

FRENCH FASCINATIONS



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Roman LASOCKI - violin

Urszula BOŻEK-MUSIALSKA - piano

***Jerzy BAUER** (*1936) : Invocazioni

***Marian BORKOWSKI** (*1934) : Images II

***Romuald TWARDOWSKI** (*1930) : Niggunim, Chassidic Melodies

***Witold RUDZINSKI** (1913-2004) : Sonata pastorale for violin and piano

***César FRANCK** (1822-1890) : Sonata in A major for violin and piano

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The idea for this CD originates from Roman Lasocki's French fascinations. During his already 45-year-long stage career, he has particularly often performed in renowned concert halls in both Paris and numerous French cities. We will refer to the respective performances recorded on the CD when discussing the subsequent compositions. However, it is worth mentioning here that the artist's performances have been widely acclaimed by the audience and critics, who have written excellent reviews of his concerts. The second element of the aforementioned fascination with the French atmosphere are the Parisian threads in composers' lives – distinguished artists with distinguished works that established a lasting place for themselves in the Polish history of music; the composers that have had a decades-long artistic friendship with the soloist of the CD. The fact that César Franck belongs to the French cultural circle is unquestionable, yet it is important to note the fact that each author of the works presented on our CD studied composition in acclaimed classes of Parisian universities for many years. Generally, the attempt to clarify the presence of the national element in such marvellously imprecise art as music, which is by nature asemantic, is doomed for failure. Therefore, we can discuss a specific atmosphere of the works basing our judgment on subjective feelings of the audience. It seems, though, that longstanding composition studies with such masters as Nadia Boulanger or Olivier Messiaen had to influence the authors' creative imagination. All Polish compositions on the CD are linked by dedications for Roman Lasocki and the fact that the artist premiered the pieces, performed them number of times in renowned concert halls in Poland and abroad as well as recorded them for the Polish Radio, TVP and various radio and television stations abroad. The works presented on the CD were registered by Roman Lasocki almost 25 years ago. The recalling of these impeccable interpretations is a tribute to the soloist who, very reluctantly, celebrates the 45th anniversary of artistic activity.

Jerzy BAUER (1936-) studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris in 1969-70. He dedicated to Roman Lasocki three essays for violin and piano from 1972, *Preludes and Polish dance* from 1976 and *Invocazioni* for violin and piano (1974), which is presented on the CD. The pieces, edited by Roman Lasocki, were published by the Polish Music Publishing House. The first performance of *Invocazioni* took place in the Łódź Philharmonic in 1976. During the recital, Roman Lasocki was accompanied by Kiejstut Bacewicz. Roman Lasocki has performed *Invocazioni* accompanied by this outstanding pianist and chamber musician as well as by Urszula Bożek-Musialska on various stages in Europe over 100 times and in France – over 40. The composition was recorded for the Radio France, the Polish Radio and TVP. It was also recorded for the Polish record label Polskie Nagrania and the English one, Olympia.

Marian BORKOWSKI (1934-) studied with Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen in 1966-68. At the same time, he studied philosophy at the University of Paris and Sorbonne. *Images II* for any string instrument was composed in 1975 and was dedicated in its cello version to Allan Mounier, who premiered the piece in Paris in the same year. The violin version dedicated to Roman Lasocki was performed by the soloist more than 200 times on the occasion of numerous Polish festivals, foremost, the Warsaw Autumn Festival, and European ones, including the Festival Estival de Paris. Only in France, the piece has been performed over 60 times. The soloist recorded the work for the German record label Sonoton as well as for Polskie Nagrania (Polish Records) and the London Olympia. In addition to that, he has performed the piece several times in TVP and recorded it for the Polish Radio.

