembourg (mezzosopran), Christoph Slowinski (klaver); ***Polish String Quartet Berlin EDA Records EDA 042 (67 minutter)



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

Ut fra den luftige og muntre klaverkonserten (1932) som innleder denne CDen med førstegangsinspillinger av den polske komponisten Józef Koffler, kunne man aldri forestilt seg at en så tragisk skjebne kunne vente ham bare 12 år senere. Tidlig i 1944 sto Gestapo på døren til huset i det sørøstlige Polen hvor den jødiske Koffler og hans kone og sønn hadde funnet ly, og førte dem bort. De ble aldri sett igjen. Den forsmedelige slutten står i motsetning til den høye status Koffler hadde oppnådd i mellomkrigsårene. Sammen med Szymanowski var han blitt Polens ledende modernist, skjønt han skrev i en helt annen stil enn i den geistlige modaliteten i Szymanowskis senere komposisjoner. Kofflers hovedbidrag synes å ha vært en forsoning mellom Schönbergiansk dodekafoni og nyklassisisme – men så mange av verkene hans gikk tapt under andre verdenskrig at en nøyaktig vurdering av hans betydning kanskje aldri blir mulig. Det stilistiske spekteret her er slående. Klaverkonserten setter en toccata i frihjul, der solist og orkester synes å glede seg over å erte hverandre, og en skjør dans (en krakowiak) på hver sin side av en urolig nocturne – der man faktisk hører ekko av Szymanowski. De to sangene, op. 1 (1917), har begge en høytidelig, nesten rituell skjønnhet, og den etterfølgende Strykekvartett nr. 2, Ukrainske skisser (1941), rommer korte, stiliserte danser mellom Szymanowski og Stravinsky et sted, spenstigheten gir av og til etter for et underliggende vemod. Fire dikt (1935) til franske tekster, er mer abstrakte, skjønt Koffler fremdeles ikke er helt villig til å ta en Schönberg. Symfoni nr. 2 (1933) makter igjen å fusjonere 12-toneteknikk og nyklassisisme, og viser ofte en ganske sardonisk humoristisk sans underveis. Fremførelsene er uten unntak utsøkte: «luventus» i Det polske Luventus Symfoniorkester viser ingen tegn til manglende teknisk sikkerhet: dette ensemblet utgjøres av de beste nyutdannede fra Polens musikkonservatorium. Maciej Gołąbs artikkel i CD-heftet fortjener også applaus – og vil noen lese mer om Koffler, har Golab skrevet en artikkel som tar for seg alt Koffler skrev, og som du finner her.

Som den første CDen viet Kofflers musikk, er denne utgivelsen verd å løftes frem for dette verket alene. Og den er en del av en lykkelig trend: for to år siden utga CPO en CD med hans klaver- og kammermusikk (777970-2), og hans komplette musikk for solo klaver, spilt av Elżbieta Sternlicht, finnes på Acte Préalable (AP0122 og AP0123). I 2013 lanserte Polsk Radio Agnieszka Duczmals innspilling med sitt Amadeus Kammerorkester av Kofflers utsøkte arrangement av Bachs Goldbergvariasjoner for strykeorkester og blåsekvintett. Du kan høre den her.

Det Berlin-baserte EDA Records har i de siste årene gjort en strålende innsats for det 20. århundres glemte polske komponister, og denne Koffler-innspillingen plasserer seg i en ærerik katalog over betydningsfulle utgivelser. Ta en titt på www.eda-records.com, og du finner en skattekiste med ukjente rikdommer.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

Erinnerungen an damals... (German)

November 2014

Pizzicato

By Remy Franck

Die letzte Blaue; Walter Arlen: Kammermusik & Lieder; Altes Lied, Humoreske, Monotypes, Mementos, Die letzte Blaue, Sonnet für Violine & Klavier, Arbeit macht frei für Klavier & Metronom, Lieder: 2 Fragmente aus The Song of Songs, Houses of Worship, Septet, Wenn die letzte Blaue geht; Rebecca Nelsen, Christian Immler, Daniel Wnukowski, Daniel Hope; 2 CDs Gramola 98996; 11/12 (101'23)

Walter Arlen wurde 1920 als Walter Aptowitzer in Wien geboren. Nach seiner Flucht aus Wien studierte er in Amerika. Er arbeitete als Musikkritiker für die 'Los Angeles Times' (1952 – 1980) und leitete als Professor die von ihm gegründete Abteilung für Musikwissenschaft der Katholischen 'Loyola Marymount' Universität. Ab 1986 folgte auch wieder verstärkte Kompositionstätigkeit. Als Komponist ist er ein tonaler Miniaturist.

