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Krzysztof MEYER :

*TRIO FOR CLARINET, CELLO AND PIANO OP. 90 (1997/98)

*CLARINET QUINTET OP. 66 (1986)

Eduard BRUNNER – clarinet

Ivan MONIGHETTI – cello

Pavel GILILOV – piano

THE WILANÓW QUARTET

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Krzysztof MEYER (*1943) originates from Kraków. He studied composition in the State High School of Music first in the class of Stanisław Wiechowicz, then, after Wiechowicz's death, with Krzysztof Penderecki. He graduated from it in 1965 and one year later he also graduated from the faculty of Theory of Music. Afterwards, he pursued his supplementary studies in Paris under the direction of Nadia Boulanger. In 1966-68, he performed as a pianist with the vanguard musical ensemble MW2. In subsequent years, he appeared on stage a number of times as both a soloist and chamber musician. He was a lecturer at the Academy of Music in Kraków (in 1966-87 and again in 2008-2014), a composition professor at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne (1987-2003) and a lecturer of history of music at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (2009-2013). In 1985-89, he was the president of the Polish Composers' Association. In addition to that, he participated in the works of the programme committee of the Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music for 14 years (1974-88).

Composition has always been first for him, therefore, he composed more than 100 pieces over 56 years. These include *Cyberiada* based on Stanisław Lem's short stories, the oratorio *Creation*, 2 masses, 9 symphonies for various orchestra and vocal line-ups, 15 instrumental concertos and several dozens of chamber and solo music pieces, out of which the latter are dedicated to piano, cello, organ and saxophone. The composer has received numerous national and international awards for his works (including the Prince Pierre of Monaco Grand Prix in 1970 for the opera *Cyberiada* and two distinctions at the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers in Paris for String Quartets Nos. 2 and 3).

As a child, he had an opportunity to listen to chamber music concerts that were frequently held at his home. Hence, his first musical impressions came from the music written for smaller ensembles. It is plausible that this fact greatly influenced the shape of the composer's future interests. A special place in his output is occupied by 14 string quartets. Thanks to these works, for many years, he has been considered one of the most accomplished representatives of the genre in the Polish music. In the catalogue of his works there are also 3 quintets (clarinet, piano and saxophone ones), trios for different sets of instruments (including the particularly often worldwide performed Piano Trio) and a number of compositions for two instruments with piano.

Meyer believes that the musical narration makes sense. His music always strives for something or generates expectation. The composer, being a supporter of the thesis that music should affect the audience's emotions, holds that the expression of music is decided mostly by the harmony. However, he does not think it is reasonable to turn back to the Romantic harmony, although the way he narrates his works can be associated with this era. Yet, he expects performers to play with a beautiful sound and to shape phrases in traditionally understood "musicality," as was characteristic for the music of the bygone ages. Without these qualities, it is difficult to imagine any performance of the two pieces included on the CD.

The performers of the works recorded on this CD (Eduard Brunner, Ivan Monighetti, Pavel Gililov and the Wilanów String Quartet) have broad experience in Meyer's music. The composer wrote solo concertos and chamber music pieces for them, whereas the Wilanów String Quartet's repertoire features all string quartets by Meyer. On the CD there are two pieces using clarinet which are written for a group of instruments with long tradition in the history of music. Meyer composed the pieces with Eduard Brunner in mind, an outstanding performer of masterpieces from the past and at the same time an actively engaged in the contemporary music artist.

The Trio for clarinet, cello and piano was composed in 1997-98 on commission for the Sommerliche Musiktage festival in Hitzacker (northern Germany) and it was premiered there on 31 July 1999. It comprises of three contrasting movements performed *attacca*. All three play an important role for the dramatic structure of the piece. A few general indications concerning the tempo and character of the movements will serve as a guide for the musical topography of the Trio. The first movement starts in a moderate tempo, then an agitated middle section follows and after that, the initial atmosphere returns, as it usually occurs in the traditional ABA form. The second movement is fast and violent – it constitutes a *sui generis* perpetual motion machine that develops according to the rule where the crescendo leads to the culmination, occurring exactly in the "golden cut," from which the diminuendo proceeds. In the third movement varied yet related motives slowly flow, which can be easier read in the score than heard, particularly when we listen to the piece for the first time.

The Trio for clarinet, cello and piano can be easily associated with Johannes Brahms' music, especially if we take into consideration Meyer's orchestral piece *Hommage à Johannes Brahms* (1982). Contrary to possible expectations, one should not look forward to references to the Clarinet Trio by the German composer nor to quotations from opus 114. The situation is slightly different in regard to the **Clarinet Quintet** composed 12 years earlier. Krzysztof Meyer once said that Brahms' Clarinet Quintet had almost always constituted for him the incarnation of "probably the greatest chamber music masterpiece of all time," therefore, one day he wanted to "make it his own."

The attempt to "appropriate" Brahms' work consisted in writing the piece in Meyer's musical language, which, however,

would fit into the Brahms tradition. In the music of Classical and Romantic periods the four-movement form was a standard, yet it was lacking in Meyer's existing chamber music output. The construction, presented for the first time exactly in the Quintet, can be considered as a clear bow to Brahms. The same can be said about the second movement in the ABA form, the third one composed as a binary scherzo and the finale in the form of variations. For this is how Johannes Brahms' Clarinet Quintet is built. Therefore, the "frame" of the Quintet on which Meyer composed his music belongs to Brahms. Thus, the piece is devoid of quotations or stylistic references to Brahms' Quintet, however, there are some allusions, which can be noticed by a hearer who is familiar with the piece. It is not music that is quoted, but a kind of gesture or the atmosphere of Brahms' work. The strong expressiveness, so characteristic for Meyer's music, is the principal value of the Quintet and it constitutes its source of the force of expression.

