

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today's concert commemorates the bicentenary of the death of General Józef Wybicki, the author of the text of Dąbrowski's Mazurka. This is a good opportunity to recall the history of the efforts to regain independence lost as a result of the Third Partition of Poland in 1795.

The text of the ***Song of the Polish Legions in Italy*** (which was the original title of Dąbrowski's Mazurka, the national anthem of the Republic of Poland) was written by Józef Wybicki. It was sung for the first time by the soldiers of the Polish Legions in Lombardy in July of 1797, and it accompanied the Legions' soldiers in their long and difficult journey to Poland.

As the popularity of Dąbrowski's Mazurka grew, it became an informal anthem of the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1815). After the fall of Napoleon, the song was still alive in private homes, but rarely performed in public. During the November Uprising (1830–1831) it was revived again. After the fall of the uprising, in the autumn of 1831, numerous groups of defeated insurgents emigrated, for fear of Tsarist repressions. They appeared in various European countries, at the same time popularizing Dąbrowski's Mazurka. The song reached Prussia, Austria and France; it appeared also on the Polish exiles' southern route. New local variants of the song were being created in various languages. Adam Mickiewicz wrote about it in his epic poem *Pan Tadeusz*, referring to it as "a song famous nowadays all over the world".

The song achieved the greatest international fame during the Spring of Nations (1848). It was heard in many places with its text rewritten according to the circumstances. That happened, for instance, during the Prague Slavic Congress of 1848, a gathering of representatives of western and southern Slavs, when the Pan-Slavic Anthem with the text "Hey, Slavs" by the Slovak poet Samo Tomášik began to be popularized. Both its text and even more its melody exhibit its Polish origins. It is so similar to the Polish anthem that on listening to it one has the impression that it is the current Polish anthem, but performed too slowly. Many years later, the Pan-Slavic Anthem became the unofficial anthem of the Slovak Republic (1939–1945), as well as the national anthem of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1992), the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2003) and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006).

Motifs of Dąbrowski's Mazurka occur in important symphonic works from the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Among them is the oratorio ***The Legend of St. Stanislaus*** by Franz Liszt, whose interlude ***Salve Polonia*** brilliantly exhibits the Mazurka. Another composition worth mentioning is the overture ***Polonia*** by Richard Wagner. The Polish composer Ignacy Jan Paderewski, in turn, used this melody as a basis for the victory motif in his ***Symphony in B minor***, composed for the 40th anniversary of the January Uprising in (1863). In 1915, the British composer Edward Elgar composed the symphonic prelude ***Polonia***, also using the tune of Dąbrowski's Mazurka.

Musically, very interesting work using the tune of Dąbrowski's Mazurka is ***Fugue and Coda*** on the theme "Poland Is Not Yet Lost", published in 1821 by Polish composer Karol Kurpiński.

We will hear this composition today. The theme of the fugue is the initial fragment of Dąbrowski's Mazurka, corresponding to the words "Poland is not yet lost, so long as we still live", but transformed from its original triple meter into a quadruple one. The orchestral version of the work was performed in public only on 1 January 1831, during the November Uprising, in the Grand Theatre in Warsaw. It was enthusiastically received by the audience. The critics wrote that "the chosen rhythm, somewhat slowed-down, assumed a solemn, almost religious character and it can be predicted that the fugue will be in the future included among religious chants, especially for ceremonies which should recall the great deeds of our forefathers". This did not happen, unfortunately, since after the fall of the November Uprising the composition fell into oblivion – which is a great loss for the Polish musical culture.

While there are no doubts about the authorship of the text of the *Song of the Polish Legions in Italy*, the author of its music remains unknown. Some attributed its authorship to Prince Michał Kleofas Ogiński (1765—1833), an important participant of the Kościuszko Uprising in Lithuania, who after the fall of the uprising lived abroad for a few years. The prince, an amateur musician and composer, enjoyed composing military tunes for his troops. In 1797 he sent to General Dąbrowski a *March for the Legions*, which was mistakenly regarded as the prototype of the Song of the Polish Legions in Italy. A partial solution of the music authorship riddle occurred in 1938, when a copy of an 1821 publication of Three Marches by Ogiński was found, and one of them turned out to be the March for the Legions. The discovery allowed to establish without doubts that Ogiński's March for the Legions and the Song of the Polish Legions in Italy are two distinct compositions.

It is worth to remind that Ogiński's music - Polonaises - were performed during the previous SOR conference in Bled two years ago by prof. Tadeusz Trzaskalik – economist, mathematician and pianist, employed at the University of Economics in Katowice, Poland. He is also the performer of the concert today. We will hear one composition: Fugue and Coda on the theme "Poland Is Not Yet Lost", composed by Karol Kurpiński.