Gramola veröffentlicht nun eine weitere CD-Produktion mit Werken von Walter Arlen, welche irgendwie alle die eigene Betroffenheit über die Gräueltaten der NS-Herrschaft als Grundlage haben. So ist das Lied 'Die letzte Blaue', benannt nach der letzten nächtlichen, an ihrem blauen Licht erkennbaren Straßenbahn der Wiener Linien, eine Hommage an einen unvergänglichen Schlager jener Zeiten.

Neben Werken für Klavier solo (Monotypes, Mementos) finden sich auf dieser Doppel-CD des polnisch-kanadischen Pianisten Daniel Wnukowski auch Werke für Klavier und Violine und weitere Lieder. Für Erstaunen sorgt der Titel des dreiteiligen Werk 'Arbeit macht frei' für Klavier und Metronom, das 1995 nach einem Besuch des ehemaligen Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz entstand.

Dies ist also ein abwechslungsreiches Programm mit durchaus gefälliger Musik, das sehr sensibel und mit spürbarer Liebe zu der Musik Arlens auf hohem Niveau dargeboten wird. With much emotion Walter Arlen condensed memories from his youth in Vienna and the atrocities of the Nazi regime in his musical miniatures and songs. The varied program of solo pieces for piano, songs and chamber music is performed with commitment and sensitive inspiration.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

SAMPLE RECITAL PROGRAMS

G.F. Handel - Keyboard Suite No. 7 in G minor HWV432
 L. van Beethoven - Piano Sonata No. 7 in D major, op. 10 no. 3
 INTERMISSION
 K. Rathaus - Two movements from the Ballet "Der Letzte Pierrot" (The Last Pierrot)
 R. Schumann - Carnaval, op. 9

J.S. Bach - English Suite No. 3 BWV 808
 L. van Beethoven - Piano Sonata op. 28 "Pastorale"
 INTERMISSION
 Zenobia Powell Perry - Homage
 R. Schumann - Symphonic Variations, op. 13

J.S. Bach English Suite No. 5 BWV 810
 L. van Beethoven - Six Bagatelles op. 126
 INTERMISSION
 J. Brahms - Sonata No. 3, op. 5

G.F. Handel - Keyboard Suite No. 5 in E major
 K. Rathaus - Sonata No. 3
 INTERMISSION
 Fr. Chopin - 24 Preludes, op. 28



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

LECTURE RECITALS

Program #1 - Lyricism in the 20th Century

This concert program highlights the influence of post-Romantic lyricism on the works of various 20th century composers, many of whose lives were permanently altered as a result of the Holocaust. Works by Alban Berg, Arnold Schoenberg, Walter Arlen, Karol Rathaus, Oskar Morawetz among others.

Program #2 - Mazurkas of the Interwar Period

Almost everyone is familiar with any one of the 59 mazurkas of Frédéric Chopin as a strong testimony of his Polish roots. Yet this marvelous Polish dance had also captured the hearts of numerous other composers. This lecture recital focuses on the exciting musical developments that took place during the Interwar Period and their influence on the mazurka dance form. Works by Aleksandre Tansman, Karol Rathaus, Roman Maciejewski among others.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVALS

Program #1 - Notturmo

Reflective music by 20th & 21st century composers that evoke contemplative, abstract scenery, leaving one mysteriously enthralled into a transcendental, Zen-like state of mind. Works by Nikolett Burzynska, George Crumb, Jesus Torres among others.

Program #2 - Poland

Works by three Polish composers Karol Szymanowski, Szymon Laks and Piotr Szymanski.



DANIEL WNUKOWSKI

CONCERTO REPERTOIRE

Early 20th century piano concertos

“From Weimar Republic to the New Frontier”

E. Schulhoff - Concerto for piano and small orchestra, op.43 (1923)

I. Stravinsky - Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments (1923)

G. Gershwin - Concerto in F (1925)

M. Ravel - Concerto in G major, M. 83 (1931)

A. Schoenberg - Concerto, op. 42 (1942)

B. Bartok - Concerto No. 3, Sz 119 (1945)

K. Rathaus - Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, op. 45 (1939)

Piano concertos ready by 2am in the morning (in case of cancellations)

L. van Beethoven - Any of the 5 concerti

J. Brahms - Concerto No. 2, op. 83

Fr. Chopin - Both concerti

C. Franck - The Symphonic Variations (Variations symphoniques), M. 46

G. Gershwin - Rhapsody in Blue, Piano Concerto in F (1925)

E. Grieg - Concerto in A minor, op. 16

F. Haydn - Concerto in D major Hob. XVIII:11

F. Mendelssohn - Concerto No. 1 in G minor, op. 25

W.A. Mozart - No. 12 A major KV414; No. 13 C major KV415; No. 17 G-major KV453;

No. 22 E-flat major KV482; No. 23 A major KV488; No. 24 C minor KV491; No. 27 B-flat major KV595

R. Schumann - Concerto in A minor, op. 54

For complete concerto list, please visit www.wnukowski.com