The premiere of the Clarinet Quintet took place on 2 November 1986 in Ulm. It was Eduard Brunner and the Wilanów String Quartet that performed the piece. It is worth mentioning that the Wilanów String Quartet premiered the majority of Krzysztof Meyer's chamber music works.

Thomas Weselmann

Eduard BRUNNER (born 1939 in Basel) is one of the leading clarinetists of our time. He studied in Basel and Paris (with Louis Cahuzac); for one season he was the first clarinetist of the Bremen Philharmonic Orchestra (1962), then he accepted the same post in the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich (1963). For many years he was a lecturer at the Hochschule für Musik Saar in Saarbrücken. He gained international reputation as a soloist and chamber musician, particularly engaged in the contemporary music performance. He has been a guest at numerous festivals in Moscow, Lockenhaus, Schleswig-Holstein, Vienna and Warsaw (the Warsaw Autumn Festival). He has performed in various countries as a soloist and member of chamber ensembles; he has played with Gidon Kremer, Oleg Kagan, Natalia Gutman, Jurij Bashmet and Alfred Brendel, among others. He has also performed with the Wilanów String Quartet for a number of years. On his initiative, several dozens of chamber music and symphony pieces featuring the clarinet were composed. The artists that have composed works for him are, inter alia, Jean Françaix, Christobald Halfter, Helmut Lachenmann, György Kurtág, Ysang Yun and in Poland Augustyn Bloch and Krzysztof Meyer. A special place in the artist's activity is held by the promotion of the contemporary music. He has recorded over 200 solo and chamber music pieces from the clarinet repertoire for various record labels. He leads masterclasses in Marlboro, Prague, Schleswig-Holstein and Salzburg.

Ivan MONIGHETTI (born 1948 in Riga) – a Russian cellist, the last Mstislav Rostropovich's student in the Moscow Conservatory. In 1974, he became the winner of the main prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition, however, the longstanding ban on leaving the Soviet Union postponed his international career, which developed only at the end of the 1980s. Monighetti's repertoire includes early music (performed on a historic instrument) as well as contemporary music. His recording of 20th century solo cello pieces received a Diapason d'Or award. Such composers as Frangiz Ali-Zade, Rudolf Kelterborn and Krzysztof Meyer have composed for him. In 2002, he was awarded a Fryderyk for the CD recording of Johann Sebastian Bach's six solo cello suites. In 1999, Monighetti debuted as a conductor. Moreover, he has given concerts in many countries with the ensemble Camerata Boccherini, which he founded himself. He lives in Switzerland where he is a lecturer at the Academy of Music in Basel. He is also a guest pedagogue at the Queen Sofía College of Music in Madrid. For many years, Monighetti has had links to Poland. In 1979, he performed in Poland for the first time at the Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music. He is invited on a regular basis as both a soloist and pedagogue. He has been a guest professor at the Academy of Music in Kraków.

Pavel GILILOV (born 1950 in Donetsk) – a pianist of Russian origins who lives in Austria. As a pianist, he made his debut with orchestra at the age of 8. He completed his studies in the Leningrad Conservatory in the class of Moses Khalfin. He started his stage career with winning a few prizes: the 2nd prize at the 4th All-Russian Piano Competition in Moscow (1972), the 4th prize at the International Chopin Competition (1975) and the 1st prize at the Gian Battista Viotti International Music Competition in Vercelli (1978). In 1978, he emigrated from the Soviet Union. At first, he lived in Austria, then in Germany where he was a professor at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne and then again in Austria where he teaches in Salzburg. He often performs as a soloist and chamber musician, mostly in duos with cellists. For many years, he was a chamber music partner of Mischa Maisky and Boris Piergamienszczikow; recently he plays with Ivan Monighetti. In 2004, he founded the Telekom Beethoven Competition in Bonn, which he still directs. Pavel Gililov has performed in Poland on a number of occasions. He plays mostly Chopin music, yet he also performs contemporary music, e.g., he was the first performer of Krzysztof Meyer's Piano Concerto.

The WILANÓW String Quartet – a string quartet founded in Warsaw in 1967. At first, it performed under the name Beethoven String Quartet. Since 1969, it is known as the Wilanowski String Quartet (in the 1990s it was changed to the Wilanów String Quartet). The ensemble received awards for the performance of classical music repertoire at the competitions in Vienna (1971), Bordeaux (1972) and Munich (1973). During those years, the ensemble was particularly famous for its performance of contemporary music. Due to the fact that so many pieces have been written for the group, one could say that it has contributed to the refreshment of the genre among Polish composers. The quartet has performed several times at the Warsaw Autumn Festival. In 1983, the ensemble received a critics award "Orfeusz" for the best performance of Polish music (for the String Quartet No. 6 by Krzysztof Meyer). In 1986 and 1990, it received an award of the Polish Composers' Association. Since 1990, the quartet has been permanently linked with the Old Town Culture House in Warsaw. The Wilanów String Quartet has recorded over 30 CDs for such record labels as DUX, Acte Préalable (unknown Polish pieces of 19th and 20th centuries), CD Accord, Tudor, Pro Viva (Polish contemporary composers' pieces, inter alia, all string quartets by Krzysztof Meyer), Calig, Olimpia, Col Legno, Polskie Nagrania and Tonpress. Since the mid-1970s, the ensemble consists of: Tadeusz Gadzina – 1st violin, Paweł Łosakiewicz – 2nd violin, Ryszard Duż – viola and Marian Wasiółka – cello.