

REV. DARIUSZ SMOLAREK S.A.C.

THE MUSIC OF SIMON FERDINAND LECHLEITNER
IN OŁTARZEW

The account from the concert—Ożarów Mazowiecki, 10th May 2015, 7.00 pm
Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles Seminary and Parish Church—Ołtarzew

It is a great satisfaction to a musicologist to listen to a piece that was hidden as a manuscript in the archives for dozens or hundreds of years, and was found and brought to light by such musicologist. Based on preserved parts such a piece may be reconstructed and issued in the form of a score used by the musicians. The performance that took place on 10th May 2015, in the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles Seminary and Parish Church in Ołtarzew, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, was an opportunity to listen to the forgotten music live. The musicians performed two pieces of Simon Ferdinand Lechleitner, an obscure composer of Austrian origin, who worked in the Polish—Lithuanian Commonwealth in the first half of 18th century: *Litaniae de Corde Jesu* (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) and *Missa solemnis in honorem Sancti Cajetani* (Saint Cajetan Mass).

There were numerous church musical ensembles in 18th century Commonwealth operating in cathedrals, collegiate churches, parishes and monasteries. Usually they consisted of four vocal parts: soprano (in those days called canto), alto, tenor, and bass, and the instrumental part referred to as *Kirchentrio* (*church trio*) made up by two violins and organ. Sometimes it was complemented by several wind instruments (such as trumpets or horns). The pieces for liturgies (masses and vespers) and services (litanies, antiphons, sacred baroque arias) were composed and performed in accordance with the performing manner of the time. It was also the style of Simon Ferdinand Lechleitner, one of the composers who was part of the culture of the Commonwealth.

Despite a rich legacy of S. F. Lechleitner, he remains a little-known composer of the first half of 18th century. Presumably, he was of Austrian (Tyrolean) origin, and in Poland he served at the court of the magnate Jerzy Aleksander Lubomirski the starost of Nowy Sącz and the voivode of Sandomierz. He composed numerous works for various churches, in particular in Sandomierz, and for Piarist and Jesuit musical ensembles. A confirmation of this point are his numerous compositions,

Rev. DARIUSZ SMOLAREK S.A.C., PhD—The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Department of Religious Polyphony, Institute of Musicology; address for correspondence—e-mail: dsmolar@kul.pl

dated in the period from 1725 until 1749, and preserved in church archives. The largest part can be found in the musical collections of the Diocesan Library in Sandomierz. According to the researches 40 out of the total of 70 reported works of this composer have been preserved either in their entirety or in parts.

The two compositions of S. F. Lechleitner performed during the concert come from the former college of Piarist fathers in Podoliniec (Spiš, currently Slovakia). The monastery, school and college founded in 1642 by the magnate Stanisław Lubomirski were one of the oldest in Poland along with those in Warsaw. The goal of the Piarist order established in Rome in 1597 by the Spanish priest Saint Joseph Calasanz was to provide free, widespread and basic education. Their spiritual motto was: *Pietas et Litterae* (*Faith and Science*).

Apart from universal sciences, the education in Podoliniec also included the music. The students and their teachers—the monks sung and played polyphonic sacred music. More than 400 works composed in 18th century have been preserved from this monastery. As a result of the historical turbulence these musical works are now maintained by the State Archives in Modra near Bratislava (Slovakia).

The first performed piece was the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—*Litaniae de Corde Jesu* (manuscript with the catalogue number H-47 dated 1734). The composition is bound with the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that developed at that time. The main credit for promulgation of the service went to a modest nun Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. Part of the worship was a litany prayer which was taking shape at that time (its contemporary form was approved in 1889 by the pope Leon XIII). That is why some petitions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Lechleitner's litany are different to the contemporary ones. This prayer was only coming into existence. The most popular litany text worked out into polyphonic music in those days was the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto) and it is interesting that the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has also been developed into a polyphonic arrangement at that time. The manuscript from Podoliniec includes a contrafactum as in the original music the text was substituted with the Marian litany. It is an interesting point that I have found a second manuscript with the same composition in the Archives of the Cistercian Abbey in Cracow-Mogiła. In my opinion this is a prove of a proliferation of the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Commonwealth.