Romuald TWARDOWSKI (1930-) studied in the Parisian class of Nadia Boulanger in 1963 and 1966. He dedicated to Roman Lasocki three of his violin works. The three pieces constitute a triptych referring to the three different cultural circles: *Capriccio in Blue*, *Spanish Phantasy* and *Niggunim: Melodies of the Hasidim* from 1991. The latter is presented on the CD. All the aforementioned works were published by the Polish Music Publishing House. The score was edited by Roman Lasocki and there are two versions: one for violin and piano and the other for violin and symphony orchestra. Roman Lasocki recorded them with the Great Polish Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, the Polish Radio Orchestra in Kraków and the Polish Radio Orchestra in Warsaw under the direction of Jerzy Salwarowski, Szymon Kawalla and Jan Pruszek. The artist has performed the piano version of *Niggunim* with Józef Stempel, Tadeusz Chmielewski, the composer himself and with the pianist featured on the CD over 100 times on many stages of Europe and in France circa 30 times. The soloist recorded the composition on CDs for the record label Polskie Nagrania and the London Olympia. He has also performed it a number of times on the Polish Radio and TVP.

Witold RUDZINSKI (1913-2004) studied in the Parisian class of Nadia Boulanger in 1938-39. He dedicated to Roman Lasocki three of his violin works: *Capriccio-improptu* (1980), *Ricercar sopra Roman Lasocki* and *Sonata pastorale* from 1978, however, the version presented on the CD was written in 1984. The soloist has performed the aforementioned

pieces a number of times on stage as well as recorded them for the Polish Radio and Television. His edition of scores were published by the Polish Music Publishing House and the Authors' Agency of the Polish Society of Authors and Composers. This recording was made in the Concert Hall of the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music during the concert celebrating the 85th anniversary of the composer.

The emanation of the spirit of French music in works of **CESAR FRANCK** (1822-1890), a Belgium-born composer, seems to have reached its pinnacle in one of the most famous violin compositions – the Sonata in A Major written in 1886. Roman Lasocki has performed the Sonata on number of occasions in notable concert halls in Poland as well as in many world music centres. In France he has played it over 50 times. On stage he has been accompanied by outstanding Polish pianists and chamber musicians: Kiejstut Bacewicz, Józef Stempel, Krystyna Makowska-Ławrynowicz, Tadeusz Chmielewski, Urszula Bożek-Musialska and others. He has also recorded the piece a number of times for both radio and television. In 1986, on the 100th anniversary of the creation of the piece, the artist was invited to Paris to a concert organised in the framework of the anniversary of the creation of the piece which took place in the palace in Rue Lauriston. The venue is connected with the making of sketches for the filled with the spirit of music cycle of novels *In Search of Lost Time* by Marcel Proust. The links between the novels and Franck's Sonata are generally known. The performer presents a very personal conception of the piece, perhaps referring to the famous interpretation by David Oistrakh. The particular sweetness of sound achieved by varied vibration, richness of colours as well as by the articulation that highlights the desired diction, the distribution of culminations, the contrasting characters of the respective movements and the calm, real *tranquillo*, which opens the outer movements, seem to exceptionally accurately transmit the French 'spirit' of this music. One of the first digital recordings made in Poland was released 25 years ago under the record label Veriton; at first, in analogue version on a vinyl record and few years later on a CD. In view of all the above, the sound is rich in the unique charm characteristic for old recordings. The recording session took place in the Concert Hall of the Silesian Philharmonic. In subsequent years, already in a completely modern sound aura, the composer recorded there a series of CDs accompanied by the Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra. The albums include such compositions as concertos by Szymanowski, Shostakovich and Stravinsky as well as Lutosławski's works.

Józef Kański

Roman LASOCKI – one of the most distinguished Polish violinist of his generation. He graduated with honours from the State High School of Music in Łódź in the class of Prof. Franciszek Jamry. Subsequently, his masters were: André Gertler, Henryk Szeryng, Tadeusz Wroński and Stanisław Lewandowski. He participated in numerous master classes. He has performed on the most important stages in the world, inter alia, the Salle Gaveau in Paris, the Bösendorfer-Saal in Vienna, the Carnegie Hall in New York and other renowned concert centres of Europe, Asia, United States and Canada. He has participated at distinguished world music festivals such as the Festival Estival de Paris or the Warsaw Autumn Festival.

He has performed with the most notable Polish conductors. A special place in his output is held by the concerts and recordings given with the Silesian Philharmonic and the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Karol Stryja, Antoni Wit, Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk and Jerzy Swoboda as well as recitals where he was accompanied by Kiejstut Bacewicz, Józef Stempel, Urszula Bożek-Musialska and Tadeusz Chmielewski, among others.

The artist has recorded over 20 analogue and digital discs for Polish, German, English, French and Japanese record labels. Among the awarded recordings there are: Lutosławski's Partita, the Violin Concerto in A minor op. 77 by Shostakovich, Grażyna Bacewicz's Violin Concertos and the Violin Concerto No. 2 by Karol Szymanowski that was especially well reviewed. Roman Lasocki has also recorded for the Polish Radio as well as for radio stations in Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Hungary, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, the Czech Republic, Korea, United States and Canada. His longstanding partnership with the Polish Television resulted in six music cycles (*Phantasy for Strings, Masters of Violin Playing, Stories Written with the Bow, Roman Lasocki Presents*) under which he presented over 250 episodes of programmes that hosted the most distinguished Polish violinists, violists and cellists.

For decades, the artist has been invited to lead master classes in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, South Korea, Japan, United States and Canada. He is also a member of jury and chairperson of numerous Polish and international violin competitions.

Since 1970, he has been a pedagogue. He is a full professor at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music and a professor at the Academy of Music in Katowice. In 2002-2004, he was a lecturer (as a visiting professor) at the Keimyung University in Daegu (South Korea) and in 1996-2000, he led master classes in Seoul.

Many renowned Polish violinist, who are now pedagogues at the music universities or concertmasters of symphonic and chamber orchestras, graduated from his class. Roman Lasocki has also carried out a number of significant academic

functions, inter alia, he served as Vice-Rector for Artistic Affairs of the Academy of Music in Warsaw, as chairperson of the Chair and also as Dean. Moreover, he is a supervisor and reviewer of over 40 doctoral thesis, habilitations and applications to grant the title of professor submitted by the majority of Polish music universities.

Over 30 outstanding composers dedicated their works to Roman Lasocki: Rafał Augustyn, Jerzy Bauer, Marcin Błażewicz, Edward Bogusławski, Marian Borkowski, Sławomir Czarnecki, Andrzej Dutkiewicz, Jan Wincenty Hawel, Benedykt Konowski, Włodzimierz Kotoński, Stanisław Moryto, Bronisław Kazimierz Przybylski, Witold Rudziński and Romuald Twardowski, among others.

Prominent personalities of music world have expressed their admiration of Roman Lasocki's playing. Witold Lutosławski wrote in a letter to the artist: "Thanks to your and Ms. Musialska's performance I believed that I did not compose *Recitativo e arioso* with left hand and I like your performance very much." The great composer also encouraged the violinist to take up interest in his other works. As an answer to the suggestion of the master, Roman Lasocki performed *Partita* in the version for violin and orchestra almost 70 times and his recording (PRK CD020) made ten years ago with the Silesian Philharmonic under the direction of Jerzy Swoboda, as well as the subsequent recordings for the label DUX, were acclaimed by critics and won phonographic awards. Professor Tadeusz Wroński, one of leading Polish violinists and violin teachers, wrote in "Ruch Muzyczny" (January 11, 1998): "...Roman Lasocki is a mature violinist, enjoying well-deserved recognition at home and abroad. A perfect feel for and understanding of new music is a special feature of his musical imagination, and something which he has successfully passed on to his students. For all his passion for modern music, Roman Lasocki remains a universal violinist, with a grasp of all styles. He can include the performance of Lutosławski's *Partita* among his genuine achievements; in my view, thanks to this recording this piece will become a staple position in the violin repertoire." Prof. Jadwiga Kaliszewska and Prof. Zenon Brzewski, accomplished pedagogues and violinists, with whom Roman Lasocki has had a lasting friendship and artistic partnership, also praised his performances.