S. F. Lechleitner has used an unofficial text of the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The composer divided the piece into nine parts, dedicated to changing casts: *tutti* (performed by the whole ensemble) and the soloists in various configurations. The composition was performed by *Collegium Musicum Varsoviensis* consisting of the vocal and instrumental ensembles. The vocal octet (a doubled voice cast) included: Katarzyna Bienias (solo), Sylwia Sikorska—*soprano*; Joanna Gontarz (solo), Anna Stawarz—*alto*; Adam Sławiński (solo), Grzegorz Wiśniewski—*tenor*; Krzysztof Chalimoniuk (solo), Mirosław Grabski—*bass*. They were accompanied by the group of instruments made up of: Judyta Tupczyńska—first violin; Kornelia Korecka—second violin; Aleksandra Górską-Tarłowska—cello; Paweł Hulisz—

trumpet (clarino) #1; Michał Tyrański—trumpet (clarino) #2; Katarzyna Kalisz-Kędziołek—positive organ, basso continuo realisation. The performance was conducted by Mariusz Latek.

The second Lechleitner's piece played this evening was *Missa Solennis in honorem Sancti Cajetani* composed in 1741 (catalogue number H-125, a copy dated 1747). The term *Missa Solennis* (correctly *Solemnis*) denotes a *ceremonial mass* for special occasions with all parts included. The title *In honorem Sancti Cajetani* is a dedication indicating that the mass was meant to venerate Saint Cajetan, whose feast day is 7th August. The charisma of Saint Cajetan (1480–1547), founder of the Congregation of Clerics Regular called the Theatines, was a religious education of the poor youth. A similar programme expanded with a general free education was left to Piarists by Saint Joseph Calasanz. In Poland, the Theatines had their abbeys in Lviv (1664) and Warsaw (1696). *In honorem Sancti Cajetani* mass may indicate a spirituality and religious traditions of the Podoliniec abbey, where the Piarists presumably venerated Saint Cajetan due to a similar charisma. Saint Cajetan was canonized in 1671, that is almost a hundred years before Saint Joseph Calasanz (1767).

The text of the composition consists of the words from *Ordinarium missae* (*Ordinary of the Holy Mass*): *Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei*. The piece is a kind of a cantata mass, in which some parts are divided into smaller sections. The solo arias include *Benedictus* (soprano) and the second *Agnus Dei* (bass). On the other hand, *Hosanna in excelsis* begins with the solo part of soprano crowned with the entrance of the choir. Soprano's melody in the key of the dominant is then repeated by the bass solo. The whole is finished by *tutti* part in the main key. A beautiful soprano and bass duet with *basso continuo* in the background and a dialoguing part of the oboe is a central section of *Credo: Et incarnatus est*. The solo parts were performed by: Katarzyna Bienias—*soprano* and Krzysztof Chalimoniuk—*bass*. They were accompanied by *Ab Imo Pectore* Chamber Choir prepared by Mariusz Latek. The instrumental ensemble *Collegium Musicum Varsoviensis* was complemented by Agnieszka Wachnik performing the oboe part in *Et incarnatus est*.

The musicians played in a 18th century manner that is in a standing position. A single scoring of the instruments and a chamber vocal scoring favoured sound clarity within the walls of the church with a rather long reverberation time. Both the soloists and the amateur choir *Ab imo pectore* performed at a good level. But it is a beautifully balanced soprano of Katarzyna Bienias that deserves a special attention. Young but excellent instrumentalists, prepared to perform Early Music, were ornamenting the melody professionally and at the same time with taste, thus referring to the aesthetics of the music performed in the Baroque style. The performance of two trumpeters playing genuine (reconstructed) 18th century instruments with high registers called clarino was a real treat. Similar trumpets are played by the angels from the organ façade in the Church of the Visitation—the

Marian sanctuary in Święta Lipka, whose figures were used in the poster advertising the concert.

The compositions performed during the concert were written in the galant style. However, they are of functional nature. The masses were performed during solemn liturgy, while the litany—during services in the Piarist Saint Stanislaus the Bishop and the Martyr church in Podoliniec, that survived with the collegium to the present day.

The performed works of Simon Ferdinand Lechleitner, a little-known 18th century composer, were reconstructed by Rev. Dr. Dariusz Smolarek SAC, who also gave a foreword. The whole concert was conducted by Dr. Mariusz Latek. He was also an originator and organizer of this extraordinary event, that became an opportunity to listen to forgotten, Old Polish, vocal and instrumental sacred music.

The patrons of the concert were the Mayor of Ożarów Mazowiecki Mr. Paweł Kanclerz and the Parish Priest of Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles Parish in Ołtarzew Rev. Jacek Smyk. The media patronage was provided by the Commune of Ożarów Mazowiecki and the Austrian Cultural Forum.

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