Roman Lasocki have been honoured with the Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Gold and Silver Crosses of Merit, the Gold Badge of the Polish Radio, the "Golden Screen" Award, five times with the Award of the Minister of Culture, the Gloria Artis Medal and the Medal of the Commission of Education for his artistic merits.

Acting for 25 years as an artistic director of the festivals he founded, "Masters of Violin Playing" and "Stars Promote," he was honoured with awards of Zielona Góra and Lublin and he was also given honorary citizenship of Jelenia Góra. After few decades of playing the instrument being an Italian copy of Maggini, the artist, interested in the development of Polish string instruments industry, gives concerts on another violin named "Roman Lasocki," which has been built this year by outstanding Polish violin maker Stanisław Król.

In 2012-2013, Roman Lasocki held the function of chairperson of the Polish Artists and Musicians Association and since 2004, he has been the vice-president of the Henryk Wieniawski Music Association in Lublin. In 2013, the artist was honoured with the title of Professor of Honour of the String Academy in Hamburg.

Urszula BOŻEK-MUSIALSKA graduated from the State High School of Music in Katowice in the class of Prof. Marta Furmanikowa (diploma with honours). She continued her studies at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna in the chamber music class of Prof. Franz Holetschek and piano class of Prof. Frieda Valenzi-Richter from which she graduated with honours. Moreover, she received an award of the Austrian Minister of Culture. She participated in the master class in Bayreuth in the chamber music class of Siegfried Palm.

She gave concerts as both a soloist and chamber musician in Poland and abroad (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Switzerland, Yugoslavia) with such artists as Aureli Błaszczok, Kaja Danczowska, Teresa Głębówna, Krzysztof Jakowicz, Roman Lasocki, Zdzisław Łapiński, Adam Musialski, Andrzej Orkisz, Zdzisław Piernik, Roman Siwek, Tomasz Strahl, Alexander Baillie, Emile Cantor, Peter Damm, Peter-Lukas Graf, Mihaela Martin, David Pituch, Branimir Slokar, Michel Strauss, Romeo Tudorache, Tabea Zimmermann, among others. She had a piano duo with Krystyna Słobodnik.

She participated in many prestigious festivals, inter alia, the Polish Piano Festival in Słupsk, the Music Festival in Łańcut, the Warsaw Autumn Festival, the Mozart Festival in Salzburg, the ISCM World Music Days, the Prague Spring International Music Festival. As a pianist and chamber musician, she accompanied instrumentalists at the international music competitions (Budapest, Frankfurt am Main, Geneva, Hradec, Markneukirchen, Munich, Prague).

She was invited to participate in numerous master classes (Łańcut, Koblenz, Lenk, Salzburg, Weimar) where she worked with various distinguished artists such as Felix Andrievsky, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Julius Berger, Nora Chastain, Carlo Chiarappa, Peter Damm, Dorothy DeLay, Roberto Fabriciani, Dieter Flury, Jean Fournier, Michael Frischenschlager,

Jürgen Geise, Peter-Lukas Graf, Raymond Guiot, Ludwig Güttler, Michael Höltzel, Antonio Janigro, Rudolf Jettel, Lewis Kaplan, Rudolf Klepac, Ewald Koch, Ulrich Koch, Charles-Andre Linale, Heidi Litschauer, Alain Marion, Wolfgang Marschner, Ariane Mathäus, Ruggiero Ricci, Gottfried Schneider, Ljerko Spiller, Sandor Vegh, Victoria Yagling, Helmut Zehetmair, Grigori Zhislin, Denes Zsigmondy and others. She made many radio, TV and CD recordings.

Urszula Bożek-Musialska was also a pedagogue. Her students were winning prizes at chamber music competitions. She led master classes and was a member of jury of music competitions. She was a professor of the Chair of Chamber Music of the Academy of Music in Katowice.